

**BEATLES 2000**

**THE CONCEPT OF FORM AND ITS CHANGE  
IN THE MUSIC OF THE BEATLES**

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# JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

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## **Tiivistelmä - Abstract**

The primary main aim of the thesis is to study the form, form types and their changes utilised by the Beatles during 1962-70. Another aim is to develop the theory and methodology of popular music, also suitable for the study of subjects other than the Beatles. The material includes the singles (#22) released by the Beatles and an analysis of an exemplary song "I Saw Her Standing There" (1963).

The thesis consists of a resumé and four articles written during 1998-2000. There are four specific aims for this thesis. The first is to test the theoretical and methodological grounds of the analysis of form and to apply them to the singles released by the Beatles and to find preliminary results. This is done in my article "The Concept of Form and its Change in the Singles of the Beatles" (1998). The second aim is to broaden the context by studying the identity and history of the Beatles in the article "Liverpoolian Identity of the Beatles from 1957-62" (2000a). The third aim is to examine the role of repetition in popular music analysis, as in my MA thesis "Musematic and Discursive Repetition – A Study of Repetition in Popular Music Analysis" (1997). The fourth aim is to elaborate the analytical procedure of studying form in the article "You Need another Chorus – Problems with Formal Concepts in Popular Music" (2000b).

**Asiasanat**  
The Beatles, form, popular music analysis.

**Säilytyspaikka**  
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**Muita tietoja**

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## INTRODUCTION

The primary main aim of the thesis is to study the form, form types and their changes utilised by the Beatles during 1962-70. Another aim is to develop the theory and methodology of popular music, also suitable for the study of subjects other than the Beatles. Ultimately the material of my doctoral dissertation will cover all songs officially recorded and released by the Beatles during 1962-72 in England (over 200 songs). The research questions of the doctoral dissertation are:

- *to define the form types used by the Beatles;*
- *to use statistical methods to analyse the changes in the uses of these form types across time;*
- *to deep analyse exemplary songs representing different time and style periods, form types and songwriters; and*
- *to analyse and interpret the changes and consistencies in the concept of form, and to discuss possible reasons behind them.*

In this licentiate thesis the general framework is the same as in the doctoral dissertation. The material used here is yet narrow – it includes the singles released by the Beatles<sup>1</sup> and an analysis of an exemplary song “I Saw Her Standing There” (1963). There are four specific aims for this thesis. The first is to test the theoretical and methodological grounds of the analysis of form and to apply them to the singles released by the Beatles and to find preliminary results. This is the done in my article “The Concept of Form and its Change in the Singles of the Beatles” (1998). The second aim is to broaden the context by studying the identity and history of the Beatles in the article “Liverpoolian Identity of the Beatles from 1957-62” (2000a). The third aim is to examine the role of repetition in popular music analysis, as in my MA thesis “Musematic and Discursive Repetition – A Study of Repetition in Popular Music Analysis” (1997). The fourth aim is to elaborate the analytical procedure of studying form in the article “You Need another Chorus – Problems with Formal Concepts in Popular Music” (2000b).

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<sup>1</sup> The number of singles is 22, which includes 44 songs.

## POPULAR MUSIC AND FORM

Even though form is one of the key concepts in “traditional” musicology, it has not been all that fashionable subject within the field of popular music research. On one hand this is due to the lack of general interest in musical analysis and the repugnance to use neither methods nor the concepts of traditional musical analysis in analysing popular music, and on the other to the strong tendency towards sociological and cultural approaches in popular music research.

It was T.W Adorno who initiated the sociological approach to music and popular music. His famous article “On Popular Music”, published already in 1941, has been much discussed since. It is indeed still impossible to discuss popular music, including formal analysis, without considering his views.<sup>2</sup> It seems safe to say that Adorno had a very simplifying, degrading and pessimistic view of popular music. Popular music forms, being just standardised, predictable, meaningless schemata, were totally uninteresting to him. His theory must, of course, be interpreted within the context of the culture, time and ideology behind it. However, it is true that his influence on the study of popular music has been enormous.

There has been a strong inclination towards sociological and cultural approaches since the 1970s (e.g. Shepherd 1980, Wallis 1984, Dasilva 1984, Supicic 1987, Frith 1983, 1988, Wicke 1990). According to the extremists of this approach, musical meanings are created and absorbed only through culture and society. It was through these approaches the study of popular music was legitimated in academic world, especially in England and United States of America.

Applying traditional music theory and analysis to popular music has, as stated, become more common in recent decades. Many traditional musicologists have persuted a paper or published an article on popular music or used examples of it in their analytical or theoretical studies. Applying traditional and formal analysis to popular music began in the late 1960s and early 1970s as a part of the general rise of structuralism and semiotics (i.e. Tagg 1979). Some scholars have applied traditional theories/approaches of music analysis to a certain repertoire or style of popular music. Allen Forte (1995) applied Schenkerian theory to the music of the Broadway

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<sup>2</sup> Adorno's thoughts are discussed in Nurmesjärvi 2000b.

composers, e.g. Gershwin and Porter. According to Richard Middleton (2000, 144), Forte's analysis is a part of

“[...] theories which try to model and account for structural hierarchy – the sense that listeners can, as it were, pull back from the level of small-scale events to take in [...] the significance of progressively higher level moments and markers.”

On the other hand Middleton reviews approaches that emphasise “the role of conventions” (Ibid.). Pieces of music must be considered in relation to genre, which is defined by conventions, also relating to form. Music makes sense through cultural knowledge. (Ibid. 145.) Middleton himself has considered repetition as a central structural element of popular music. Its dominance in popular music is mainly due to the considerable use of African-American techniques, such as riffs and call-response, whose role in form is important. (Ibid. 143.)<sup>3</sup> By analysing music through the concept of repetition one is dealing with the identification of similarity and difference.<sup>4</sup>

In most of the studies form is considered to be just one feature among other musical features. For instance, Alf Björnberg studied Swedish Eurovision song contest melodies, which often are schlager-like. He defines three main types of form: standard form, verse-chorus form and strophic form (Björnberg 1987,55), which are also the most commonly used concepts in the analysis of popular music form. Jon Fitzgerald (1996b) has studied form as one of the features in the 1960s US top forty songs. Richard Middleton's above-mentioned work on musical structures, processes and repetition is interesting and relevant as to the study of form (1982, 1990, 2000).

Form is an essential part of songwriting guides and popular music theory books. Definitions of some formal concepts are found, for example, in the books by Fielder (1996) and Fitzgerald (1999). Usually this kind of books cover the most commonly used concepts, which are then illustrated by or possibly applied into mainstream songs. A good example of such guides is Sheila Davis' book “Craft of Lyric Writing” (1985), in which she explores common popular music form types in their historical context.

The studies considering the Beatles have not concentrated on form any more than in popular music studies in general. There are writings that involve music analysis or analysis of form by, for example, Fitzgerald (1996a; 2000), Everett (1999),

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<sup>3</sup> Middleton's concepts of musematic and discursive repetition are the subject of my MA thesis (Nurmesjärvi 1997), which is summarised in p. 4 (Study I).

<sup>4</sup> These are related to the three basic form building processes of recurrence (AA), contrast (AB) and variation (AA') presented by Bent (1987, 88).

Heinonen (1995), Macdonald (1995) and Porter (1979). An Italian musicologist Franco Fabbri (1996) has published an analytical article about the “Forms and Models of the Beatles’ Songs” to which I will return later.

## STUDY I: MUSEMATIC AND DISCURSIVE REPETITION A Study of Repetition in Popular Music Analysis (Nurmesjärvi 1997)

The purpose of the MA thesis was to examine and develop the study of musical structures in popular music by approaching them through the concepts of *musematic and discursive repetition* (Middleton 1982, 1990). The aim was to examine these concepts on both theoretical and analytical level. The main issues were to study 1) the origins of these concepts; 2) their syntactic functions and characteristics; and 3) their differences and limits. The two latter issues were examined by using the technique of hypothetical substitution (Tagg 1979) in the analysis of example songs representing mainstream rock/pop.

The theoretical part clarifies the origins of the concepts of musematic and discursive repetition, and their definitions. The term ‘musematic’ is derived from the term ‘museme’ used by Seeger (1960) to refer to a unit of music-logic. Tagg (1979), in turn, has used it to refer to a semantic meaningful unit. For Middleton, musematic repetition is a structural, syntagmatic feature, and the musical meaning relies on the structure. Musematic unit is short, unvaried and non-linear. The origin of ‘discursive’ is assumed to be derived from another linguistic term, ‘discourse’, which refers to a process, sentence or narration. Music based on discursive repetition is often hierarchically ordered, varied, linear, and the repeated units are longer than in musematic repetition. The analytical part of the study includes testing of the two concepts through hypothetical substitution. This technique is a means for testing the changes of musical meaning resulting from the replacement of musical elements by different elements, in order to verify or falsify hypothesis on this meaning (Tagg 1979, 76). The analytical part also includes detailed analyses of six mainstream popular songs within the above framework.

It was concluded that the concepts of musematic and discursive repetition are applicable but insufficient as such to be used in music analysis. In order to perform a thorough analysis of a song structure and form the concepts would need redefining, or

the use of additional, hierarchical concepts. Finally, it was suggested that Lidov's (1978) concepts of formative, focal and textural repetition could be helpful in formulating a further theory based on repetition in popular music.

## STUDY II: THE CONCEPT OF FORM AND ITS CHANGE IN THE SINGLES OF THE BEATLES (Nurmesjärvi 1998)

The purpose of this article was to shed light on the concept of form and its change in the music of the Beatles. The forms used by the Beatles were assumed to be based on the standard forms of the Tin Pan Alley era. The hypothesis was that the influence of the standard forms was stronger during the early years than the late years. If so, the music of the Beatles would reflect a more general trend in popular music of the 1960s (cf. Björnberg 1987). The theoretical framework relied on prototype theory (Rosch 1975, 1978).

The main research questions were: 1) which forms are the most prototypical examples of the material; 2) what is the amount of used standard forms in percentages; 3) how the standard forms were extended; 4) how the use of forms changed across time; and 5) are there differences in the forms of the A- and B-sides of the singles.

The material of this study included the singles (22#) the Beatles released in 1962-70. Of the whole repertoire (over 200 songs) these 44 songs provided a sufficient sample to test the theoretical background and methodology, and gave preliminary results of the material. The analysis was based on the reissued CD versions of the original recordings by EMI/Apple. The material was analysed on three levels: 1) the entire selection; 2) the four periods (1962-63, 1964-65, 1966-67, 1968-70); and 3) on yearly basis.

The analysis of form into its constituent elements was based on the concepts of repetition, parallelism and symmetry (Middleton 1990; Nurmesjärvi 1997; Meyer 1975). Moreover, it relied on the grouping criteria presented by Lerdahl & Jackendoff (1985). After the analysis of the song forms, which were indicated by alphabets (A, B, C, ...), the results were further analysed by using simple statistical operations (percentages, correlation analysis).



According to the study the amount of standard forms was more than 80% until 1967, after which it dramatically fell. The average prototypicality rate, amount of standard forms and standard deviation of the prototypicality rates all implied the same tendency. Almost 80% of the songs were based on standard forms (AABA, ABAB and AABC). The study also showed that there are standard extensions to these normative forms. The A-sides of the singles were almost solely based on the standard forms and the prototypicality rate (0.778) was higher than that of the entire selection (0.756). In the B-sides of the singles the results were more disperse and the prototypicality rate was slightly lower (0.71).

The findings supported the main hypothesis that standard forms were dominant in the early material. However, other forms appeared at a fairly late state (1968-70). This was in line with the general change in popular music towards the verse/chorus form (Davis 1985, Björnberg 1987). It is also known that the Beatles used standard forms as models in the songwriting process (Heinonen 1995). Other studies that support these results are studies of the stylistical periods of the Beatles (Eerola 1997), and the changes that took place in their recording team (Heinonen 1998).

### STUDY III: LIVERPUDIEN IDENTITY OF THE BEATLES FROM 1957-62 (Nurmesjärvi 2000a)

The aim of this article was to study 1) the historical, social, political and economic factors that influenced the local identity of the Beatles as Liverpudlians; and 2) how this local identity influenced their music. This was carried out by a theoretical model, which was based on studies of local identity by Sara Cohen (1994). A further purpose was also to study the musical influences present in Liverpool at the time of the childhood and youth of the members of the Beatles.

Liverpool had a strong musical tradition in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Typical styles included Music Hall, traditional jazz, Tin Pan Alley and Big Band music. From the 1950s on the influences included also Rhythm&Blues, Country&Western, and especially skiffle – a part of folk tradition played by home made instruments that was popular in the whole England in the beginning of the 1950s, and Merseybeat – a

typically Liverpudlian rock'n'roll style. Liverpool was also well known for its strong identity, which was not least supported by the sailors that were typical of this city with an active port. The area was also fairly poor and the decades following the Second World War hit Liverpool hard. Unemployment rate was high. Liverpudlians were often described as tough, strong and hard drinking. Comedy was one of their ways of coping with the difficulties of their everyday lives.

All the musical styles of Liverpool influenced the music of the Beatles in one way or the other. Most of these styles can also be heard in their music. Skiffle and Merseybeat were the most influential styles. Merseybeat, being clearly Liverpudlian style, has often been emphasised when discussing the musical scene of Liverpool at the turn of the 60s. The Beatles was even presented as the most representative group of this style.

Liverpudlian identity influenced the formation and music of the Beatles in various ways. There were many musical, historical, social and political influential factors. In the 1950s Liverpool already had a strong local identity. There was an active and lively musical scene. Merseybeat was a local phenomenon, which reinforced and reflected this identity. It perhaps did not renew the music, but it shaped the style and was reflected in the attitude of the youth. It was a means for the Liverpudlians to separate "us" from "others", emphasise the difference. Merseybeat was strongly linked to the identity, and perhaps it would have not existed without the prior strong identity of Liverpool. There were also particular individuals that made a difference, Brian Epstein (manager) and Alan Williams (early promoter) played an important role. Also some individual factors in the history of the Beatles – especially their trips to Hamburg – shaped their style and reinforced the prior Liverpudlian identity.

## STUDY IV: YOU NEED ANOTHER CHORUS

### Problems with Formal Concepts in Popular Music (Nurmesjärvi 2000b)

This study was based on a presumption that there are obscurities regarding the concepts used in the analysis of popular music form. Many of these obscurities are apparently due to a lack of explicit definitions of the concepts, such as verse and

chorus. They can, however, to some extent be cleared in the light of the historical development of form. Moreover, there are two common illusions concerning popular music form. Firstly, there is an underlying thought that all popular music forms are simple; and secondly, that the analysis of form is considered to be a simple, non-complex procedure.

One aim of this article was to provide evidence to illustrate these two illusions and how they have affected the understanding and analysis of form by a review of existing literature (Adorno, 1990; Björnberg 1984; Davis 1985; Fitzgerald 1996a, 1996b; Koskimäki & Heinonen 1998; Lee 1970; Middleton 1990; Moore 1993). Another aim was to shed light to different uses of the concepts of verse and chorus and standard forms by exploring the origins of these concepts. The problematic aspects were illustrated through three different analyses (Pollack 2000; Fitzgerald 1996b; and my own analysis) of an example song: "I Saw Her Standing There" (1963) by the Beatles.

It was shown that the lack of explicit definitions of formal concepts have resulted in problems of understanding the form and created confusion concerning the meanings and uses of the concepts. The three analytical interpretations of "I Saw Her Standing There" illustrate that there are several possible ways to conceive the form of the song. However, a particular interpretation may not always be understood in a way the author has intended to if the foundation or reasoning for the analysis is not presented clearly. Too often the analysis is based on implicit assumptions. There are also problems concerning the actual analytical procedure, which cannot unambiguously or exhaustively be explained and defined but demand constant consciousness and awareness of the analyst.

The confusion of the concepts and their uses can be avoided by explicitly stating the basis and principles of analysis and the theoretical background on which they are based on. This is crucial in understanding the results of the analysis. The classification of various form types is not simple and clear cut and therefore it also demands attention. An exploration of the historical context is needed in order to understand and interpret the form types.

## LOOKING BACK

Form has not been widely in the interest of popular music scholars. It has been considered as a part of several music analytical studies, and yet the theoretical concepts and the methodology of analysis have rarely been discussed. There has certainly not been an extensive study about the forms used by the Beatles. The study of popular music forms is enlightening in many respects. It is one approach to study the musical style; what were main stylistical influences, how they were used, and how they changed in the songs of the Beatles. Moreover, it can be studied whether their music reflects more general stylistic and historical changes in popular music.

The aim of my thesis was to study the forms utilised by the Beatles. The purpose was to identify the form types and their changes and to consider possible reasons behind them. In the articles included in this thesis I have been able to answer some of the aims of the doctoral dissertation presented in the Introduction (p. 1). Mostly these results are related to the two first aims: defining the form types and the use of statistical methods to analyse the changes. Naturally the results apply more accurately to aims of this licentiate thesis. The first article concerns the forms used in the singles released by the Beatles. The conciseness of the material set limitations to the interpretation of the results but, in any case, it seemed logical to start the study with a small, well-defined material in order to test the theoretical background and procedure. The results indicated that this was, indeed, a good starting point: they pointed a direction for my future research by suggesting how the research questions should be formulated, helping to choose the key concepts and implying how to contextualise the analysis. They have also made clear which are the problematic methodological and analytical aspects involved.

The main problem in Study II was due to an equation between a series of alphabetic symbols (indicating similarities and differences between formal units) and standard forms commonly labeled by such symbols. If, for example, the first four formal units were labeled AABA, this four-unit complex was always equalled to the AABA standard form. Even though this interpretation is valid in most instances, it does not apply to all cases. This does not mean that the results of the singles article does not make sense because, in any case, the analysis was based on commonly accepted analytical principles. However, in the future research this problem must be taken into account more seriously.

The defects in the Study II indicated also a general need for more thorough thought of the theoretical and methodological grounds of formal analysis. Study IV concentrated on the vague and confusing definitions of the commonly used formal concepts of verse, chorus, refrain, and standard form. The purpose of the article was to point out the insufficiency and limitations of these concepts, and the confusions in their use, which are due to the lack of their explicit definitions. The three different analyses of the example song "I Saw Her Standing There" showed that a formal analysis of such song, appearing to be fairly simple, is not unambiguous at all. The awareness and above all, explicitness through out the study, especially regarding the theoretical choices, is essential in the analysis.

The interpretation of the results – the utilised forms and their changes – has not yet been very extensive. It is clear that understanding and interpretation of forms requires a closer study of musical processes. Repetition is one of the driving forces in popular music. The concepts of musematic and discursive repetition, which were under examination in Study I, are helpful in the process of segmenting the songs into formal units. The concepts provide analytical tools for studying the musical processes that articulate form and of which it is constructed. Repetition helps to interpret the nature of the events that characterise a form type or it explains the changes in forms. Study III concerning the Liverpoolian identity of the Beatles provided a historical context to the subject of the study. There are many influences and events that affected their music and playing. They in part explain the context of their music and its form.

Unfortunately there are not many analytical studies about the music of the Beatles to which the results of these articles could be compared. The article of Franco Fabbri (1996), concerning the forms and models of the Beatles, is interesting as to my study. According to Fabbri most of the Beatles songs are of chorus-bridge form.<sup>5</sup> Another typical form type is the verse-chorus form. He gives some example songs of each type. In the whole recording career of the Beatles he sees a change in the use of forms. In the early years until *Rubber Soul* they are based on this chorus-bridge form type, after which they move to more lyric oriented songs. Chorus-bridge form appears again at the *Get Back* project in the end on their career.

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<sup>5</sup> The choice of these terms is not common. Fabbri (1996, 195) writes that chorus-bridge type "actually comes out of Broadway's musical theatre." This refers to the standard form (i.e. AABA) in which the A is chorus and B is bridge. He states that the most confusions and difficulties in the uses of the concepts are between that of verse and chorus. The definitions of these concepts are found in Fabbri 1996, 175-176.

These results support my views. According to the single material the standard forms were the main forms the Beatles used. However, in my study the use of standard form was considerably high until the last two years. In other words, my study implies that the Beatles used standard forms as the basis of their songs much longer than Fabbri's study suggests. Firstly, this can perhaps be explained by the factor that I based the results on the normative form, including only the four first sections. Secondly, as stated above the forms were interpreted as normative standard forms, which might affect the results to some extent. In spite of this, standard forms and verse-chorus forms are the main categories of forms used by the Beatles. Fabbri states that in addition to these two main form types there are many song forms, which I also agree upon. In fact, there are hardly two songs of exactly similar form (if the intros, repetitions of the main units, solos, and codas are taken into account) in the entire material. A problem concerning Fabbri's article is that he presents only the results, illustrated by some example songs. It would have been interesting to see the analysis on which his results and interpretations are based.

The results of my licentiate thesis can be generalised to some extent. The contextual approach presented in Study III may be applied in interpreting the results of the "formal" analysis also in the future. Moreover, problematising the analytical concepts (as in Study IV) may be assumed to contribute especially to the theoretical framework of the future study. In this thesis, the only article including quantitative analysis of the song material was the one concentrating on the singles (Study II). They do represent the whole time span of 1962-70 but there are problematic aspects: the musical material used as the data is small and statistically not very significant, only 44 songs out of over 200. Moreover, the singles are aimed specifically at the commercial market, in the sixties they still were the main form of music consumption. Despite the fact that the analysed songs were not many I have noticed similar tendencies in my other studies. In addition to the articles presented in this thesis I have during my doctoral studies presented several conference papers based on other material than the singles. A study of the early recordings of the Beatles (1962-63) indicated similarly that the use of the standard forms and standard extensions was high during this period.<sup>6</sup> The results of the analysis of the double album *The Beatles* (1968) were consistent with the results of the songs representing the same period in the single

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<sup>6</sup> A paper "The Concept of Form in the Early Recordings of the Beatles" given in IASPM Norden conference in Oslo, Norway, September 12, 1999.

material.<sup>7</sup> An extension to this was a study of the whole experimental period (1966-68) which showed that there was more variety of form types than what was expected on the basis of the single material.<sup>8</sup>

## LOOKING AHEAD

Three explanatory factors for the forms used by the Beatles and their changes have been presented in the articles of this study. Firstly, the contextual aspects regarding the identity and background of Beatles (Nurmesjärvi 2000a), secondly, the historical aspect of the formal concepts used in the analysis (Nurmesjärvi 2000b), and thirdly, the musical processes through the concepts of musematic and discursive repetition (Nurmesjärvi 1997). All studies so far have indicated a need for further elaboration of the theoretical and methodological aspects of the analysis, including the principles of segmentation and formal concepts, and the interpretation of the results. Firstly, it would seem fruitful to explore the cognitive basis of understanding music and its form. Applications of the implication-realization model (Narmour 1991), which is related to the Gestalt laws of music perception (Meyer 1956; rejuvenated by Narmour 1990, 59 f), and the *Generative Theory of Tonal Music* by Lerdahl & Jackendoff (1985) can be used in both forming the principles and guidelines for the analysis and interpreting and explaining the results of the analysis.<sup>9</sup>

Another suitable approach is to continue to explore the possibilities of using the concept of repetition in the analysis. The syntagmatic processes involving repetition

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<sup>7</sup> The recording is also known as the *White Album*. The presentation was given in IASPM England branch conference in Liverpool, England, in September 11, 1998, together with Yrjö Heinonen and Jouni Koskimäki.

<sup>8</sup> A paper "The Concept of Form in the 'Experimental' Recordings of the Beatles" given in 13. Nordiske Musikforskerkongress in Aarhus, Denmark, August 18, 2000.

<sup>9</sup> *Form* in terms of Meyer is seen in a very particular way. He outlines the difference of something "having form" or "being a form". When something has a form, it means that its parts are functionally, syntactically related to one another, like the development section, or a novel. But in Meyer's point of view they are not forms: "When we say that something is a particular form -- we are referring both to its hierarchic structure and to its conformant organisation on the highest level. When both types of relationships are articulated by clear differentiation, then relationship will be formal. That is, the complex event will be said to be a form." (Meyer 1973, 91.) Pure repetition, the return of earlier material and strong, continuity-breaking closure are the obvious indicators of form; the first two indicate the beginning of form, the last the ending of the form. From the point of view of form alone, the only relationships possible between two entities are varying degrees of conformance or contrast (Gjerdingen 1988, 47).

may also explain the changes in forms and be used as one parameter when defining form types. Richard Middleton (2000) has presented concepts of *sectional & additive forms*, which are related to his previous concepts of musematic and discursive forms. Moreover, as Middleton (2000, 151) states: “the divergent formal principles I have discussed ... are all the time mediated by the specificities of genre and style”, which should be considered in the analysis as well.

It will be necessary to revise the analytical procedures in order to find a more clear and relevant relation between the form types and method of analysis. So far it has not been clear to what extent the analyses can be paralleled with the form types. The use of the concepts, such as verse and chorus has been avoided in the stage of segmentation of formal section. The problem is two sided. On one hand I will be dealing with the analysis of a large material, over 200 songs. That creates specific problems. It will become more difficult to formulate extremely strict principles that would apply to every single song, and I will be forced to make exceptions and interpretations already at this stage. On the other hand deep analysis of exemplary songs will be performed. This requires tools for much more detailed structural study. These will at high probability be found by exploring the possibilities of the concepts of repetition.

An important part of the future study that has not yet been mentioned will consist of various comparisons of the analysis material, e.g. comparing selections of songs from various time / style periods, and comparing material from different songwriters, mainly Lennon and McCartney. The use of simple statistical methods is still pertinent for this purpose.

It is hoped that this and my future study will contribute to the study of form in popular music in general. Moreover, other work would be gladly welcomed in this field as well. The writings on popular music form have so far briefly mentioned historical aspects and the studies have not really been extended beyond the mainstream popular music, which has very much followed the historical traits instead of inventing radically new forms. The study of the Beatles is situated in the 1960s, which is just the beginning of the development of post rock'n'roll era. Since the end of the 1960s numerous genres have evolved, which have renewed form types and the terminology would not be sufficient in explaining them. The previous discussion implies strongly that analytical tools and frameworks are required in popular music research. The results of these studies may be applied in guide books for songwriters, and the knowledge



concerning musical form may also contribute to understanding musical styles and their history. It should also increase our knowledge and comprehension of music and people in general terms.

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Appendix 1.

**MUSEMATIC AND DISCURSIVE REPETITION.  
A Study of Repetition in Popular Music Analysis.**



# **MUSEMATIC AND DISCURSIVE REPETITION**

## **A Study of Repetition in Popular Music Analysis**

Master's thesis

Spring 1997

University of Jyväskylä

Department of Musicology

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Repetition is a natural characteristic of our everyday lives. Often the things which are repeated are so obvious that we don't pay any attention to them. This type of occurrences include, for instance, habits, biological cycles, different cyclic recurrences in religions and beliefs. Repetition can be seen and studied from many perspectives. Besides repetition in everyday life, it can also have a more specific role in life and culture. Its importance in music has been acknowledged by many scholars, for instance Nicholas Ruwet and Richard Middleton. Repetition is a typical characteristic of music, playing a great role in musical structure, especially, but not solely, in popular music (Ruwet 1987:16, Middleton 1990:268). Raymond Monelle points out how in music repetition seems very natural: "music, unlike language, often repeats phrases syntagmatically in a very simple and regular way" (1992:66). In the following passage some examples of repetition will be presented in order to indicate the several possibilities it provides for the study of culture, art and music.

## 1.1. Introduction to Roles of Repetition

Clement Harris<sup>1</sup> (1963) regards repetition as a natural characteristic of arts, but also a characteristic which has two specific purposes for human beings. The first of these is "the utilitarian purpose", i.e., that repetition can be used to gain various goals, benefits or profits. This applies to the immediate repetition of whole work or piece of music. On the other hand the purpose of repetition is to satisfy the artistic sense of humans, provide balance, proportion and symmetry. This applies only to parts or units of a larger work.

James A. Snead<sup>2</sup> views repetition as a necessity for the survival of any culture. According to him it is impossible for a culture to be a never ending

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1 "The element of repetition in nature and the arts", *Musical Quarterly* no 12/1963.

2 "Repetition as a figure of black culture", *Black literature and literary theory* 1984, p. 59-79. In this article Snead criticises the Western view of "white", European culture as historical, individual and developmental, and black African culture as primitive, repetitive culture with no history.

reservoir of new inventions and developments. Instead, it is dependent on repetition and built on repetition. He contests the idea of Western culture as non-repetitive and inventory on the grounds that it "repeats continuously in precisely the belief that there is no repetition in culture, but only a difference, defined as progress and growth" (Snead 1984: 60).

Hroar Klempe discusses repetition in commercials, both in visual images and music<sup>3</sup>. Advertisements have become more fragmented, and as an example of this he examines Coca Cola's 'First time' advertisement campaign. The increased fragmentation in these commercials is explained by the increasing amount of repetition that is used in them in a structural way. Music plays a special role in delivering this effect, and the purpose of studying music in commercials is "to show how central the musical way of using repetitions is to an understanding of the commercials" (1992:401).

Rosalie Bandt's dissertation "Models and processes in repetitive music, 1960-83" (1983) looks at repetition from the view point of a composer's tool or a composing technique. She describes 'repetitive music' as the kind of music which

"uses principles of repetition in one or more of its parameters to a significant extent. -- repetition as central idea or driving force. All music which relies first and foremost on repetition as its modus operandi could be called repetitive music". (ibid:4).

This would, according to the definition, also include popular music. But, Bandt continues further. She points out that "repetitive music" in her thesis denotes music created since the 1960s, and the term has also been widely used to refer to the works of especially four composers, Terry Riley, Philip Glass, Steve Reich and La Monte Young. Then, she admits, that also the words 'experimental' and 'minimal' have been used to describe repetitive music. In her opinion what is understood by 'experimental' in music does not in this case describe the same as 'repetitive'. (Ibid:5-6.) Actually 'repetitive music' does not here cover all the possible styles suggested by the first description, but the term is limited to the music of these four composers. In the dissertation Bandt examines the kind of models and processes that can

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<sup>3</sup> "On mythical repetitions in music, text and image in the coca-cola commercials", *Secondo convegno europeo di analisi musicale*, Trento 1992.

be used as tools for the creation of repetitive music<sup>4</sup>, and she examines some of the works by Glass, Reich and La Monte Young.

Information theory<sup>5</sup>, which has been applied to music by Abraham Moles (1966), also recognizes the effects of repetition on information. In his discussion of 'semantic' and 'esthetic' information and its macro structures, Moles presents a "law of repetition"<sup>6</sup>. According to this law, the greater number of repetitions that occur, the less information is conveyed.

Repetition has also been used as a criterion in music analysis. Nicholas Ruwet's paradigmatic method of analysis<sup>7</sup> involves a technique for the "procedures of division" based on the principle of repetition (Ruwet 1987:15). The piece of music subject to analysis is seen as a syntagmatic chain of units repeated or not repeated, and it is segmented into units by way of identifying them on the grounds of equivalence and difference; every fragment repeated is considered as a unit. Ruwet's starting point in this theory is "the empirical appreciation of the enormous role played in music, at all levels, by repetition" (ibid:16). He wants to carry further an idea proposed by Gilbert Rouget:

" certain fragments are repeated, others are not; it is on repetition - or absence of repetition - that our segmentation is based. When one sequence of notes appears two or more times, with or without variation, it is considered a unit. As a corollary, a sequence of notes which appears only once is also considered a unit, what ever its length and the apparent number of its articulations (especially silences)."<sup>8</sup>

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4 These models are:

1. Mental models;
2. Self image and interpersonal relationships as models;
3. Biological models;
4. Physical models;
5. Written models (not for oral music).

5 Abraham Moles: Information theory and esthetic perception, 1966:153-66.

6 "The law of repetition": when a perception (a group of symbols, sonic objects, cells) is repeated  $n$  times, the rate of information yielded per unit of time decreases as the binary logarithm of the number of repetitions increases:

$$\Delta R = -K \log_2 n$$

This law governs the organization of the sequences forming the musical message; it governs repetition, one of the essential procedures of composition. Moles 1966:154.

7 "Methods of analysis in musicology" *Music analysis* 6:1-2, 1987.

8 Rouget, "Un chromatisme africain", *L'homme: revue française d'anthropologie*, vol.1, no. 3, September-December 1961:41, quoted in Ruwet 1987:16-17.

This is also the basic idea of paradigmatic analysis. Ruwet's method was further adapted by Nattiez as the basis of his theory of the neutral level of music.

The Canadian musicologist David Lidov has also studied the role of repetition in music<sup>9</sup>. According to him there is correlation between the structures repeated and the functions of repetition. In this correlation both the form and meaning of music interact. His aim is "to indicate the scope and variety of musical phenomena which a systematic repetition theory might help us to take more thoroughly into account" (Lidov 1978:1). At the outset he presents what he considers the grammatical roles of repetition. Lidov points out the extensive and specific way repetition is used in music compared to other artistic and communicative media. With variations in amount and degree repetition is found in all types of music. Importantly, music unlike other arts allows and even requires literal repetition. As it is so widely used within music it can be said that repetition is a concrete fact of music "holding a privileged status among formal devices on the basis of its at least relative, if not absolute concreteness", as opposed to social facts like harmony and tonality (ibid:3). Repetition is a useful starting point when studying musical hierarchy, segmentation or identification of musical ideas. Lidov makes remarks on repetition as it has been used in analysis by Ruwet (1966) in his method of paradigmatic analysis, which was developed on the basis of Ruwet's theory by Nattiez (1975). An analysis which is based on repetition studies the individual, factors specific of each piece of music and by those means avoids making generalizations. Furthermore, repetition is a useful tool for discovering stylistic distinctions and procedures of new, unfamiliar styles. Apart from its grammatical functions, repetition can also be seen as an affective element of music. Depending on the ways it is used repetition creates different effects and meanings. Important factors are the function and the structure of repetition as well as how much is repeated how many times. (Ibid:1-7.)

In the study of repetition Lidov positions himself within structural semiotics.

"A study of repetition brings us to a junction, where questions of musical structure meet questions of value and content. -- . The problem of relating communicated content to communicative structure is the central problem of

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<sup>9</sup> "Structure and function in musical repetition", *Journal of the Canadian association of university school of music*. 1978.

semiotics, the formal and generalised study of signs and symbolic relations".  
(Ibid:7)

He considers repetitive structures and all formal and material elements of music as signs, in a sense that "anything which refers to something else is a sign, and 'refer' may be taken in the sense of 'stands for' or 'directs attention to'" (ibid). Based on linguistic concepts of reference Lidov introduces three structural-functional categories of repetition, which may be considered as signs. Firstly, *formative repetition*, which refers to itself, in other words, to what is repeated. This is based on the famous Prague School concept of the self-referential sign. Secondly, there is *focal repetition*, which draws attention to the repetition itself: a "self-referential type that focuses attention on the fact of repetition, *per se*, thereby taking on an expressive, connotative or symbolic value" (ibid:8, authors italics). By this Lidov refers to Morris' term 'formator', which means "sign which control the interpretation of other signs" (ibid). The third type of repetition is *textural repetition*, which "points away from the repeated material to other musical signs while influencing their quality" (ibid). This is related to Peirce's term 'index', which is a sign which refers to other signs.

## 1.2. The Syntagmatic Roles of Repetition

There are many ways to see the role of repetition in music and art. In this particular study repetition is seen as a structural element, as the idea on which the identification of the segmented units is based on. In musicology the concept of repetition has been separated from the concepts of 'reprise' or 'return'. 'Repetition' means immediate occurrence of the same. 'Reprise' and 'return' are used when the same e.g. unit or formation is repeated but with contrast or delay. Despite this division these meanings are not separated in this study. Repetition is to be understood in the broadest sense meaning any repeated elements of music.

Richard Middleton (1990) discusses on several occasions the many different ways in which repetition is involved with popular music. He mentions Jacques Attali's theory of the political economy of music (repetition and mass production, Middleton 1990:97), Theodor W. Adorno's theory of standardisation (musical form on the level of style, ibid:54-5),

Ruwet's paradigmatic analysis (ibid:183-9), and the views of mass culture theorists, who use repetition as a "weapon" to attack and criticise popular music (as a phenomenon of the mass culture era), and to put it down with comments such as "it's monotonous; it's all the same; it's predictable" (ibid:268); they regard repetition as a negative feature. But Middleton holds on to a broader perspective.

"All music contains repetition - but in different amounts and of an enormous variety of types. We need to see the extended and nature of repetition in a given music as produced by and located at the point where several sets of determinations intersect: the political economy of production; the 'psychic economy' of individuals; the musico-technological media of production and reproduction --; and the weight of the syntactic conventions of music-historical traditions." (ibid)

The task he lays out is enormous. Towards the end of the book, he connects repetition and the results of his study more closely to Freudian psychoanalytical ideas of repetition and pleasure, and the psychic economy of individuals (ibid:287f). This goes beyond the limits the frame laid out in this thesis, and the concentration will be focused on the repetition as a syntactic feature of music. Repetition provides a guideline to distinguish the major units of formation, the syntactic units of music.

"different syntactic processes are mixed up together; and, in mixing, they do not remain wholly themselves; they are articulated together, each mediating the other -- since music is a temporal system, different syntactic processes can operate simultaneously on different structural levels -- Within a particular musical system, or individual song, the existence, role and nature of repetition is a major distinguishing tool for analysis, helping to indicate synchronically existing differences, in relation to other systems and songs, and also helping to mark out historical changes in musical styles. The significance of repetition is closely bound up with its role in the total syntactic structure, that is, first, with the nature of what is repeated, and second, with the relationship of the repetition to other processes that are present. (Middleton 1990:268-9.)

Recently<sup>10</sup> (1995) he has again emphasized the importance of the role of repetition in music and called for semiology to pay attention to the various types of repetition, that is, to the syntactic structure of music.

The concepts of equivalence and difference are very fundamental in music and in connection to repetition. They seem to appear whatever aspect of music is under consideration. Middleton suggests some other concepts in order to discuss equivalence and difference: he speaks of the 'epic', 'narrative' and 'lyric' modes of construction of musical syntax. The narrative mode indicates qualities of difference; it is both goal-directed linear and self-confirming, marked by closure. It is a story that begins, proceeds and ends. Opposite to that is the epic mode, which privileges repetition and varied repetition; it implies repeating the same information. In between the epic and the narrative modes comes the lyric mode; it privileges open/closed, binary structures, but uses the narrative in a holistic, circular way. (Middleton 1990:216-7.)

The relationship of these modes to the real structures of music is described by Middleton (ibid:239) as follows:

"Some examples of 'obvious' connections have already been mentioned: archlike and centripetal melodic shapes and open/close structures (bourgeoisie); cumulative, riff-based melodic structures (tribal societies); variative melodic structures (proletarian cultures); the narrative/lyric/epic triad and its social connotations".

Pure examples of the epic mode are not usually found in popular music, and therefore Middleton takes his example from tribal music. In some types or genres of music, such as rap or techno, as well as in rare individual pieces (e.g. James Brown: Sex machine<sup>11</sup>) examples may be found, in which the structure comes very close to the pure epic/circular. In these examples the vocal melodic line is often completely absent or is structured in an epic way.

In most cases the narrative mode is present in music at some level (usually goal-directed melodic/harmonic process). The lyrical mode, as being a combination of both the epic and the narrative modes, is the most dominant mode in Western tonal music, rather than the purely narrative (nothing is repeated) or epic (unvaried repetition) modes. In the case of

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<sup>10</sup> "Repeat performance" Richard Middleton paper presented at the IASPM conference in Glasgow 1995.

<sup>11</sup> The structure of this song is discussed and analysed in section 3.2.1.



popular music this is supported by the fact, that popular music privileges symmetrical structures and strophic disposition<sup>12</sup>, which are characteristics of the lyrical mode, and that popular pieces always contain repetition on some level.

### 1.3. The plan of the Thesis

The purpose of the present undertaking is to examine and develop the study of musical structures. Richard Middleton (1983, 1986, 1990) has introduced two concepts; *musematic and discursive reptition*. Musematic means repetition of a short, unvaried accompanimental unit, and discursive repetition of a long, varied or contrasted, processual unit. The study focuses on these concepts in order to specify their meanings and to test their use in practice by analysing songs. The examples used are from main stream popular music<sup>13</sup>.

Repetition has not been used as a tool of analysis in this extent in the previous analysis of musical structures. Middleton's concepts seem to open a new way of analysing the musical syntax. I am especially interested in the repetition in popular music, since repetition is such a determining factor in its structural patterns. Concepts of musematic and discursive repetition provide tools to analyse not only the macro structures (form) but also the micro structures of music.

In order to make a complete study of the uses and possibilities of these concepts of repetition the study enters two levels, theoretical and analytical. In order to develop and analyse the definitions of these concepts the main issues and questions are:

- 1) *to study the origins of these concepts,*
- 2) *to study their syntactic functions and characteristics,*
- 3) *to study the differences and limits of these concepts.*

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12 Symmetrical structures: "larger units being constructed by binary combination of smaller units", Strophic disposition: "repetition of small number of well demarcated sections" Björnberg 1994:56

13 My acknowledgements to Alf Björnberg who was my supervisor and tutor during 1995-96 in Gothenburg University, Sweden.

The first chapter included a *presentation of some of the roles of repetition in music* and specially *syntagmatic roles of repetition in music*. In chapter two *musematic and discursive repetition* are discussed by their *definitions, syntactic roles, origins of the concepts and temporal aspects*. In chapter three the *concepts are discussed in terms of hypothetical substitution and symmetry*, and then *applied in the analysis* of six Western contemporary popular pieces. The examples illustrate the ways the repetition types are found in actual pieces of music and what are their characteristics. The last chapter includes a *conclusive discussion* of the study and its implications. It *summarizes the results of the concepts musematic and discursive repetition and problematizes the use of these concepts*. In order to give some *direction, new ideas and suggestions for future research* there is also a presentation of interesting and possibly fruitful concepts of 'formative, focal and textural repetition' by David Lidov.

## 2. MUSEMATIC AND DISCURSIVE REPETITION

Richard Middleton distinguishes two techniques of repetition; musematic and discursive. They are originally presented in his article "Play it again, Sam!: Some notes on the productivity of repetition in popular music" (Popular Music 3, 1983), again in article "In groove, or blowing your mind? The pleasures of musical repetition" (Popular Culture and social relations, 1986) and rewritten in his book "Studying popular music" (1990). In this thesis the latter is mainly quoted since the differences between these articles are rather small.

### 2.1. Musematic and Discursive Repetition Defined by Middleton

Middleton gives a brief definition of 'musematic' in musematic repetition. It's origin is in a concept of 'museme' as it has been used by Philip Tagg (Middleton 1990:189). He does not mention the origin of the term 'discursive'. He gives, however, definitions to these concepts:

"Musematic repetition is, of course, the repetition of musemes; the most immediately familiar examples - riffs- are found in Afro-American musics and in rock. Discursive repetition is the repetition of longer units, at the level of the phrase, the sentence or even the complete section. The effects of the two types are usually very different, largely because the units differ widely in the amount of information and the amount of self-contained 'sense' they contain, and in their degree of involvement with other syntactic processes. Moreover, musematic repetition is far more likely to be prolonged and unvaried, discursive repetition to be mixed in with contrasting units of various types (as in AABA structure of the classic Tin Pan Alley ballad form). The former, therefore, tends towards a one-levelled structural effect, the latter to a hierarchically ordered discourse. Musematically recursive frameworks are often combined with a 'surface' characterized by complex, minutely inflected (--), perhaps improvised variation; while discursive processes tend to result in 'developmental' structures, most strikingly worked out in the European art tradition, in which the underlying form is often a 'one-off' while the 'surface' in many ways relatively crude and impoverished."(Middleton 1990:269)

Discursive repetition can be in different ways hierarchically ordered; immediate (two phrases repeated immediately 'a a'), delayed (two phrases 'a' repeated in sequence with phrase 'b' in the middle = 'a b a') or combined discursive repetition (both combined 'a b b a'). These techniques take place in phrase repetition, sequence, symmetrical parallelism and phrase-structure repetition. (Ibid:270.) According to Middleton a sequence, when repeated in binary tonic-subdominant or tonic-dominant juxtapositions, may be musematic repetition, because its non-process character (Ibid: 276). Further Middleton recognizes that defining precisely term musematic is difficult, and so 'the nature and size of the museme need to be regarded flexibly" (Ibid: 189).

## 2.2. Musematic and Discursive Repetition as Structural Elements

Musematic and discursive repetition are clearly concepts of syntactic structure of music. The following passages will present their position within the syntagmatic categories and present their specific roles in musical structure.

### 2.2.1. The Syntagmatic Categories

Middleton introduces musematic and discursive repetition in the context of syntagmatic categories of 'narrative-lyric' and 'epic-lyric'<sup>14</sup>.

"The variety of ways in which repetition can be used is potentially infinite. We can, however, distinguish certain basic models. Recalling the three 'ideal' syntagmatic categories described earlier - 'narrative', 'epic' and 'lyrical' - one can consider the two types that predominate in nineteenth- and twentieth-century popular music - 'narrative-lyric' and 'epic-lyric' as marked by contrasting modes of repetition, which I shall call *discursive* and *musematic*, respectively." (Middleton 1990:269, author's italics)

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14 Already introduced in section 1.2. p. 5.

As quoted above, most of Western music uses the lyrical mode of construction of musical syntax. The reason why Middleton introduces the new concepts of epic-lyric and narrative-lyric is that in his view only 'lyric' is no longer sufficient to cover even a generalized account of styles within popular music, and some elaboration is needed. Further, these new categories emphasize the specific characters of specific genres of popular music, more precisely the historical changes found between 19th and 20th century styles, which Middleton aims to point out in his study.

Musematic and discursive repetition relate to these modes of syntax as their characteristics. Musematic repetition is a typical characteristic of the epic/circular mode, discursive repetition one of the narrative mode. However, as Middleton says, in practice the epic, lyrical and narrative modes appear in mixtures. Therefore also these repetition types are used simultaneously within a syntactical mode. Most nineteenth-century popular songs display varying proportions of the lyrical and narrative modes, and thus they utilize a narrative-lyric mode; similarly post rock'n'roll songs adhere to an epic-lyric mode<sup>15</sup> (ibid:217).

"It is important to stress again that these two types are historically not *entirely* mutually exclusive; indeed, they interact to form a variety of sub-types - hence the emergence of the 'narrative-lyric' and 'epic-lyric' types". (Ibid:270)

From the point of view of repetition techniques the question is only about the *amount* of musematic or discursive repetition used in a particular music: which one of them has the more dominating role. 19th century popular music is more 'narrative', uses the technique of discursive repetition more, even exclusively, while on the other hand 20th century popular music is more epic, privileges musematic repetition, but also uses discursive repetition. (Middleton 1990:269.)

Both repetition techniques can be used simultaneously in different parameters, and at different syntactic and structural levels (Middleton 1983:237). The number of repetitions is infinite in the epic mode, nil in the narrative, but 'suitable' in the lyrical. Because of the elliptical form repetition is an obvious characteristic of the lyrical mode, but because it also includes narrativity, the number of repetitions cannot be as high as in the epic mode. The length of the repeated units has to be quite short, these are

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15 In the article in *Popular Music 3* this was called "epic-recursive" (1983:238)

units of musematic repetition when used extensively, but on the other hand long enough to facilitate the creation of narrative process through discursive units. It has to be kept in mind that musematic and discursive repetition are only one type of characteristics of narrative, epic, and lyrical, and there are various other factors that have formative functions. Yet our aim here is not to define these syntagmatic categories but to study the possible uses of musematic and discursive repetition in the analysis of music.

### 2.2.2. The Syntactic Roles of Musematic and Discursive Repetition

The main textural layers that can be separated in popular music are melody and accompaniment, the former tendentially using more of discursive and the latter more of musematic repetition. Even though the layers can be generalized like this, the resulting character, continuity and construction of the whole song is not dependent on them as separate layers of texture, but on how they articulate together. The type of repetition used in each parameter outline the overall structure and the form of the piece. Both repetition types can occur simultaneously in different parameters. If the same technique is used at the same time in many parameters, it reinforces the effect of that type of repetition.

“The effects of these two types are usually very different, largely because the units differ widely in *the amount of information* and *the amount of self-contained ‘sense’* they contain, and in their degree of involvement with other syntactic processes.” (Middleton 1990:269, my italics)

‘Information’ and ‘self-contained sense’ do not have the same meaning. Units of discursive repetition can be argued to be more informative because of their linearity and processual character, which is usually realized by the melodic line combined with verbal lyrics. Musematic repetition, on the other hand, is not informative in this sense, because it includes a great number of repetitions of the unit. It is quite obvious that the more repetitions there are, the less attention is paid to what is repeated, and the less information is delivered. This has already been introduced as Moles (1966) ‘law of repetition’ (section 1.1). However, the term ‘information’ can be understood in a different sense. In popular music both musematic and

discursive repetition deliver information but on different levels and through different techniques than that understood in terms of information theory. Musematic repetition is often used in such way, that it informs and prepares the listener for the following. All the changes in musematic repetition, e.g. those carried by accompaniment, are usually markers of change in the structure. In this sense it can be very informative.

The amount of 'self-contained sense' does not depend on the amount of the information the repeated unit contains. The units of musematic repetition may have a lot of self-contained sense, in the sense that their 'meaning' does not depend on other syntactic processes or other kinds of syntactic units. For musematic repetition to exist, it is sufficient enough that the unit of musematic repetition is repeated a (great) number of times. The units of discursive repetition, on the contrary, do not have a lot of self-contained sense. In order to create a discursive structure, a contrast, variation or process is always needed. Units of discursive repetition depend on each other in order to create a discursive syntactic structure.

### **2.3. The Origins of the Terms 'Musematic' and 'Discursive'**

In order to gain deeper knowledge of the concepts one should consider their origins. The term 'musematic' is derived from 'museme', which was first used by Charles Seeger (1960) and later by Philip Tagg (1979). They used it in different ways; Seeger as a unit of music-logic and Tagg as a semantic meaningful unit. Middleton acknowledges both of these uses. The term 'discursive' is obviously derived from 'discourse' as the linguistic discourse analysis. This is not explicitly recognized by Middleton, even though he mentions the term 'discourse' when defining discursive repetition<sup>16</sup>.

#### **2.3.1. From 'Museme' to 'Musematic'**

'Museme' is a concept invented by the musicologist Charles Seeger. For him 'museme' is a unit of music-logic applicable to occidental (Western) music. Philip Tagg adopted the term 'museme' and considered it as a universally applicable concept, a semantic, meaningful unit. For Middleton 'museme' is

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<sup>16</sup> See quote on p.10.

a small, syntactic unit. He directs it explicitly towards popular music. All these different uses of 'museme' vary. It also has to be considered that the definitions given to 'museme' influence 'musematic', and therefore, in order to examine 'musematic', its origin needs to be explained. There are three main problems involved in the examination of museme; 1) What does a museme signify; 2) On what basis it is segmented and 3) On what level the meaning is considered.

The concept of museme was used for the first time as a musical term by Charles Seeger in his article: "On the moods of logic"<sup>17</sup>. In this theory a 'museme' is a unit of music-logic. As the name of the article suggests, he concentrates on the construction of *musical moods*<sup>18</sup> based on logic. Technically, moods are series of possible theoretical patterns which are composed of tone beats<sup>19</sup>, the components of music-logic form segmented by rules of logic. A form of a mood indicates the function of its elements, tone beats. Seeger recognizes three different kinds of musical units of the moods. The smallest possible unit is that of a single component, a single tone beat, a 'protomorphic'. The next logical possibility is the unit of two tone beats, a 'mesomorphic'. Neither of these two can include the requirements that he has posited for the complete mood or unit of music-logical form<sup>20</sup>. The smallest unit that is able to fulfil these possibilities is a 'museme', the unit of three tone beats:

"a unit of three components - three tone beats - can constitute two progressions and meet the requirements for a complete, independent unit of music-logical form or mood in both direction and extension. Both variance and invariance can be exhibited in each of the four simple functions. It can be regarded as

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17 The article "On the Moods of a Music Logic" was first published in the *Journal of the American Musicological society*, XIII (1960), and rewritten "On the Moods of Logic" in *Studies in musicology* 1935-75 (1977)

18 "Mood" here is a parallel concept to linguistic mode, Seeger 1977:77, author's italics

19 A tone beat means a note, which has qualities of pitch and duration. Seeger also calls it "a musical phoneme" (1960:229)

20 These requirements are direction and extension, and their variance/invariance. (Seeger 1977:76). "Variance of direction" allows the progression in one direction or its opposite (rising/falling of pitch, the fastening/slowing down of tempo etc). Only the possible change and its direction is recognised, not its quantity. "Variance of extent" measures quantities or degrees in the change affecting the parameter in question, and their relation to one another in a particular context (state or rate of a factor, for instance dynamics, tempo and timbre, and the change and variation of it).



binary and holomorphic - *a music morpheme or musems.*"<sup>21</sup> (Seeger 1977:76, author's italics)

He defines the size of the museme quite precisely in relation to tone beats; the minimum is three tone beats, but it may also be constructed from four tone beats (a ternary museme), or even five tone beats<sup>22</sup>.

For Seeger 'museme' is a unit of music-logic. He constructs an abstract theory of the logical possibilities of musical thought. The segmentation, or rather the composing of musemes relies on the rule of three tone beats. This is not problematic since the question is about abstract ideas. Technically the theoretical 'musemes' fill their function.

Seeger acknowledges the difference between language and music, and the danger of drawing false conclusions of using the same terminology in both speech-logic and music-logic. The semantic meanings are not the same in language and in music, because in music it is connected to the function of the logic.

"Although a sentence in linguistically a chain of morphemes, logically it is a chain of sememes - a sememe being the meaning of a morpheme. Speech-logic lies entirely in the message of a signal-message complex, not at all in its signal. A music-logic, on the other hand, certainly lies in the signal of a signal-message complex... A music-logical cursus cannot be \*translated\* into another music employing different sounds in the signal without distortion." (Seeger 1960:229-30, quoted in Monelle 1992:75)

Seeger's theory becomes problematic when applied to real music. This problem was confronted by Philip Tagg. He adopted 'museme' from Seeger and used it in the analysis of music for the first time in the analysis of "Kojak - 50 seconds of television music" (1979). His aim was to isolate the units that carry musical meaning, further to analyse and to interpret them. For this purpose he changed the meaning of the concept. Tagg refers to semantics in the definition of 'museme'; he abandons the abstract logical definition, and 'museme' becomes the *basic unit of musical expression*, a meaningful unit. Musemes may be broken down into smaller elements, but

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<sup>21</sup> In Seeger's book there is a misspelling: "musems" is used only in this passage. On all other appearances the word is spelled "museme", which is assumed to be the correct form

<sup>22</sup> It is stated by Seeger that this is rare: "Moods of five or more components (four or more progressions) can usually be considered compounds of two and three progression units, but occasionally can be formulated to advantage as separate units" (1977:76).

not without the destruction of meaning (Ibid:71). By this Tagg means that a "museme is a whole, complete unit carrying musical meaning", and if any of its elements is removed or replaced, the museme is not the same as before<sup>23</sup>.

Tagg draws a clear analogy with linguistics. He places 'museme' on the same level as 'morpheme'<sup>24</sup> and the tone beat on a level with 'phoneme'<sup>25</sup>. Just as a morpheme is composed of a number of phonemes, a museme can be broken down into basic elements, which may be tone beats; Tagg, however, calls them 'musical phonemes' (Tagg 1979:71). The analogy between 'museme' and linguistics is also implied by Seeger, by his placing of the concept of museme on the same level as 'a music morpheme'. A morpheme is defined as a meaningful unit, and therefore after drawing this parallel 'museme' may also be regarded as a meaningful unit.

Tagg wants to create an exact theoretical model for identifying musemes. He tries to perform the segmentation by Seeger's principle, three tone beats. This, however, is supplemented by a modification:

"the progression from silence to musical sound at the start of a musical piece or movement must also be considered as a museme component (so that from silence |Ø| to tone beat 1 |tb1| to tone beat 2 |tb2| may be considered as constituting a museme, - -, according to Seeger, elision of the final component of one museme into the first component of the next one does not constitute the cancellation of the museme status of either of two units of musical expression".  
(Tagg 1979:71)

The segmentation by the rule of three tone beats is not practical and cannot be carried out by Tagg in his analysis. It can be applied to segmentation of the melody, but difficulties occur when the accompaniment is segmented. Tagg, however, seems to have adopted Seeger's rule in a flexible way three tone beats being the *minimal requirement* of the unit of logic i.e. that of meaning<sup>26</sup>. Even this is not flexible enough and exceptions have to be

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23 To test the validity of the segmentation into musemes he uses four methods: 1) *hermeneutic intuition*, 2) *intersubjective comparison*, 3) *interobjective comparison*, 4) *hypothetical substitution*. See chapter 3.

24 "a minimal unit of speech that is recurrent and meaningful" or "a linguistic form that is not further divisible without destruction of meaning and is the minimal meaningful unit" (Pei 1966, quoted in Tagg 1979:71)

25 "minimal units of speech distinguishing one utterance from another" (Tagg 1979:71)

26 The size of a museme was defined by Seeger as three to five tone beats.

made<sup>27</sup>. Applying the segmentation rule in practise leads into the extension of the size of museme.

The meanings of 'musemes' are passed through codes and communication, which are bound to culture. There is a "correspondence between elements of musical and extramusical expression within any one uniform system of musical code" (Tagg 1979:66) and that "the musical elements are contained within a musical language which the same listener is competent at decoding"(ibid:65). Therefore the meanings cannot be universal. Tagg's method could be applied to music of any culture when interpreted from the culture in question. When studying meaning on this level the segmentation rule cannot be determined from outside, nor can it be known beforehand which parameters are pertinent and meaningful. The measurement of destruction of the meaning is difficult and has various degrees<sup>28</sup>.

Middleton acknowledges that 'museme' was used by Seeger, even though he adapted it from Tagg. For Middleton the term 'museme' is an origin to the term 'musematic', which represents a type of repetition (paired with a term discursive repetition). The units of musematic repetition are identified by repetition. Monelle has also remarked that in music segmentation can be carried out on the basis of repetition, at least to some degree, because music often repeats its units regularly, in a syntactic way (Monelle 1992:65-66)<sup>29</sup>. When repetition is used as the basis of segmentation the problems related to the segmentation of 'musemes' disappear. The units are determined by the structure of music, not by the theory.

The aim of the segmentation is different in case of musematic repetition. Middleton does not try to segment logical or meaningful units in the same sense as Seeger and Tagg did. For him 'musematic' is a structural element and the meaning is on a different level. He indicates that denotation in music, the apprehension of musical meaning, is tied up with the structure of music: "there is a direct and immediate semantic correlation

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27 See Tagg 1977:99,100, 1982:34-5.

28 As an example of this see Tagg 1979:76-7, also 1982:51-3, where he uses the technique of hypothetical substitution on the Swedish national anthem "Du gamla du fria", further Middleton 1990:180-2, where the same technique is used to the Beatles song "A day in the life"

29 An illustration of this is the way segmentation is done in Nicholas Ruwet's paradigmatic method of analysis. He has developed explicit segmentation criteria based on repetition, i.e., systematic identification of equivalence and difference.

to musical structures, which can be conceptualised in various ways"(ibid:220), and so *meaning can be analysed by studying the structure* <sup>30</sup>.

What actually is the same in 'museme' and musematic repetition? They both are small units but contradictions on the other hand are many. Tagg was able to segment the melody of 'Kojak' and 'Fernando' into three tone beat musemes to some extent, but problems occurred when application of this rule to accompaniment was attempted. However, Middleton's musematic units are characteristically found precisely in accompaniment structures, and they are identified by recurrence. Also the characteristics of the 'musemes' and the units of musematic repetition are very different. The 'museme' is a segment of, for instance, the melody, and it is dependent on the other melodic musemes. It does not have self-contained sense as the units of musematic repetition have.

The examination of the concept of 'museme' does not actually give much information of the concept of musematic repetition. The term is derived from 'museme', but does not have the same conceptual meaning. If the units of musematic repetition were also to be named 'musemes', it would cause more confusion. The concept of musematic repetition has created meanings of its own and should be considered separate from 'musemes'. It has a different purpose, function, characteristics, nature and it is identified on different basis.

### 2.3.2. The Origin of 'Discursive'

A term discursive has many different meanings. According to the "Oxford English Dictionary" (1989) *discursive* is defined in a following way:

- (1) running hither and thither; passing rapidly irregularly from one locality to another (*rare in lit. sense*);
- (2) passing rapidly or irregularly from one subject to another, rambling, degressive; extending over or dealing with a wide range of subjects;
- (3) passing from premises to conclusions; proceeding by reasoning or argument (often opp. to *intuitive*).

The definitions 1-2 are not probable sources of the term 'discursive' used by Middleton. Irregularity and rapidness are not characteristics of discursive

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<sup>30</sup> Middleton present theories of Frances (1958) and Imberty (1979), Jakobson (1960), Eco (1979) and Stefani (1973) to support the view of structural semantics. It was also stressed by Lidov, chapter 1, p.4.

repetition as described before. The definition number three, however, seems to describe better the meaning of the term 'discursive' we are dealing with.

Discursive repetition is derived from the concept of discourse. It has following meanings:

(1) Onward course; process or succession of time, events, actions etc. (=course). (2) 'The act of the understanding by which it passes from premises to consequences'. (3) Communication of thought by speech (a talk, a conversation; a common talk, report, rumour). (4) Narration, a narrative, tale, account. (5) A spoken or written treatment of a subject in which it is handled or discussed at length (a dissertation, treatise, homily, sermon, or the like). - Now the prevailing sense. (6) Familiar intercourse, familiarity with subject, conversancy. (7) Comb. (=osana eri yhdyssanoja). (8) Special comb.: *discourse analysis*, linguistics, method of analysing the structure of texts or utterances longer than one sentence, taking into account both their linguistic content and their sociolinguistic context; analysis performed using this method. (Ibid. My italics)

Middleton's use of the term 'discursive' seems to include all these explanations, especially from 1-4, and 8. It is obvious that the source of the term 'discursive' is 'discourse'.

Particularly, the last definition of the term 'discourse' is interesting. 'Discourse' as the origin of the term 'discursive' connects the discussion to linguistics, as in case of 'musemes' and 'musematic'. Emile Benveniste describes linguistic analysis in his book "Problems in general linguistics" (1966). The first condition for any linguistic unit to exist is that it must be part of a higher unit. A phoneme is a part of a sign (morpheme) here regarded extensively as a word. 'Word' he describes as intermediary, because it can be broken down to the lower level into phonemes, but also "as a unit of meaning and together with other units of meaning; it enters into a unit of the level above" (Benveniste 1966:104). This level is a sentence.

"The sentence, - -, is the very life of human speech in action. -- [W]ith the sentence we leave the domain of language as a system of signs and enter into another universe, that of language as an instrument of communication, whose expression is discourse. --. The sentence belongs to discourse. It is even by discourse that it can be defined; *the sentence is the unit of discourse*" (Ibid:110, my italics)

A discourse includes a number of sentences<sup>31</sup>. Benveniste expanded later his theory by making a distinction between 'semiotics' and 'semantics'. By the former he means that the sign is the unit of meaning. In semantics the unit of meaning is a sentence.

Benveniste considered 'meaning' as separate from 'reference'. For him the meaning is implicitly inherited in the linguistic system. This equals to primary signification. The reference is made outside, to the world of objects. This is the secondary signification. Both meanings can be covered only in a level of sentence, i.e. in discourse, which makes its role in the analysis so significant.

Teun A. van Dijk (1977:2) has emphasized the importance of the concept of 'discourse' in the analysis of language. He wants strictly separate compound sentences from sequences of sentences:

"utterances should be reconstructed in terms of a larger unit, viz that of TEXT. This term will here be used to denote the abstract theoretical construct underlying what is usually called a discourse.-- [D]iscourse is -- taken as a sequence, *ie* as a linearly ordered *n*-tuple of sentences." (Ibid:3,5)

A sentence is not large enough unit to be considered as the highest unit of analysis and the meaning can not be analysed based on compound sentence, because

"meaning of sentences may depend on the meaning of other sentences of the same utterance although not always in the same way as the meaning of clauses in compound or complex sentences." (Ibid:3)

To use Benveniste's definition of reference this could be interpreted that the reference is not made solely outside to the world, but also to the other sentences, within the discourse (sequence of sentences).

How does the discourse analysis relate to the understanding of discursive repetition? Middleton defined that discursive repetition is found at the level of phrase, *sentence*, or even complete section, including variety of materials, different length of units and form<sup>32</sup>. How can a sentence be related to music? Structurally it could be the level on which smaller unit create a relationship or organize a higher level unit. In terms of harmony it could be a completed sequence of chords, a vamp. On the basis of the

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31 Benveniste is quoted by Ricoeur, 1978:67f.

32 See section 3.1.2.

definition of the term 'discourse' in discourse analysis, discursive repetition includes also the relationships between the units of discursive repetition ('sentences'). This level may appear problematic since such large structures of music are difficult to define by these terms.

Based on these views of the origins of 'musemes' and 'discourse' it seems as Middleton had an idea borrowed from linguistics when he paired the terms 'musematic' and 'discursive' together. Musematic seems to carry the connection to the morpheme. In discourse analysis it is used as the unit of meaning but, which combines to a larger unit of meaning, to a sentence. A discourse, of which the term 'discursive' is derived from, is composed of sentences. With this pair of concepts Middleton attempts to cover more tightly the study of structure to that of meaning, as it is done in linguistic analysis. A study of 'musemes' would be a study of only morphemes, which is not adequate in analysis of meaning.

## 2.6. The Temporal Aspects of Musematic and Discursive Repetition

As may be concluded from the discussion above, the effects of musematic and discursive repetition differ much. This is also the case with respect to their regarding temporal effects. Musematic repetition marks time, makes the time circulate by repeating the same, while discursive repetition produces a sense of forwardness and processuality, it composes time (Middleton 1990:272, 275). These differences can be discussed in terms of different *temporalities*.

Jonathan Kramer discusses temporalities in a book "The Time of music" (1988). His basic concepts are *linearity* and *nonlinearity*, and these serve as the basic concepts in his analyses of music. Different temporalities create different kinds of effects and meanings in music.

"The meanings of music are temporal owing to music's unique ability to create different kinds of time, often simultaneously, which resonate with the nonlinearity ( and linearity) of our inner thought process as well as with the linearity ( and nonlinearity) of our eternal lives in society. Through time, music's meanings become both internal (syntactical) and external (symbolic)." (Ibid:15)

Kramer describes *linearity* as “the determination of some characteristic(s) of music in accordance with implications that arise from earlier events of the piece” (ibid:20). It is a progression in time, in which the things that have already occurred determine the things that are yet to come. The movement of linearity never stops. Opposite to this is *nonlinearity*, described as “the determination of some characteristic(s) of music in accordance with implications that arise from principles or tendencies governing an entire piece or section” (ibid). Two of its main aspects are textural consistency and durational proportions. In order to explain linearity and nonlinearity further, Kramer presents a table of dichotomies which can be associated with the concepts:

<u>Linearity</u>	<u>Nonlinearity</u>
teleological listening	cumulative listening
horizontal	vertical
motion	stasis
change	persistence
progression	consistence
becoming	being
left brain	right brain
temporal	atemporal <sup>33</sup>

TABLE 1. Linearity and nonlinearity (Kramer 1988:63)

Linearity is seen as a characteristic of tonal (classical) music and nonlinearity as one of atonal music. Popular music cannot be directly attributed to either of them: depending on the popular style concerned, characteristics from both columns in the table may be suitable to describe it. Few pieces of music are consistently characterised by either linearity or nonlinearity; they regularly co-exist on different hierarchical levels in music.

Kramer proposes five temporalities which are created through interaction between linearity and nonlinearity: directed linear time, nondirected linear time, multiply-directed linear time, moment time and vertical time. Of these five, the most interesting ones in the present context are the concepts of *directed linearity* and *nondirected linearity*. The former

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33 For this last pair of terms Kramer gives further explanation: "When a certain aspects of a piece exist for their own sake, not because of some larger progression, they are atemporal. Their presence in the composition is more important than their temporal position in it. Their impact is not dependent on their position along a time continuum, but they nonetheless contribute to overall temporal coherence." Kramer 1988:63



refers to a goal-oriented progression, while in the latter the goal is missing but the continuity remains. Allan Moore (1992) has summarized the meanings of these concepts clearly in relation to popular music. Moore starts from Kramer's

“idea of *'directed linearity'*, likening it to the experience of rail travel: such travel is experienced as directed motion from an initial point, along a clear path, to a final point. This analogy is used to explore the role of 'functional harmony' in much pre-twentieth-century Western tonal music,--. Kramer then introduces the idea of *'non-directed linearity'*. Here, the sense of motion remains, but the goal is equivocal. This seems to me to describe quite well the time sense of a great deal of conventional rock, wherein a sense of motion is normally ensured by three features: melody, harmony and rhythm. The singing voice approximates to a line rather than a series of discrete sounds, by analogy with spoken phrases. Harmonic successions give a sense of motion from one harmony to the next, although the motion tends only to be very local, arriving back at the original harmony for a repeat of the succession.” (Moore 1992:87, my italics)

Moore points out how post rock'n'roll music differs from traditional Western tonal music in regard to linearity. In Western tonal music the directed linearity is accomplished by both harmonical and melodic tonal processes, but in popular music it is the melodic process which usually is more directional than the harmony. The sense of motion remains in the harmony, but it may vary; it becomes nondirectional. A vamp, a fully completed harmonic cycle, creates a stronger sense of progression than just an alternation of two chords<sup>34</sup>.

Musematic and discursive repetition are not exact parallels to Kramer's concepts nonlinearity and linearity, but the kinds of temporality that can be created by these types of repetition can be described in terms of directed and nondirected linearity. The following discussion is carried out in terms of musematic and discursive repetition and their temporal effects in contemporary Western pop/rock/dance music, of which the objects of musical analysis, presented in chapter 4, are taken.

The effect of pure musematic repetition is nondirectional. Unvaried, continuous repetition has no goal, nor is it progressive. Yet it is in motion, circulating and creating 'present' time sense. In the quote above Moore connects nondirectionality to conventional rock, which typically uses

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<sup>34</sup> The difference between "vamp" and "two chord alternation" is demonstrated in section 3.1.

musematic repetition of small rhythmic and melodic units, as well as short harmonic patterns<sup>35</sup>, which create a sense of motion. The linearity which it contains, and tonal music is linear, is not clearly goal directed, or better to say, the goal is not clear. We perceive a strong sense of continuity and movement, but they are not heading towards a specific goal; the available choices of the routes and consequences are many. If there is direction involved, it is a very short term phenomenon and the goal is never set far away from the starting point, nor is it tonic directed. This is the kind of experience resulting from structures constructed of musematic units.

A textural layer of directed linearity, for instance, a melodic line supported by a harmonic progression, which has a starting point at the beginning of and a finishing point at the end of the piece, is not a characteristic of mainstream contemporary popular music. Even though, there are processes which can be described in terms of directed linearity, but these processes are created by different techniques and structural factors, described in terms of discursive repetition, which are further discussed in the next section.

The best examples of directional processes are those provided by functional harmony, as pointed out by Moore. A typical functional harmonic progression starts from tonic chord, takes a route through some other chords, and then possibly returns to I again (often through V). It moves from one point to another having a goal at the end of the progression; tonal motion is always goal-directed (Kramer 1988:25). There are also other ways of creating directional linearity. As mentioned earlier, in popular music directional processes extending throughout the whole piece occur rarely. The directionality is created by techniques of discursive repetition, such as alternation of contrasting units (usually melodic and harmonical) within and between the sections (verse/chorus), which are marked by many structural factors<sup>36</sup>.

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35 Musematic and discursive repetition are discussed in Moore 1993:35-6.

36 Philip Tagg has discussed temporalities from a different point of view in his article: "Understanding musical 'time sense' - concepts, sketches and consequences" (1984), also in Tagg "Kojak" (1979:184-6)

### 3. MUSICAL EXAMPLES

The chapter 3 included a theoretical overview of the role of repetition, particularly musematic and discursive repetition, in music. It is possible to take the concepts so far only in theoretical terms. The following chapter takes musematic and discursive repetition into practical level by means of hypothetical substitution and analysis of two songs. The analysis of these songs will test the limits and boundaries of these terms.

#### 3.1. Hypothetical Substitution - Exploring the Boundaries between Musematic and Discursive Repetition

Philip Tagg used four techniques in order to test the validity and change of the musemes. They are: 1)*hermeneutic intuition*: the analyst's subjective introspective process on grounds of his/hers own experiences; 2)*intersubjective comparison*: comparing the reactions of many individuals to the same piece of music; 3)*interobjective comparison*: comparing the correspondence and communication of similar musical and extramusical codes (musemes or PMCs or SMCs) between different pieces of music; and 4)*hypothetical substitution*: testing the changes of musical meaning resulting from the replacement of musical elements with different elements, in order to verify or falsify hypotheses on this meaning (ibid:73-76). The latter is especially interesting in relation to musematic and discursive repetition. Even though musematic repetition is distant from 'musemes' hypothetical substitution appears to be a useful tool also for testing the borderlines of musematic and discursive repetition. When the identification of these repetition types is no longer unambiguous they need to be considered and examined carefully. Hypothetical substitution is a good technique for this purpose. Yet these limit cases, though they are complex, are the ones that truly help to understand the nature and the role of the repetition types.

One of the most interesting problems is the number of repetitions involved in each type of repetition. Musematic repetition usually consists of a greater number of repetitions of small units in micro levels, when discursive longer units are not depended on the number of repetitions,

even though it is possible that they are repeated (e.g. sections/choruses may be repeated many times). There are cases where these generalisations need some extension. Another problem concerns the identification, which has to be made considering the previous and following units. None of the elements in question can be taken out of the whole structural context. Interesting are also the cases when the structural levels of musematic and discursive repetition intersect, or even cross the levels.

A useful concept in this discussion is *symmetry*. We do have pre-existing expectations of the patterns of structure in popular music. They are due to our experience of the possible modes of construction of this type of music. Such conventionalisations or generalisations can be found on the level of song group, style, culture, or musical system. They help us to construct some kind of symmetrical frame structure in case of each song. The different types of repetition can be considered within these frames. This can be illustrated by taking a hypothetical example.

A piece of music which has a symmetrical structure. The frame of this structure is built on two bar-units, which group into four and eight bars (2+2+2+2). The song begins with a unit  $a$  ( $= 2$ ). This melodic unit  $a$  is repeated unvaried  $\Rightarrow a a$ . In popular music this is a common combination, whatever the length of the units is. The choices of what kind of unit can follow are either a repeated  $a$  or new material  $b$ . If  $b$  occurs  $\Rightarrow a a b$ , no attention is paid, because the result is a typical discursive structure. If the choice is an unvaried  $a \Rightarrow a a a$ , the listener is alerted to pay attention to what follows. The expectation of a different unit was not fulfilled. The next unit is crucial. The assumption is, that the unit  $a$  has been repeated three times  $\Rightarrow a a a$ . Again, it can be followed by an  $a$  or an  $b$ . At this point there is a big difference whether the previous unit was repeated unvaried or with variation. If all three units  $a$  have been repeated unvaried, especially the last one, there is good reason to believe, that the following unit is another  $a$ . If there has been variation in the unit  $a$  ( $a'$ ), possibly implicating tonal change, it gives a reason to expect new material  $b \Rightarrow a a a' b$ . Even if there is no variation in the unit  $a$ , it is possible that a unit  $b$  follows. At this situation contrast is expected to occur.

Another assumption is that the three unvaried repeated units  $a$  are followed by another  $a$  resulting in the structure of  $\Rightarrow a a a a$ . In this case no contrast or variation is used, and the effect of this is circular. The repetition has crossed the limit and is obviously already 'too much' to be categorised as discursive repetition; the same unit has been repeated four times, unvaried,

throughout the section. Structure is clearly built on musematic repetition. This analysed section should now be related to following material. If the next set of four units begins with an unit *a* again, the expectation is, that the whole *a a a a* will be repeated again (creating a macro structure A A). If something different follows, there is a reason to expect a contrasting section to follow (A B).

### 3.1.1. Elvis Presley: Love Me Tender

In practice this can be illustrated first by a song that is assumed to be familiar to most readers; Elvis Presley's evergreen "Love me tender". This song is originally an old Irish folksong "Aura Lee", which was introduced to the public by Presley. This is a typical ballad form even though usually it is performed in a 32 bar structure; in this case the length is the half of it, 16 bars.

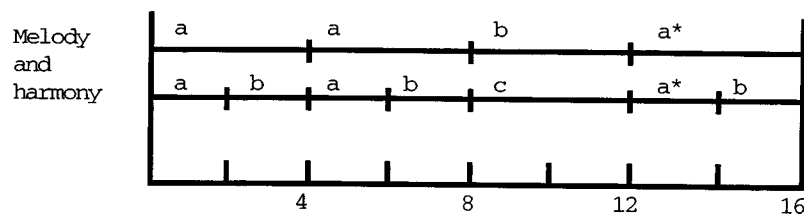


FIGURE 1. Elvis Presley: Love me tender (1956)

The four bar phrases *a* can be divided into smaller units which may help the identification of the structure. Yet they are not recognized as own level of form through listening experience.

The symmetrical frame works in groups of four bars. The song begins with a four bar melodic and harmonic (I/II/V/I) phrase *a*, which is repeated unvaried with different lyrics (4+4) *a a*. This is followed by a new melodic four bar phrase, and the last phrase is a variation of the first phrase => *a a b a'*.

1 Love me ten - der, love me sweet, ne - ver let me go.

5 You have made my life com - plete, and I love you so.

9 Love me ten - der, love me true, all my dreams ful - fill.

13 For, my dar - ling, I love you, and I al - ways will.

EXAMPLE 1. Elvis Presley: Love me tender

As the song is so well known within its tradition, its structure is also recognized. One knows that after the first phrase is repeated, a new phrase is introduced. What happens if this is changed? In the next example the structure of the song is altered, so that the phrase *b* which is the contrasting section, is replaced by another melodic *a*.

1 Love me ten - der, love me sweet, ne - ver let me go.

5 You have made my life com - plete, and I love you so.

9 Love me ten - der, love me true, all my dreams ful - fill.

13 For, my dar - ling, I love you, and I al - ways will.

EXAMPLE 2. Substituted version of "Love me tender"

The effect is crucially different. The old discursive contrasting, directional structure is now just simply a repetition of unvaried 4 + 4 + 4 + 4 bars, each four bars being melodically identical to one another. The discursiveness, the goal or aim of where the structure previously was heading is absent. The song has become just a circular 16-bar carousel, which could be repeated 'forever'.

In this example the repetition occurs in the level of phrase, which is usually the level for discursive processes. Still there is nor much 'discursiveness' here. This structure is identified as musematic repetition, as the repeated unit is not varied or contrasted by another unit or material. The number of repetition is crucial, because the listener has to be convinced, that no contrast or variation follows on this level. These four times of repetition of this phrase is enough to create musematic circulating effect. From this example one can draw a conclusion that some of the characteristics of musematic repetition are more elementary than others. The length of the unit does not seem to be crucial after all, and 'musematic' can be found in many levels.

### 3.1.2. John Lennon: Imagine

The same kind of hypothetical substitution can be done with a different song. The second example is John Lennon's "Imagine". The form of the song is a typical popular music form *A A B A B*. As can be seen from the figure the verse *A* and the chorus *B* consist small size and number of different elements.

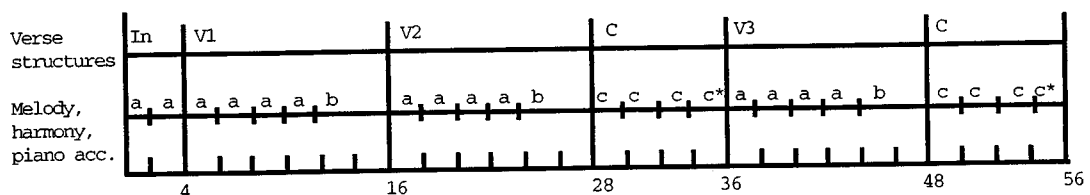


FIGURE 2. John Lennon: Imagine

In previous example "Love me tender" the repeated four-bar structure featured a full cadential harmonic pattern I/II/V/I. The case is quite different when dealing with a two-bar structure, like in "Imagine", wherein the harmonic structure is constructed from the binary switching of two chords, not a full harmonic cycle.

1 C Cmaj7 F C Cmaj7 F  
Im-ag-ine there's no heav - en it's ea - sy if you try\_

5 C Cmaj7 F C Cmaj7 F  
no hell\_ be - low\_ us A-bove us on-ly sky\_

9 F Am/E Dm7 F/C G C/G G7  
Im - ag - ine all the peo - ple liv-ing for to-day\_ ah\_

EXAMPLE 3. John Lennon: Imagine (1971)

The following substitutions will be made to the first 12 bars of the song, which represents the section *A*. As can be seen in Example 3, the two-bar harmonic and melodic unit is built on the alternation of two chords I(-<sup>7</sup>)/IV. This is repeated four times. After this follows a four-bar harmonic progression IV-VI/II<sup>7</sup>-IV/V-I/V<sup>7</sup>. An interesting substitution here would be to alter the number of the repetitions of the two-bar structure and then study the possible effects of the changed structure. The altered parameters are melody and harmony.

In the first substituted case (Example 4) the two bar chord progression is repeated six times instead of the original four. This is presented without text because there are additional bars in the structure.



The musical score is written in treble clef with a common time signature (C). It consists of four staves of music. The first staff (measures 1-4) has chords C, Cmaj7, F, C, Cmaj7, F. The second staff (measures 5-8) has chords C, Cmaj7, F, C, Cmaj7, F. The third staff (measures 9-12) has chords C, Cmaj7, F, C, Cmaj7, F. The fourth staff (measures 13-16) has chords F, Am/E, Dm7, F/C, G, C/G, G7.

EXAMPLE 4. First substituted version of John Lennon: Imagine (1971)

As can be noticed by singing or playing the song, adding these two two-bar units before the final four-bar progression does not disturb the structure very much. The effect is weak, even though the original frame structure is changed. This change is noticed, due to the fact that the song is familiar to the listener, because the switching to the four-bar progression is expected already after the first eight bars. Since the expected change does not take place there, after four bars, the next place where the change could be expected would be after the four additional bars (altogether 12 bars from the beginning). If it does take place there, the listener's expectation is satisfied.

Until now both the two-bar structures have been dividable by four; the original song structure is constructed of  $8 + 4$  bars, and the first altered version of  $12 + 4$  bars. A greater effect can be achieved by changing the structure so that it is no longer possible to divide it by four. In the next example the structure is constructed of three from these two-bar units ( $2+2+2 = 6$  bars) which are followed by the original four bars.

1 C Cmaj7 F C Cmaj7 F  
Im-ag-ine there's no heav - en it's ea - sy if you try\_

5 C Cmaj7 F F Am/E Dm7 F/C  
no hell\_ be - low\_ us Im- ag- ine all the peo - ple

9 G C/G G7  
liv-ing for to-day\_ ah\_

EXAMPLE 5. Second substituted version of John Lennon: Imagine (1971)

In this case the ending four bars come quite unexpectedly after the six bars. The symmetry is set for a four bar structure, even though the first unit four bars long does not appear until the end of the section. The effect is stronger than in the first altered version, but still not very strong.

This phenomenon is described by Alf Björnberg (1994) in terms of *symmetry* as follows:

“Symmetrical binary construction being the implicit norm of popular music, asymmetrical structures will be perceived precisely as deviations from a norm, that is, occurrences of asymmetry are perceptually marked as 'events'. In general, the experiential effect of a deviation from symmetry is inversely related to its size; deviations 'below bar-level' not only disturb period and phrase structure but also regular metre” (Björnberg 1994:59)

In each piece the symmetry is a 'rule' which is followed by bar-constructions and by metre. Allan Moore (1993) discusses a hypermetre of the rhythmic organization of music. This is also a kind of implicit existing norm or assumption within popular music:

“Metre is organized hierarchically. Just as groups of beats (normally four) are grouped to yield metre, groups of bars (normally four) are grouped yield hypermetre.” (Ibid 1993:39).

If these norms of the structural symmetry are broken, as was done in the case above (Ex.5), is the attention of the listener immediately attracted.

The first two altered versions of "Imagine" have been testing the symmetry in discursive structures. Finally, in this last hypothetical substitution performed the structure is changed so that it is constituted only by the repetition of the same melodic two-bar unit.

The musical score consists of three lines of music in treble clef, 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are: "Im-ag-ine there's no heav - en it's ea - sy if you try\_ no hell\_ be - low\_ us A-bove us on-ly sky\_ Im-ag - ine all the peo - ple liv-ing for to - day\_". The chord symbols are C, Cmaj7, and F. The first line starts at measure 1, the second at measure 5, and the third at measure 9. Each line shows a two-bar melodic unit repeated.

EXAMPLE 6. Third substituted version of John Lennon: Imagine (1971)

The effect is of the same kind as in "Love me tender" (Example 1), even though here it is, if possible, even more 'musematic', since the repeated unit is shorter and the number of repetitions is doubled. This kind of cycle is not contrasted with other units and not supported by a harmonic goal-directed progression; it is repeated for its 'own sake'.

Another possible case, even though there is no musical example of it here, should be discussed. This involves a large structure repetition, it could be a phrase group, or even a whole song. Assumption is that there is a melodic discursive phrase structure  $a a b$  where one phrase equals 4 bars (=12 bars). This constitutes the section A. The section A is repeated unvaried 12 times, after which the song is over. How can these structures be defined in terms of these repetition types? The structure  $a a b$  is clearly discursive repetition, but the repetition of A, which is formulated of  $a a b$ , is more difficult to define. Is it possible that the discursive phrase structure forms a

structure of musematic repetition on a larger level? As stated before it has to be remembered, that the length of the repeated units may not be so crucial factor. It is certain that there is a need to identify the repetition at the level of large structures as musematic repetition. Repetition of an unvaried unit, whatever its length, creates a circulating effect when repeated a number of times. The shorter the unit, the stronger the effect. Musematic repetition in large levels, macro structures may be difficult to find in contemporary popular music, but there are examples found in many present styles and genres of marginal music, i.e. in techno and hip hop styles. Therefore extending these concepts into their limits is necessary and useful.

The previous examples are quite easy to present and judge because only melody and harmony are discussed, but the more parameters there are to be considered, the more difficult it can be to analyse these repetition types. On the other hand if all the parameters support the same type of repetition, it can be marked even clearer. Judging from the two experiments of hypothetical substitution performed in this chapter it is my impression that the effects of repeated four- and two-bar structures are quite different. A four-bar unit that contains a harmonic vamp is a lot more sensitive to changes than a two-bar unit, in which two chords alternate. In both examples the way these units are used and combined with other units, i.e. the way the whole structure is constructed, determines the consequences and effects. The sense of direction is stronger in a four-bar unit which features a full vamp, in which the harmony is tonic directed. This type of unit is usually used to built larger discursive structures where it is combined with other units of the same length. The effect of a repeated two-bar unit with a I-IV harmonic switch is nondirected. A 'musematic', circular effect can be created already by a quite small number of repetitions.

Disregarding the length of the units used the perception of popular music structures is affected by the presence of expectations of symmetry. Antoine Hennion describes popular music form in his article "The production of success; an anti-musicology of the pop-song" (1983). The sense of symmetry is created during the first bars of the song, in the introduction.

"In a few bars, this serves both as a signal to the listener, enabling him to recognise the song immediately, and as a foretaste, making him want to listen to the rest. The 'intro' reveals enough to suggest the mood: sound, rhythm, type, etc. -- . The object is to use fragments which characterise the rest of the song: a

few bars of the tune, a chord, a mixture of timbres, a rhythmic pattern”  
(Hennion 1983:165)

Symmetrical structures are familiar to the listener and they make the listening process easier. The symmetry gives us the frame within the actual music is constructed. It also functions as a determining factor of the length of the repeated units, though not the type of repetition used.

These examples of hypothetical substitution and the discussion in terms of symmetry helps us to place the limits of musematic and discursive repetition. The identification of the repetition types can not take place without taking the song structure, symmetry and the level of analysis into consideration.

### **3.2. About Analysis**

Six songs have been chosen to be analysed in order to gain more insight to musematic and discursive repetition, the benefits as well as the problems concerning an analysis based on repetition types. They represent various amounts of musematic and discursive repetition, from purely musematic “Sex machine” to different mixtures of the uses of both repetition types. The analysis is based on the recorded performances. A significant role is played by the analyst's pertinence criteria, i.e. my observations, conclusions and decisions as to which are the pertinent parameters and events in the music. The emphasis is not laid on the analysis itself, but on what can be gained by analysing these songs and thus what can be said about the use, nature and limits of musematic and discursive repetition.

The purpose of these analysis is to present how musematic and discursive repetition work in practice, in which parameters they operate, and what can be said about their role compared to the theoretical discussion in chapter 2. These examples can be said to be quite typical examples of the use of these repetition types in contemporary popular music. Interesting is not only which type of repetition is used and where, but how it is used, what are the factors used to create each type.

### 3.2.1. James Brown: Sex Machine

To show how musematic repetition can work in a real piece of music, we proceed with the analysis of the song "Sex machine" by James Brown. This is an example of African-American funk-music; it typically uses a great deal of musematic repetition in all parameters, almost in an extreme way. Therefore it serves the purpose of examining musematic repetition very well.

The song is built on a strong musematic effect. Guitar and bass use only two kinds of riffs throughout the whole song, one is repeated unvaried through section *A*, and the other through section *B*. This is possible because of the stable tonal structure of the piece; in the whole section *A* there is no harmonic progression at all, it is based on a prolonged I chord, while the bridge remains on the V chord. Rhythmic riffs are repeated in the same way throughout the piece; they don't have a tonal function.

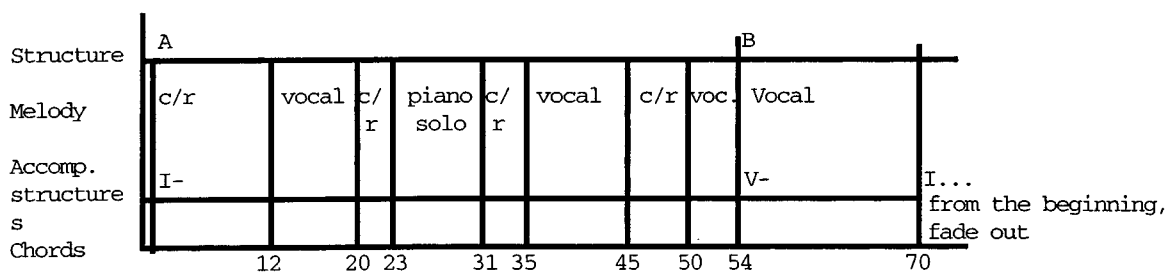


Figure 3. James Brown: "Sex machine" (1966)

The form of the song is not symmetrical as in most popular songs, but it has only two sections; *A* (bars 1-54), which is the verse, and *B* (bars 55-75, fade out), which Brown calls a bridge. The piece is not built on open/closed structures, as the majority of popular songs, but on a closed/open structure (the first section *A* ends on a I chord = closed / the second section *B* ends on a V chord = open) (Moore 1993:53). The whole piece is like an endless cycle; it gives an impression that it could go on forever repeating itself. Even though in the end it does not return to the I chord, it can be heard that the song starts again from the beginning. First James Brown shouts: "do you want to hear like I did on the top?", referring to the beginning, and that is followed by the intro, the first bar of the song just before it is faded out. There is no sense of symmetry created by the accompaniment due to the lack

of contrasting or varying elements. The only units can be identified by the phrases repeated in the lyrics. Even they are not repeated symmetrically, sometimes they are dividable by even numbers, some times not.

The whole section *A* is built on a steady guitar and bass riff repeated in a nearly hypnotic manner.

guitar

bass

EXAMPLE 7. Guitar and bass riffs from section *A*, "Sex machine" by James Brown

The riff like units of musematic repetition are repeated above a steady backbeat. On the top of this accompaniment comes the vocal line. It is also very musematic in character, characterised by a call/response structure (Get up / get on up). When there is no discursive repetition, it is difficult to know when the change occurs. It can be sensed by symmetry, which is easier to perceive in the *B* section than in the *A* section.

"Sex machine" is a good example of the use of musematic repetition. It is also an extreme example: songs are rarely built solely on musematic repetition. This is a question of stylistic character, too. Popular music is based on riffs to a variable degree:

" the riffs can be more or less the whole piece, -- . They can be continuous, or worked into an antiphonal call-and-response -- pattern. --. They can be melodically memorable, or chiefly rhythmic in impact (a method leading to funk and disco styles). Their effect, to a greater or lesser extent, is always to level out the temporal flow, to challenge any 'narrative' functionality attaching to chord patterns and verse sequences, and to 'open up' the syntactic field for rhythmic elements -- to dominate --. The shorter and more insistently repeated the riffs, the more powerful these effects." (Middleton 1990:280-1)

Yet riffs can function in different ways. Some of them have a more specific character than others, and they work at the foreground, while some of them

can be characterised as being just in the background, creating the 'motorial flow', as it is named by Björnberg (1994:58). This accompanimental 'motorial continuum' is "effected by drums, bass and chordal instruments" (ibid). As long as riffs are part of motorial flow, they don't attract specific attention, on the contrary; they are expected to function that way. In case of "Sex machine" this idea is taken to an extreme. The accompaniment is a flow on top of which the lyrics are sung.

### 3.2.2. Procol Harum: Whiter Shade of Pale

An example of the use of sequence in popular music can be found in the song "Whiter shade of pale" (1967) by Procol Harum. In this song the sequence is used within the context of an imitation or pastiche of another style, Baroque; the harmonic progression is taken from cantata by J.S.Bach. Still there is no contradiction, sequences are used also in popular music. In this particular case the sequence is used to built the whole basic harmonic structure of the song. Indeed the sequential technique is the key to the whole structure; both verse and chorus are built on it. There is no other harmonic pattern in the song.

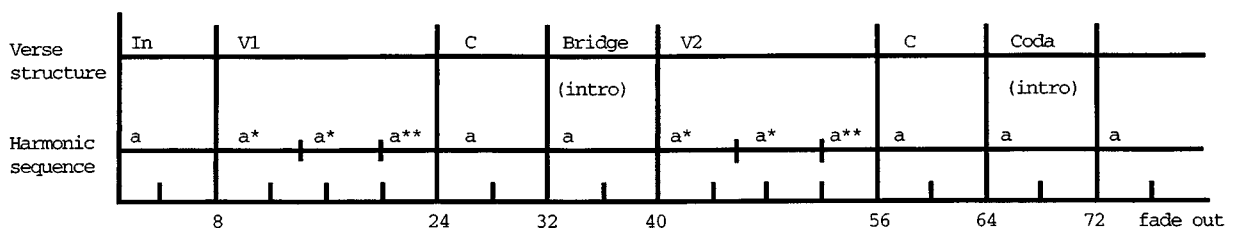


FIGURE 4. Procol Harum: Whiter shade of pale (1967)

From this illustration the harmonic patterns can easily be seen. The sequence is eight bars long but during the verse it is shortened first into 6 bar version and in the end 4 bar version.



The musical score consists of three systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system (measures 1-3) has chords C, C/B, C/A, C/G, F, and F/E. The second system (measures 4-6) has chords Dm, Dm/C, G, G/F, Em, and G7. The third system (measures 7-9) has chords C, F, G, F, and G7. The melody in the treble staff is primarily eighth-note based, while the bass staff provides a steady accompaniment.

EXAMPLE 8. The harmonic sequence of the "Whiter shade of pale"

Even though a sequence is a characteristic of discursive repetition the case here is problematic. The discursive structure can be identified within a verse, section, since there the harmonic progression is strong. The melody and the whole accompaniment section supports the harmonical progression and there are no repeated short units which could be identified as units of musematic repetition. Yet there is no contrast or variation at all between the sections, since both, verse *A* and chorus *B* are based on the same harmonic material. The chorus *B* can be identified only because of the melodic line is different and the same lyrics are repeated in every chorus. Also that is the only section where the sequence is fully carried out. On the verse it is shorter and shortens towards the coming chorus.

Middleton stated that a repeated sequence can be characterised as musematic-like repetition, quasi-musematic. This is in the cases of sequences in tonic-subdominant (I-IV) or tonic-dominant (I-V) juxtapositions, as binary switching between these positions. This kind of sequential technique is still occasionally found, for instance, in blues, where the beginning of the harmonic cycle (I-IV-I) provides a place for a unit of musematic repetition to be repeated in tonic-subdominant position. Usually it is a melodic motif or phrase which is repeated in these tonal positions,

like in “Mustang Sally” by Wilson Pickett<sup>37</sup>. In these cases the sequence does not create a progressive, goal-directed effect. (Middleton 1990:276). In case of “Whiter shade of pale” the sequence is not repeated in either of the mentioned positions and yet it becomes musematic like because the sequence is the only repeated material within the song. There is a contradiction in the definition and use of the concept of discursive repetition.

### 3.2.3. Midnight Oil: Beds Are Burning

The song “Beds are burning” is by Midnight Oil, and recorded in 1987. It can be described as a mainstream rock-pop style song. Popular songs often feature symmetrical constructions in which well-demarcated sections are combined in binary structures. Formally, this piece is built on the alternation of verse and chorus: V1, C1, V2, C2, C3 (or  $A B A B' B'$ ), which in themselves are built on binary material, as can be seen in figure 4.

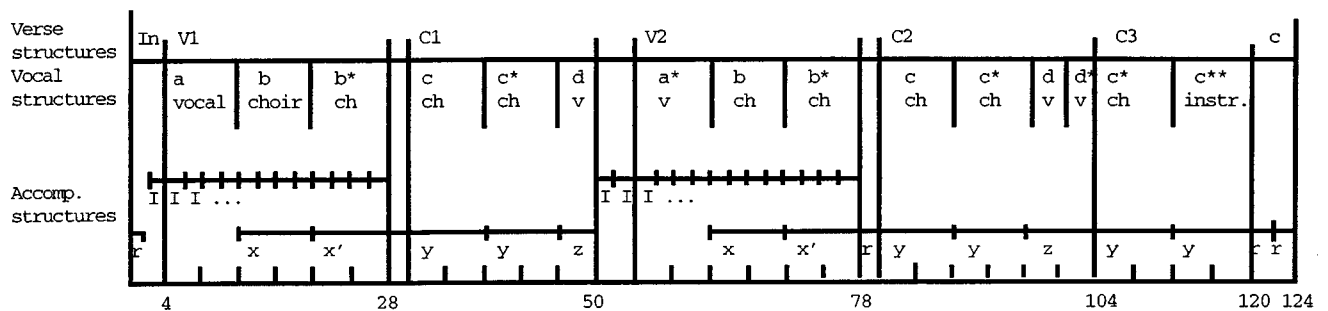


FIGURE 5. Midnight Oil: Beds are burning (1987)

The accompaniment is built on units of musematic repetition and it functions as a motorial, rhythmic background. In the verse bass and drums repeat a short 2-bar rhythmic and melodic riff ( $x$ ). The guitar is still silent. Here the riff has a very steady and circular effect, due to the bass riff remaining on the same tonal level: the bass repeats the riff in the same tonal position. At bar 13 a synthesiser enters and starts an 8-bar harmonic cycle (same length as  $b, b'$ ), which is repeated twice. It adds a processual feeling of continuity to the piece. In the chorus the harmonic cycle also lasts for 8 bars, but the amount of directionality increases due to a more frequent

<sup>37</sup> The song is analysed in section 3.2.6.

change of chords and the bass which starts moving and plays the root notes of the chords. The progression is supported by all accompaniment instruments (bass, drums and guitar). Nothing surprising occurs in the accompaniment. It fulfils its function and acts in the expected way.

The units of discursive repetition are found in the melody, which is, in both verse and chorus, characterised by two different types of binary combination which support each other. Firstly, there are two different kinds of melodic units used, and secondly they are sung by two different combinations of voices. In the verse the melodic material *a* is always performed by the lead singer; the *b* material (repeated) is sung by a group of people, a small choir. In the chorus the *c* material (repeated) is sung by the choir, and part *d* by the lead singer, i.e. the opposite construction to the verse. The discursiveness in the melody is created by these contrasts between the smaller units within the verse and chorus, as well as between the materials of verse and chorus, which are melodically and characteristically fairly different.

The 'discursiveness' of the structure and the continuity of the piece is created also by other factors than melody. The demarcation of the sections and the closures are important factors distinguishing transitions between different sections. The demarcation in "Beds are burning" is clear but simple. Since there are quite a small number of variations of the units, and since in this case they are not repeated a great number of times in immediate succession, the demarcation is easily effected by introducing new material, yet, often prepared beforehand. In this song the effect is created by a 'delay' in the harmonic progression at the end of *b*' in bars 26-28 before moving to the chorus; the first *b* lands on the I chord, where it started, but when repeated as *b*' it ends on II, and therefore creates an expectation of what follows. Specific details can also be used in order to mark or inform of a certain continuation. In this song there is a riff (*r*) functioning as a kind of 'warning signal'. It occurs in two interludes bars 28-30 and 78-80 after both verses, informing of the following chorus. The riff is introduced already in the very beginning of the piece (bars 1-2).

What is specific and in some ways even comfortable for the listener in this particular song is its symmetry and 'roundness', which simply allows and invites the listener to take part in its world. In this piece it can be seen that the technique of musematic repetition is strongly dominant in the accompaniment, creating the motorial flow to the piece. Thus, discursive

repetition is worked out at the melodic surface and in the harmonic progressions, supported and demarcated by details in the accompaniment.

### 3.2.4. Blur: Repetition

This song is from the English pop group Blur's record "Leisure" (1991). This quite slow piece of popular music is interesting, not only because of its name, but because of its strongly musematic structure.

At the level of overall form the song is conventionally constructed of binary material;  $A A B A B' B'$  (or In, V1, V2, C1, V3, C2, Il, C3). Section A (verse) and B (chorus) are constructed of two types of smaller units  $A = a, b$  and  $B = c, d$ .

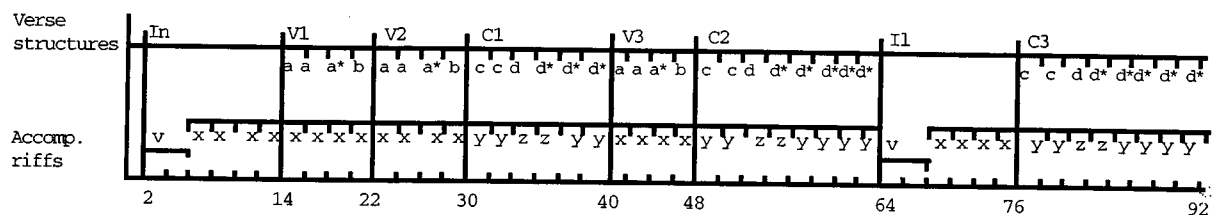


FIGURE 6. Blur: Repetition (1991)

The accompaniment is built on units of musematic repetition. In the introduction (at bar 6) a synthesiser and a bass start a cyclic repetition of a two bar riff which remains tonally and rhythmically the same until the chorus begins. It is very simple and plain, not a lot of anything else, but repetition of the same. From the beginning of verse 2 the guitar plays a I chord on the downbeat of every second bar, at the beginning of the riff. The steady circulating riff during the verses has an independent role and it is separate from the basic motorial flow accompaniment.

Synthesiser

Bass

EXAMPLE 9. Bass and synthesiser riffs from "Repetition"

The attention is attracted precisely because the same, clear, melodic riff is repeated 'too many' times. It comes to the foreground also because the only other accompaniment instrument is the drum kit, so the background is very plain. This riff circulation is intensive and effective. The musematic riff has a strong self-contained sense. It seems to go on and on and it is doing its own thing despite what happens in the other parameters of the song. The focus of attention, though, is diverted from it as soon as a new textural layer, the melody, enters the piece, the attention then being focused on the melody. Yet the riff continues circulating until the end of the verse.

An interesting accompanimental detail in the piece is the appearance of the interlude in bars 66-78, and specifically, what follows after it. It is almost precisely the same as the introduction in bars 2-14. The difference is that, at the first time it was followed by the first verse, but here at the second time it functions as a bridge, which takes us from chorus to another chorus. Listening to the song, how do we know, if it is followed by a verse or a chorus? This is implicated by a mere, thus clear, detail. At the end of interlude the last riff, marked by  $x'$  (bars 76-78), is not repeated in the same way as the last riff marked by  $x$  in the end of introduction (bars 12-14), but as in the end of verses (bars 28-30 and 48-50). When this small change is heard at the end of interlude, it directly implies the chorus, not the beginning of a new verse. Therefore the listeners are prepared for the material.

Melodically the material is used in a manner that it is on the edge of becoming musematic. In the verse the repeated units are short, only 2 bars long. The accompaniment and melody function together, and usually use the same kind of structural constructions. In this song in the accompaniment the strong, circular, foregrounding musematic riff-repetition is introduced first, and therefore as the pattern is laid out the phrases of the melody follow the same pattern of repeated units. Concerning the melodic material itself the  $A$  is built on  $a$  and  $b$  units. The unit  $a$  is

repeated three times ( $a a a'$ ), and in the end followed by another unit ( $b$ ) at the end of the verse. The point in the case of the song 'Repetition' is, that the melodic structure or the way it is constructed, is close to creating the effect of a musematic circle. If the unit  $b$  in the structure  $a a a b$  was changed in to an  $a$  ( $a a a a$ )<sup>38</sup> the discursiveness in the melody would disappear, and any discursiveness would have to be created by other layers. Yet the discursiveness is needed and there must be its elements found in order to create the difference and form, even though this is done by minimal way.

The structure and symmetry are clearly indicated in "Repetition". The first two bars of the song introduce the rhythm and the meter. The following four bars bring in the tonality, as the guitar repeats the dominant note of the key. Then the two bar riff (Example 8) begins and is repeated four times (= 8 bars) which is also the length of the verse. All the elements that we need to get the hang of the symmetry of the piece have been introduced in the first 14 bars (2 + 4 + 8). Even the length of these units grows symmetrically, the last is always doubled. The basic unit is a four bar cycle, in the verse it is repeated twice, in the chorus three times. After each section, verse or chorus, there is room for a change, not in the middle of that four, eight or 12- bar cycle.

The interaction between verse and chorus is usually built on melodic and harmonical changes. In popular music pieces the verse is traditionally the linear, on going part of the song, while the chorus, being more circular in effect, repeats the same melodic and verbal material. Interesting fact is, that the harmonic progression in this song functions in an opposite way; in the verse the harmonic cycle is produced by minimal effects, it is sparse and there is only one short harmonic pattern which is repeated throughout the verse. Then, in the chorus, the harmonic progression is brought into the foreground by all the accompaniment instruments and the binary switching of two harmonic cycles. The discursive effect during the verse seem to operate on a minimal level, the responsibility for discursivity is left to the melody alone, while the accompaniment leaves space for the melody to fulfil its function.

Antoine Hennion (1983), on the basis that "the construction of the songs has become somewhat formalised", goes into explaining the nature and function of the elements of popular music; introduction, verse and

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38 Discussion about hypothetical substitution, 3.1.

chorus, verse progression and conclusion. About "*the alternation between verse and chorus*" he writes:

*" In the verses, which are in a fluid, recitative-like style, the music subordinates itself to the lyrics, so that the story can unfold. The chorus, on the other hand, is more musical and etches the tune in the memory, a tune whose regular repetition right through the song is expected and gives all the more pleasure because it is eagerly awaited during the somewhat dull verses. The arrangement underlines this opposition by enriching the chorus in a number of ways: the addition of instruments absent during the verses, denser harmonic progressions, the pointing up of a climax whose resolution makes one ready for the calm of the following verse.*

*As far as musical construction is concerned, a song typically opposes -- the verse (- -), and -- the chorus. -- the opposition can also be achieved through a variety of means". (Hennion 1983:165-6, my italics)*

The verse and chorus are strongly contrasted in this way in "Repetition". That is so mainly because the stable harmony in verses changes in the chorus into a cyclic harmonic progression and a switching between two different types of harmonic units. The harmonic progression is sparse in the verse, dense in the chorus; there are only few instruments used repeating the same 2-bar riff in the verse, contrasting against a four-bar harmonic progression arranged for all accompaniment instruments in the chorus. Much more 'happens' in the chorus compared to the verse. The accompaniment is strongly characterised by musematic repetition in the verse, while the melody is able to create discursiveness with quite minimal effects. The cyclic chorus, on the other hand, needs the backup from the accompaniment.

The structural symmetry in music - the length of the units identified by recurrence and their balance - creates an experience of time sense. When, for instance, the same unit or section is repeated, it is expected to be repeated in same length in order to fill in the same 'amount' of time. The time is absolute if measured in seconds and minutes, but relative when experienced by the listener.

### 3.2.5. Eric Clapton: Wonderful Tonight

Eric Clapton's ballad "Wonderful tonight" (1977) is a proper example to examine structure built on stronger discursive repetition. As it is typical for ballads, the form of this song is *A A B A* (Figure 6). This kind of structure is usually discursively structured as regards both melody and harmony.

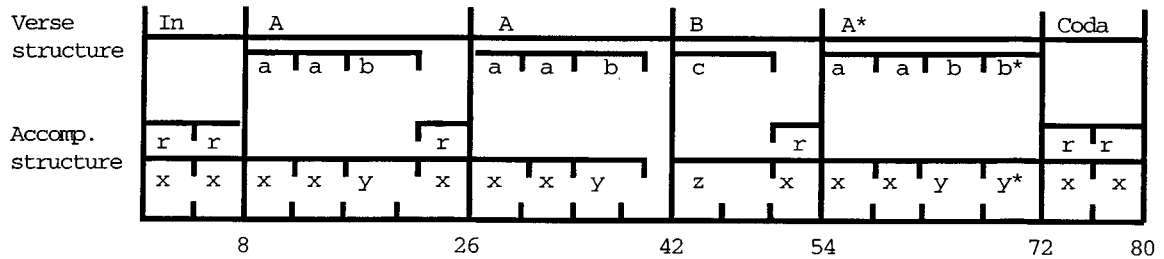


FIGURE 7. Eric Clapton: "Wonderful tonight" (1977)

*A A B A* as in 32-bar form was widely used in the beginning of the century<sup>39</sup>. Then its techniques were very much discursive, and though it has lost its great popularity, it is still used in today's music. Here it is used in varied form.

The harmonic cycle in the *A* section is: I-V-IV-V/ I-V-IV-V/ IV-V-I-V-VI-IV-V-I. Each *A* is constructed from two melodic and harmonic sections of which the first is repeated; *a a b* (4+4+8 bars). To the listener the structure is arguably rather heard in two sections, the first one being the repeated I-V-IV-V progression, and the second one the rest of the verse (8+8 bars) (not including the instrumental interlude). During the entire verse there is a sense of directed linearity and progression from the beginning of the verse until its end. The chord progression in the *B* section is IV-V-I-V-VI-IV-V-IV-V-I-(I-V-IV-V) (8+4 [interlude] bars). In contrast with *A*, the whole section *B* is one long progression and there is no sense of repeated cycle in the harmony.

In this song the melody and the accompaniment work together towards a discursive structure. Not even the accompaniment contains musematically repeated units, despite the basic rhythmic pulse of the song. The guitar and the bass follow the harmonic cycle without playing any specific riff or musematic pattern. The accompaniment only supplies the motorial flow of the piece. The only noticeable accompanimental melodic

<sup>39</sup> For example in Tin Pan Alley-style, Middleton 1990:46



figure or phrase is played by the guitar in the introduction as well as before each verse.



EXAMPLE 10. Melodic and harmonic figure from "Wonderful tonight"

It is built on the same harmonic cycle that appears in the verse; I-V-IV-V. Between the second *A* and the *B* there is only a two chord delay on a I accord creating expectation and marking the beginning of new material. Altogether this phrase functions as a demarcator of the sections. Every time it appears a verse begins. At the end of the last verse, the last few bars of the verse plus the instrumental phrase are repeated to prepare the end.

The discursiveness in the song is created by a harmonic progression and the melodic structure, which together create a sense of forward-directness, as well as the contrast within *A = a* and *b*, and between *A* and *B* (*A A B A*). The music is directed towards the end of the whole chord progression which is situated at the end of the verse. Then the circle has come to an end, and another one can begin. It seems to be typical of clearly discursive structures, on different levels, to repeat the same thing once (*a a*), but never twice (*a a a*). That is a way to ensure the discursiveness and avoid even hinting at musematic repetition. In this song there is hardly any repetition that could be called musematic. The motorial flow created by the accompaniment is not taken into account, and it is not independent of the other syntactical processes, but a part of the discursive structure. The instrumental phrase has a characteristic of musematic repetition because of its self-contained sense, even though it is not short or repeated many times, and in spite of its being supported by a full chord progression.

What changes should be done in order to include musematic repetition in this song? The first immediate idea was that the tempo should be faster and a steady beat placed on every quarter note, instead of every second one. This doesn't add any actual units of musematic repetition into the piece, but it provides the ground for them, changes the meter and pulse so that it's easier to built a riff-based repetition. If the melody and the harmonic progression was to remain untouched, it is the accompaniment

structures that would have to be modified. A circular, musematic repetition could be effected by adding a two-bar, short but effective, riff structure to the guitar. The same could be done with the bass, and then the accompanimental structure would be very musematic in character, except for the harmonic progression.

A totally different option would be to change the melodic and harmonic structure of the verse. As already presented in Figure 6 and discussed in page 64 the *A* section can be regarded as constructed of two sections (8+8), of which the first eight bars can be divided into two (4+4), because it is built on repetition of an unvaried four-bar unit. The structure could be changed so that these first eight bars of the verse would be doubled, after which it would be followed by the eight-bar progression which ends the verse (4+4[8]+4+4[8]+[8]). On the level of form I would just repeat the section *B* at the end of the piece, in order to break the traditional *A A B A* structure, and to give a stronger sense of recursiveness even on this level. There is also a small but quite important detail that could be changed, resulting in a more musematic structure. The melodic and harmonic phrase which is played before every verse would be replaced by a short rhythmic pattern. Previously this functioned as a bridge leading to the verse because of its directional harmonic progression. If it is replaced by a plain rhythmic one-bar riff which is repeated four times, it has no tonal function or direction; only the motion remains.

By increasing the number of repetitions of the shortest unit, which has already been repeated in the original version, it is easy to change the structure and the effect that it creates. The more repetitions occur, the stronger the musematic and circulating effect will be. Even if the accompaniment would be left as it is in the original version, still a musematic effect could be accomplished. But if the accompaniment was changed: riffs added to guitar and bass, as well as a steady accent on every beat, and the structure and form altered as described above, the song could be changed into a disco hit.

### 3.2.6. Wilson Pickett: Mustang Sally

This song is stylistically a typical blues song, built on a 24-bar harmonic cycle (I-IV-I-V-IV-I), which is the standard 12-bar blues formula<sup>40</sup> in extended form. Variations in the number of bars are usually effected by a reduction or expansion by a factor of 2, and the same chord progression can be fulfilled especially in this case where the number of bars is doubled.

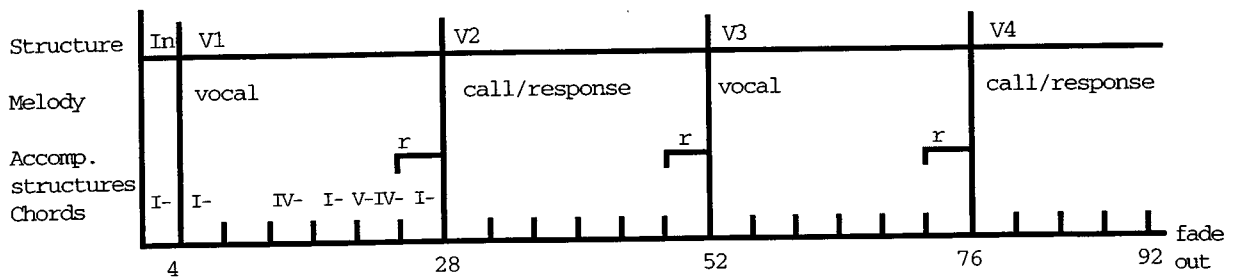


FIGURE 8. Wilson Pickett: Mustang Sally (1967)

In “Mustang Sally” the blues formula is repeated in almost four full cycles with the exception that the last one is faded. The blues formula does not have any separate refrain or chorus. The lyrics in V1 and V3 are different, but the V2 and V4 have the same lyrics. Both V2 and V4 are both also built on a call-response structure. They are similar to a chorus in the respect that they repeat the same melodic and lyrical material, as a chorus does when it is repeated, but they are not different from the V1 or V3 as regards harmony, while a chorus is usually a section contrasting to the verse. The effect of this is not that of a verse/refrain type, rather just plain binary switching between two different kinds of texture, vocal and call-response structure.

In the accompaniment the bass and the guitar repeat a one-bar rhythmic riff throughout the 24-bar harmonic cycle. There are also other instruments used, such as a keyboard instrument, and horns, which play some short patterns during the cycle. The horns have a four bar riff at the end of each verse reinforcing the demarcation. Altogether the accompaniment functions as a harmonic and rhythmic background supplying the motorial flow of the piece. Therefore it does not attract any specific attention. The singer is quite free to express himself with the melody above the background of the harmonic cycle. Vocal improvisation is an

<sup>40</sup> This is defined for instance in Moore, 1993:53

important characteristic of the song. The twelve bar blues, even when varied as in this case, is a well established popular music form. Its symmetrical structure is expected and obvious for those who are familiar with it. When it follows the conventional pattern it is easy even to 'hop into the cycle and take a ride with it'.

"Mustang Sally" is based on a quite long, progressive, goal-directed and tonic directional harmonic progression. The entire harmonic structure supports the climax which is reached at the point where the dominant appears for the first time (bar 17). Yet harmonically the effect of directionality is only perceptible throughout each the verse, because there the goal at which the progression is aimed is reached. Then the same formula is repeated unvaried. The contrast and variation between the verses is accomplished by textural means. This is the already mentioned alternation of solo vocal and call-response structures.

The strong discursive directionality which lasts through the 24 bars is created by an effect which Tagg calls 'Ready, Steady, Go!'. He describes it in Kojak as follows:

*"musical motifs can be played syntactically in the foreground when preceded by at least one repetition, preparing the listener for the material which will break the repetition sequence. In other words, one way in which individual musemes making up a melodic phrase may be distinguished from each other and given varying degrees of emphasis is through 'propulsive repetition'." (Tagg 1979:132-3, author's italics)*

The concept is easier to understand with the help of simple examples. Tagg compares this series of action with traffic lights, where the red colour refers to ready, yellow to steady, and the green one means go. It is a count in at the beginning of a structure or a piece, like starting the motor a few times before it really gets going. Also in music it works as a three-step progression. Tagg gives examples from classical music for instance the beginning of Mozart's "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik", but it is also used a lot in popular music and examples are easily found. Ideal cases are found within rock'n'roll, for instance, "Blue suede shoes" and "Rock around the clock", of which the former is notated in example 19.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major. The first staff contains the melody for the 'READY -' and 'STEADY -' stages. The 'READY -' stage consists of a quarter rest followed by a quarter note G, then a quarter note A, and a quarter note G. The 'STEADY -' stage consists of a quarter note A, a quarter note B, a quarter note A, and a quarter note G. An F7 chord is indicated above the first measure of the 'STEADY -' stage. The second staff shows the 'GO!' stage, which consists of a quarter note G, a quarter note A, a quarter note B, a quarter note A, a quarter note G, and a quarter note F.

EXAMPLE 11. Carl Lee Perkins: Blue suede shoes (1956)

Here the effect is created by rhythmic and melodic patterning, even though it remains in the same tonal position harmonically. The same leap of a third from F to A is repeated three times in each stage of the 'ready, steady, go!', but the continuation does not follow until after the last repetition.

The idea can be applied to the structure of "Mustang Sally", as well as to the 12-bar blues in general. The harmonic cycle is 24 bars long, and each one of the three stages of 'ready, steady, go!' is of equal length, 8+8+8 bars. Harmonically 'ready' remains the whole time on the I chord; its motto is 'home sweet home'. The 'steady' stage begins on the IV chord, giving a promising start; "now we are on the way, let's get rid of the tonic, this is fun", but then somewhat disappointingly returns to I again, saying "oh, that was too daring, I'd like to stay on the safe tonic yet a little bit longer" (IV/I). The 'go!' jumps right up to the V chord taking the progression to its climax, but again returns to the tonic this time through the IV; "great, finally the precious dominant is reached, now there is nowhere else to go, I'd better take the familiar way home through the IV to get there safely" (V/IV/I).

The difference between, for instance, "Blue suede shoes" and "Mustang Sally" is that in the blues, by the time it has passed the 'ready' and 'steady' stages and reaches the 'go!', the song does not proceed further; that is the end of it and then it starts the 'ready, steady, go!' -structure again. The sections are longer and repeated circularly. In "Blue suede shoes" and other rock'n'roll examples the actual song begins after short "ready, steady, go!" introduction. The small units of 'ready', 'steady' and 'go!' Tagg refers to as musematic, 'propulsive' repetition. As the length of the structure is a lot longer in "Mustang Sally" (it takes 16 bars even to get to the 'go!' stage), it can be discussed if the elements inside the structure could be called musemes? For example 'ready' includes quite short vocal line, but it is not repeated. Therefore, even if it was to be called 'museme' in Tagg's sense, it

does not fill the criterion of musematic repetition; it is not repeated. The effect of repetition is interesting on another level. The structure, whether it is called simply blues-formula or 'ready, steady, go!'-pattern, repeats itself. The more times it is repeated, as here almost four, the more circulating effect it creates. It is somewhat problematic to talk about this repetition as musematic, though the effect implies that direction. This is the problem of classification of repeated large structures into the concepts of musematic and discursive repetition, which has already been discussed in the section of hypothetical substitution.

## 4. DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Summary of Musematic and Discursive Repetition

On the basis of the theoretical discussion and the analysis the definitions of musematic and discursive repetition should be reviewed again. There are some general notions that can be made about the uses of these concepts. First of all identifying units of musematic and discursive repetition in analysis requires the identification of form and symmetry of the song. That is because the repetition types and equivalence and difference (contrast, variation) are identified within and between the sections, e.g. verse and chorus. Secondly, they are always dependent on the other syntactical elements. The object of analysis must be considered to form a whole.

Musematic repetition is typically repetition of a short unit, often riffs, which are found in the accompaniment. It functions regularly in accompanying textural layers of popular music, which is the "proper" place for it. There it functions as the motor of the piece creating a flow and it is not specially paid attention to. Musematic units are also found in vocal backgrounds as in call/response structures, and occasionally and rarely even in lead melody. Musematic units create often larger patterns, which are formed according to the structural symmetry of the piece. Since musematic repetition does not include change the same unit is often repeated unvaried throughout a section or a phrase. In this sense what is musematic on one level, e.g. within a phrase, could create discursive repetition, contrast or variation, on the next level between the phrases, depending on the other structural elements.

The number of repetition is many, though it depends on the length of the unit. There are different effects created by different length units. The shorter the unit repeated more dominant is the role of musematic repetition. This is the case in epic-lyric mode of syntax. Musematic repetition is dominant, there is not much of discursive repetition or it is created by minimal changes. Often musematic repetition is dominant within verse and chorus and the section is very epic. Lyric is the repetition of verses and choruses, the larger units. This type is typical in popular music. In the narrative-lyric the repeated units are rather long and no short units of musematic repetition take place.

Accompaniment is often a determining factor when defining the mode. If accompaniment based on long developmental harmony like often in ballads, it typically would be the narrative lyric mode, which does not include a lot or nil of musematic repetition. Yet as said the epic-lyric mode seems to be dominant and the importance of musematic repetition as part of today's popular music is great.

Discursive repetition typically functions as rather long and complete harmonic progressions. The length of the units varies from few bars, i.e. a phrase to sections, i.e. verse and chorus. Units of discursive repetition are longer than units of musematic repetition.

The techniques of discursive repetition cannot be discussed entirely in the same terms as they were discussed by Middleton in the context of late 19<sup>th</sup> early 20<sup>th</sup>-century popular music. The characteristics of discursive repetition, directionality, progression, dependence on other syntactical processes are quite the same but, in contemporary popular music they are created by very small changes. The long sequences and throughout verses lasting harmonic progressions are often replaced by shorter, repeated harmonic units. The conventional functional harmony is not used in popular music, exception is made by few ballads. It is even possible that there is no harmonic progression whatsoever in the accompaniment; the harmony may remain in the same tonal position, while the melodic line repeats short units musematically. Discursiveness is much more built on creating contrasts between verses and choruses, than on using variation. Discursive repetition is directed in one way or the other, if not directly within a discursive unit itself, then in the interaction of this and other discursive units involved in the process.

The contrasting discursive techniques are e.g. open/closed contrasting relationships of the units (Middleton 1990:270). A simple example of this is a question/answer structure, where the first unit does not end in a tonic position but "leaves the question open", creates an expectation of the following, while the next unit "gives the answer", returns to the tonic, makes a closure (Moore 1994:52-53). The markers of discursive repetition would be interesting to study but requires another forum.

Discursive repetition does not include a large number of units. Sometimes the discursive units are not actually repeated at all, if they are used as contrast to another unit. Discursive repetition has moved in a musematic direction meaning that the units are relatively short and the techniques have changed, and the two can be difficult to separate. There are



also some cases of repetition on larger structures, which do not fit well in either category.

#### 4.2. The Insufficiency of the Terminology

The borderlines between musematic and discursive repetition are problematic. The examples of hypothetical substitution and analysis show that musematic repetition is usually found in micro structures when discursive repetition works on larger structures. Still there are cases when the limits are crossed. An unvaried repetition of a whole section does not appear as discursive repetition, nor exactly musematic, even though it is musematic in character. The more times it is repeated, the more musematic is the effect because the amount of self contained sense increases. The number of repetition that creates musematic effect depends also of the symmetry of the piece, which provides the "basic unit length" and the structural frame, and thus so quite far determines the length of the repeated units, too. What happens within a piece of music must be placed in the whole picture, i.e. the whole structure or form.

Another considerable factor is the involvement of analysed units with other syntactical processes. Even a short unit which is built on the alternation of two chords can be defined as a discursive unit if it is used as a contrast to other units or if it is developed into variative or larger developmental structures. The same two-bar unit can be defined as musematic, if it is not dependent on other syntactical processes taking place and if it is repeated more than a certain number of times. Furthermore, the longer the unit, and the more complete harmonic progression it contains, the greater the number of repetitions required in order to create a musematic effect will be. Conversely the shorter the unit, and the less harmonic movement it contains (usually the alternation of two chords, or no alternation at all), the smaller the number of repetitions needed. When determining whether a repeated unit can be defined as either musematic or discursive, other syntactical processes have to be taken into account. There are certainly various degrees and levels of dependence as well as independence among these units, they act differently and create different effects. But they cannot be judged by themselves. When and if using the concepts there are three main things that should be kept in mind when

analysing musematic and discursive repetition. These are symmetry (the number of repetitions), self-contained sense versus involvement with other syntactic processes, and temporal effects, including the amount of directionality created by repetition.

Musematic and discursive repetition seem to be inadequate terms to be used in analysis of musical repetitions as the only tools. As has been shown earlier, there are cases of repetition that are difficult to place in either category. Such is e.g. the unvaried repetition of larger structures. The concepts work best on the level of phrase or section, not on larger levels. Also the discursive techniques used in contemporary popular music have changed and they should be more closely examined and identified. It could be also interesting to separate repetition and return from each other based on their functions in music. That would also require additions to terminology.

About the origins of the concepts few words could be mentioned. Middleton's idea of 'musematic' derived from the 'museme' does not seem a very good idea. They do not have same definitions and the meanings are different. There is the vague connection through the idea that both represent the linguistic morpheme, but it is not convincing. In addition to that the only common feature is that they both are typically short units, but as it is shown, there are some large structures which tend to fall in to the category of musematic repetition or then require some other kind of identification. Repetition, as the units of musematic repetition are usually repeated a large number of times, also separates it from 'musemes', which identification was not dependent on repetition.

The term 'discursive' as understood in terms of sentence or discourse is a quite good analogy. Studying discourse analysis helped to clear the point of combining the terms 'musematic' and 'discursive' together yet to understand meaning of 'discursive'. Middleton's terminology does not seem to cover the larger structures, that is where the problems of analysis occur.

Another reason for the problems in terminology is perhaps the change in musical styles. Middleton used musematic and discursive repetition mainly in the songs of the beginning of the century. He also used them in demonstrative way, to point out single features of each types of repetition. When used as a tool of analysis of a whole song or larger material the lackings are seen. If using these concepts further, they would need subclasses or additional terms to fulfil the gaps. Rather than trying to

define musematic and discursive repetition more flexibly and struggling with the same problems, or trying to create completely new terminology, it could be more constructing to approach syntactic analysis of music based on repetition by trying other existing concepts. This is implicated in the last section.

### 4.3. Formative, Focal and Textural Repetition<sup>41</sup>

In view of the confusion and inadequacy of the concepts of musematic and discursive repetition I suggest that David Lidov's terms 'focal, formative and textural repetition'<sup>42</sup> should be studied in order to discover if they are suitable terms to be used in analysis. The main ideas of these concepts are shortly presented.

*Formative repetition* is the kind of repetition which does not evoke listeners' attention. It is geared to the construction of musical structure, the grammatical features of music. It segments the piece of music into, for instance, sections, phrases and motifs.

"it defines the units of a musical work, and establishes their position in a hierarchy of longer and shorter segments. Secondly, when varied, formative repetition establishes equivalencies and oppositions between different features of the material. Thus it serves to identify significant differences, as well as concrete units." (Lidov 1979:9)

These segments, which are identified by recurrence, formulate usually symmetrical constructions, as in the structures of the four popular songs presented in chapter 4. For instance, in the 32-bar ballad structure *A A B A* these repeated sections are units of formative repetition. Each of the sections *A* and *B* are eight bars long. These sections may in most cases be divided into two four-bar phrases, which possibly may be divided into two-bar motifs. This structure does not attract our attention, it is 'obvious', the way it is expected to be<sup>43</sup>. Because formative repetition is "hierarchically conformal, its necessity and sufficiency neutralise its interest. Interest passes

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41 These concepts by Lidov were already mentioned in section 1.1.

42 Published in the article "Structure and function in musical repetition" (1978).

43 See also the previous discussion in section 3.1.

to the material" (ibid:11). The focus of the listener is directed to what is repeated, not to repetition itself. This kind of repetition is a common characteristic of music, including popular music. Usually it can be applied to the melodic and harmonical textures of music, which constitute the structure and form of the piece. Formative repetition is not paid attention to, as Lidov says: "the absence of formative repetition has a more striking effect than its presence" (ibid:11).

"The normal structures for this type are single immediate repetition, or single and multiple delayed repetitions. -- . Formative repetition is conventional and necessary, and does not attract attention. That is just the point: if it did attract attention, it would belong in the second category [focal repetition]" (Ibid:9)

In *focal repetition* the focus is on repetition itself. The fact that something is repeated attracts the attention, and the material that is repeated becomes secondary. According to Lidov the most typical examples of focal repetition are the two or three times repeated musical unit. It is repeated either immediately, or it may occur the first time before and the second time after a longer unit (ibid:15). Lidov points out, that focal repetition does have a symbolic meaning: it creates connotations and extramusical associations, and evokes feelings. Therefore the effect created by it is very different than that of formative repetition.

The third of Lidov's categories is *textural repetition*. It is marked by the number of repetitions.

"The structure associated with textural repetition is the continuing repetition of an idea more than three or four times. It cancels out its own claim on our attention and, thereby, refers our focus elsewhere (to another voice or to a changing aspect). The figure maintains, nevertheless, a transcendental influence on our musical consciousness. -- . Textural repetition is familiar in Baroque, Classical and Romantic accompaniments and developments, and it is the guiding principle of contemporary pattern music." (Ibid:21)

The idea is repeated so many times, actually, 'too many times', it cannot hold the attention any longer. Therefore, it cannot be classified to be focal repetition, but it may overlap with the definition of formative repetition. This can be exemplified in terms of popular music by, for instance, the metre and rhythmic organization of a piece. Textural repetition is found on

the accompaniment, and it creates the motorial flow of the piece. Textural repetition can also become so called 'hypnotic repetition', as in rituals. The study of the effect of this type of repetition would have to also take into account physical and psychological aspects.

On the basis of this brief presentation of the concepts, I would like to make some connections to the discussion of musematic and discursive repetition presented above. Formative repetition seems to describe the structural constructions of popular music well. It is true, that the form has implicit norms of symmetry, and when they are actualised as such, they do not attract attention. The structure is the way it is expected to be, and no attention is paid to it. The formative structures are usually realized by melodic and harmonic processes. These are correspondent to the effects of discursive repetition.

Focal repetition does not cover the description given to musematic repetition above, but it represents some of the same ideas. The units of focal repetition could be, for instance, riffs or short motifs, which are independent in character and played in the foreground texture. They attract attention, and are separate from the motorial flow of the piece. These are units with a self contained sense. Yet they are not exclusively musematic, because not all musematic repetition attracts attention. Musematic repetition found e.g. in the accompaniment would not be classified as focal repetition, some foreground motifs again would.

Textural repetition in popular music could be understood as musematic repetition in accompanimental structures. As said, it does not attract attention when functioning as the provider of motorial flow. The units in the accompaniment are repeated continuously throughout the sections. Textural repetition could also be repeated discursive structures in a level of phrase.

Lidov reminds that it must be kept in mind that these concepts are not mutually exclusive, and that there must be some space for interpretation and personal experiences.

"The boundary between formative and focal repetition can be complicated by the effects of variation but, in principle, it is precisely defined in accordance with musical structure. The distinction itself between focal and textural repetition is one which allows an ambiguous threshold, subject to expressive exploitation." (Ibid:22)

The types of repetition have to be investigated carefully and with caution, bearing in mind their functional and structural roles. What can be analysed as focal repetition on one level, can constitute formative repetition on the next level. Focal and textural repetition may in some cases be difficult to separate, and the conclusions may possibly be based on subjective matters. Yet analysis based on the function of repetition seems an interesting and reasonable task.

Since the definitions of the concepts of formative, focal and textural repetition are based on the functions, their identification is easier. The problems involved with the terms 'musematic' and 'discursive' on the conceptual and practical levels do not seem to apply to Lidov's terms. However, in order to locate potential problems concerning the use of the concepts of focal, formative and textural repetition, it appears necessary to apply them in practical analysis. Even more interesting than finding the possible problems that may occur, it is to find out what can be explored and learned by using these concepts.

A suggestion based on the results of the present study would be to search further the possibilities offered by the use of the concepts of formative, focal and textural repetition in music analysis. A study with a broader material from different styles and genres of popular music, as well as classical music, may reveal some new aspects of music and its structural functions in terms of repetition. I believe that the potential of the study of repetition in music may cross many boundaries, possibly even cultural ones.

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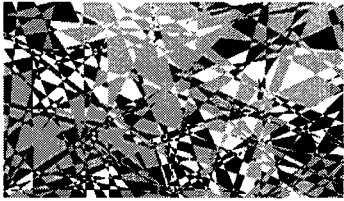
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## Appendix 2.

### THE CONCEPT OF FORM IN THE MUSIC OF THE BEATLES





**BEATLES 2000**

## THE CONCEPT OF FORM AND ITS CHANGE IN THE SINGLES OF THE BEATLES

Terhi Nurmesjärvi

Popular music began to raise serious musicological interest as a research topic during the 70's (e.g. Middleton 1972, Frith 1978, Tagg 1979). Much research has been done in the field since then. The most widely used approaches vary from the sociology and semiotics of music to music analysis. Quite few have studied the music itself as the primary research topic. The prevailing trend has been to study popular music mainly from cultural, sociological, semiotic, political, or economical, perspectives. During recent years some researchers have begun to combine these aspects, yet they are in the minority of popular music scholars. The present study differs from both prevailing and new trends. The subject of the study is music itself, and its form.

The concept of form has been referred to in several studies yet it has only been taken as the focus of analysis in a very small number of popular music studies. Although the concept of form has been one of the key concepts in the study of art music, this has been the case only in some popular music studies (Middleton 1990).

The above applies also to the study of the Beatles. There is a widespread agreement that the Beatles had an enormous influence on popular music at the time and that the entire scene of popular music was dramatically changed during the 60's. In popular music research the Beatles — as well as most of the changes in popular music and culture during the 60's — have been considered more a cultural and sociological than a musical phenomenon.<sup>1</sup> Many scholars have made occasional use of the songs of the Beatles as examples in their studies. Some academic dissertations on the subject have been done (e.g. Porter 1979, Stetzer 1976, Heinonen 1995). Nevertheless, there has not been all that much research on the music of the Beatles — and the existing research does not come close to covering all of the possible aspects. The concept of form is one of these aspects.

The purpose of this article is to shed light on the concept of form and its change in the music of the Beatles. The research materials include all of the singles the Beatles officially released in England on EMI/Parlophone and Apple labels during 1962-70; 22 singles (44 songs). The forms the Beatles used in these songs are assumed to be rarely based on the standard forms of the Tin Pan Alley era. The hypothesis of the study is that the influence of the standard forms was stronger during the early years than the late years. If this is true, the development of the concept of form in the songs of the Beatles reflects a more general trend in popular music at the time (Björnberg). The main theoretical framework is cognitive psychology, especially prototype theory (Rosch 1975, 1978). The analysis of form into its constituent elements — whose combinations result in the standard forms as well as other forms — is based on the concepts of repetition, parallelism and symmetry. Further it relies on the grouping criteria presented by Lerdahl & Jackendoff (1985). The amount of use of the standard forms (with their standard extensions) as well as change in the concept of form across time is studied by using simple statistical operations (percentages, correlation analysis).

## THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

### The Concept of Form

Form is one of the most frequently used concepts in music analysis. Leichtentritt has stated that “form in a general sense cannot be the subject of systematic study”. Rather, it is “a matter of musical instinct, of taste and of artistic intuition”. (Whittall 1981, 709.) In a sense this seems right and it is

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<sup>1</sup> The Beatles have, of course, inspired a great number of nonacademic writers, some of whom have provided extremely important source material for academic researchers (Lewisohn 1989, 1990, 1992). There is a lot of biographical literature about the group, too.

also agreed upon by many musicians. But, contrary to Leichtentritt, I still believe that the forms can be systematically analyzed.

Schönberg has provided a more optimistic view, which is closer to the concept of form applied in the present study:

"form means that a piece is organized: i.e. that it consists of elements functioning like those of a living organism. [...] The chief requirements for the creation of a comprehensible form are *logic* and *coherence*. The presentation, development and interconnection of ideas must be based on relationship". (Whitall 1981, 709).

The sections or units of a piece are not usually randomly placed or grouped together. Rather there can be an underlying system, which determinates the form. A composer may use established forms like sonata form (A B A) in classical music or the 12-bar blues pattern in popular music as a framework. What the composer creates as the content of the sections is the actual music. In this sense, the forms can also be used as compositional strategies.<sup>2</sup>

### Standard forms

It is common knowledge that the forms used by the Beatles and other rock bands in the early 60s were based on traditional standard forms (Lamb & Hamm 1981, 114; Heinonen 1995, 79). A standard form is a 32-bar structure consisting of four 8-bar periods. Standard forms were the most frequently used form types in popular music during the first half of the 20th century and slightly after. The most common standard form is the AABA form. Other standard forms include ABAB, ABAC and ABCA, of which the ABAB form was also very popular from the beginning to the century up to the sixties. (Björnberg 1987:66f.)

The AABA form is still used, although its use as such has decreased since the mid-60s. Standard forms often also have standard extensions, resulting in such form types as |AABA|BA and |AABA|CBA forms. (Davis 1989,59f; Björnberg 1987,67). The added sections are usually placed after, in some cases before, the normative 32-bar form. The standard forms were extended at quite an early stage in their history and later their length has varied by a large degree. In the music of the Beatles the overall form was usually built onto the normative standard form by adding a "proper" amount of A, B and/or C sections before or after the basic standard form (Heinonen 1995, 79).

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<sup>2</sup> For example, aleatoric form is one composition strategy in which the form is created simultaneously in the composition process and has not been determined beforehand. Composers also deliberately variate established forms or deviate from them.

## Prototypes

Standard forms are typical examples of popular music forms from the first half of the century onward. The concept of prototypicality allows one to study the typicality of form types in a certain sample of material. It is a way of representing the classification of things and concepts constructed from multiple features we perceive and operate within everyday life (Eerola 1997, 26).

Prototypes are the clearest examples of categories (Rosch 1975, 544). A category is an idea, which includes objects that are considered alike. The greater the inclusiveness within the category, the higher the level of abstraction. The level of abstraction can be formalized in terms of cue validity.<sup>3</sup> The more cue A is related to cue B, the higher is the validity of A/B; and the more cue A is related to other cues (C, D, E...) the lower is the validity of A/B (Rosch 1978, 30). "The cue validity of an entire category may be defined as the summation of the cue validities for that category of each of the attributes of the category" (Ibid. 30-31)

Categories are often defined by prototypes.

"For categories of concrete objects [... forms ...], a reasonable hypothesis is that prototypes develop through the same principles such as maximization of cue validity and maximization of category resemblance as those principles governing the formation of the categories themselves. [...]. The more prototypical of a category a member is rated, the more attributes it has in common with the other members of the category. [...]. However, the prototype does not have to have all the parameters associated with it, although the more it has, the more typical it is considered to be (Ibid. 36-37)

One aim of the present study is to find the songs that have the highest cue validity, i.e. those that represent the most prototypical examples of this material.

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

### Material

The research materials included all the singles the Beatles officially released in England on the EMI/Parlophone and Apple labels during 1962-70; 22 singles (44 songs).

The analysis was based on the original single recordings reissued on CD's which were empirically analyzed by listening. Peripherally and in the

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<sup>3</sup> A cue validity means "conditional probability [...], the frequency of a cue being associated with the category in question divided by the total frequency of that cue over all relevant categories" (Rosch 1975, 575).

Year	No	Song	Released	Division
1962	1a	Love me do	5/10/62	1962-63
	1b	PS I love you		
1963	2a	Please Please Me	11/1/63	
	2b	Ask Me Why		
	3a	From Me To You	11/4/63	
	3b	Thank You Girl		
	4a	She Loves You	23/8/63,	
	4b	I'll Get You		
	5a	I Want To Hold Your Hand		
	5b	This Boy	29/11/63	
1964	6a	Can't Buy Me Love	20/3/64	1964-65
	6b	You Can't Do That		
	7a	A Hard Day's Night	10/7/64	
	7b	Things We Said Today		
		8a	I Feel Fine	
1965	8b	She's A Woman	9/4/65	
	9a	Ticket To Ride		
	9b	Yes It Is		
	10a	Help!	23/7/65	
	10b	I'm Down		
	11a	Day Tripper	3/12/65	
11b	We Can Work It Out			
1966	12a	Paperback Writer	10/6/66	1966-67
	12b	Rain		
	13a	Eleanor Rigby	5/8/66	
	13b	Yellow Submarine		
1967	14a	Strawberry Fields Forever	17/2/67	
	14b	Penny Lane		
	15a	All You Need Is Love	7/7/67	
	15b	Baby, You're A Rich Man		
	16a	Hello, Goodbye	24/11/67	
	16b	I Am The Walrus		
1968	17a	Lady Madonna	15/3/68	1968-70
	17b	The Inner Light		
	18a	Hey Jude	26/8/68	
	18b	Revolution		
1969	19a	Get Back	5/5/69	
	19b	Don't Let Me Down		
	20a	The Ballad Of John And Yoko	30/5/69	
	20b	Old Brown Shoe		
	21a	Something	31/10/69	
21b	Come Together			
1970	22a	Let It Be	6/3/70	
	22b	You Know My Name		

TABLE 1. The singles of The Beatles in 1962-70 in chronological releasing order



most difficult cases the *Beatles Complete Scores* (1993) were used as a guide line. The material was analyzed at three levels. On the first level the entire selection (22 singles) was analyzed. On the second level the same material was divided into four selections according to the following time periods: a) 1962-63 (10 songs); b) 1964-65 (12 songs); c) 1966-67 (10 songs) and d) 1968-70 (12 songs) (Table 1). Further, on the third level the results were discussed on yearly bases.

The singles were classified according to the year of release, not that of writing or recording, which in some cases are different.

## Method

The analysis of these songs aims to segment each song into sections, which comprise the form. The main research questions are:

- 1) which forms are the most prototypical examples of the material;
- 2) what is the amount of used standard forms in percentages;
- 3) how the standard forms were extended;
- 4) how the use of forms has changed in time; and
- 5) are there differences in the forms of the A- and B-sides of the singles.

### *Principles of segmentation*

The analysis is based on the concepts of repetition, parallelism and symmetry. These concepts are not considered as exclusive but rather overlapping and they support each other. In some cases I refer to the criteria for grouping structure presented by Lerdahl & Jackendoff in *Generative Theory of Tonal Music* (1985, 36f)<sup>4</sup> in which there are similar notions about the segmentation of music.

Repetition is a common feature of all music including popular music in which most of the sections usually recur more than once.<sup>5</sup> (Middleton 1990, 268; Ruwet 1987, 16; Monelle 1992, 66; Nurmesjärvi 1997, 1; and Meyer 1973, 44<sup>6</sup>). The sections are hardly ever repeated unvaried, which sometimes causes problems in segmentation. More important than the degree of variation is perhaps in which parameters the variation occurs. L.B.

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<sup>4</sup> They have formed an analytical system for the different aspects of musical structure (e.g. grouping and meter). The meaningful part for the present study is the grouping structure, which "expresses a hierarchical segmentation of the piece into motives, phrases, and sections" (1985, 8). Grouping Well-Formedness Rules (GWFR) address the formal structure of grouping patterns; i.e. defines what is a group. Grouping Preference Rules (GPR) address which of the formally possible structures that can be assigned to a piece correspond to the listener's actual intuition. Lerdahl and Jackendoff list a total of 12 rules.

<sup>5</sup> The identification of musical units was based on repetition in Ruwet's (1987) segmentation method.

<sup>6</sup> Meyer's writes about 'Conformant Relationships', which means similarity between musical units.

Meyer (1975, 54) has expressed an idea related to repetition and reprise in pieces of music, which contains an important thought on a general level:

"the greater the amount of change - in both rate and degree - in one parameter, the smaller must be the changes in other parameters if patterning is to be perceived. [...] The amount of simultaneous variation possible also depends upon the nature of the patterns themselves: the more patently structured and archetypal one aspect of a pattern (for instance, its melodic shape), the more other parameters (e.g., rhythm, harmony, etc.) can be varied without destroying the impression of conformance."

I would argue that in popular music some parameters are more important than others and there are typical ways of varying the sections. Even though the basic melodic line remains basically the same the singer often colours and modifies the melody due to changes in the lyrics and artistic interpretation. Some rhythmic details may be changed and the players use the instruments in a creative way. All these factors modify music. In view of stability and identification, significant parameters are harmony and the general accompaniment patterns. They usually remain fairly stable throughout the song. The sections are often of the same length, though sometimes new material is introduced at the end of a section (1-2 bars) indicating change or closure.

Parallelism is a closely related concept to the previous one. When two or more similar segments are parallel, they are rather identified as separate sections, not as one (Lerdahl & Jackendoff 1985, 51).

Another important concept is symmetry. It is also a common and expected feature in popular music. The listeners have pre-existing expectations regarding the patterns of popular music. These generalizations are learned knowledge of the style or genre of music. (Nurmesjärvi 1997.) This implies that the sections of form are preferably the same length when repeated (Lerdahl & Jackendoff 1985, 49).

There are also some other fairly obvious aspects that should be taken into account in the analysis. Firstly, the sections have to be contiguous, that is successive, they cannot include disconnected parts (Lerdahl & Jackendoff 1985, 37). Secondly, only complete groups/sections are considered as formal units, e.g. a final B-unit faded out in the middle is analyzed as a coda, not as another B-unit. Thirdly, the sections should rather not be small, the smaller the less preferable they are (also Lerdahl & Jackendoff 1985, 43). A single note or bar is not considered as a group/unit, it is included in other units (an exception can be made in the case of an intro or coda, which are often rather short, even one bar).

The forms have been analyzed as normative standard forms when it made sense to understand them in this way. The sections after or before the normative form are considered as its extensions. The preferred length of a group/formal unit is set by the normative standard form unit of 8 bars. It has been applied when possible. Different sections are preferred to be of approximately the same length rather than having very long and short

sections mixed together. This has not been possible to apply in all cases. Further there is variation even in the length of the same repeated section.<sup>7</sup>

The songs were divided into the following sections: In (intro), A, B, C, D, S (solo), W (interlude) and Co (coda) according to the rules above. Changes in the lyrics are indicated by numbers (A1, A2...)<sup>8</sup> An example of the result of the analysis is Example 1.

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In|AABA|S(b)A

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Example 1. The form of the song *Love Me Do* (1962), single 1.a

The normative standard form is placed between the vertical lines, other sections before or after the standard form.

### *Statistical analysis*

The purpose of this analysis is to study the relative proportions of the form types and the cue validity of the units; i.e. how the sections are organized syntagmatically and which are the prototypical forms.<sup>9</sup>

First the amount of different form types and their extensions were calculated. The forms were regarded as falling into the following categories:

Standard Forms and Standard Extensions	AABA	- BA, -SBA, -AB, -BSAB
	ABAB	- CAB, - AB
Other forms	AABC	

Secondly, the distributions of each two-section combination was calculated for all 44 songs (e.g., A-A or A-B). Each combination received a relative value (percentage) in relation to its own total form. This was done using the following procedure. Each song received a value of 1, which was divided by the number of two-section combinations in that particular song. For example, if a song had 4 two-section combinations, value 1 was divided by 4, resulting in a value of 0,25. Then the relative value 0,25 was multiplied by the absolute number of occurrences of that particular combination (e.g., A-B, #2)

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<sup>7</sup> For the complete analysis and length of the sections see Appendix 1.

<sup>8</sup> None of the sections A, B, C or D represents verse or chorus (refrain). These terms are avoided.

<sup>9</sup> Similar analyses have been made on the level of tones e.g. by Frank Tirro (1988) who studied the use of the Markoff-chain model in the analysis of Gregorian hymn melodies, and Yrjö Heinonen (1997) who studied pentatonism in some songs of the Beatles.

and this combination received a value of 0,5 (#2 \* 0,25=0,5). The relative values of each song were compared to corresponding values of the entire material by correlation analysis. The correlation values reveal the songs that are the most prototypical examples of the material. The average correlation of was calculated separately for each time period and for the A and B sides of the singles.

Standard deviation was used as a further criteria for measuring the prototypicality rate: the lower the standard deviation value, the higher the degree of prototypicality of a certain selection.

## RESULTS

A summary of the results is presented in Figure 1, which represents the difference in the amount of used normative standard forms and other forms during 1962-70.

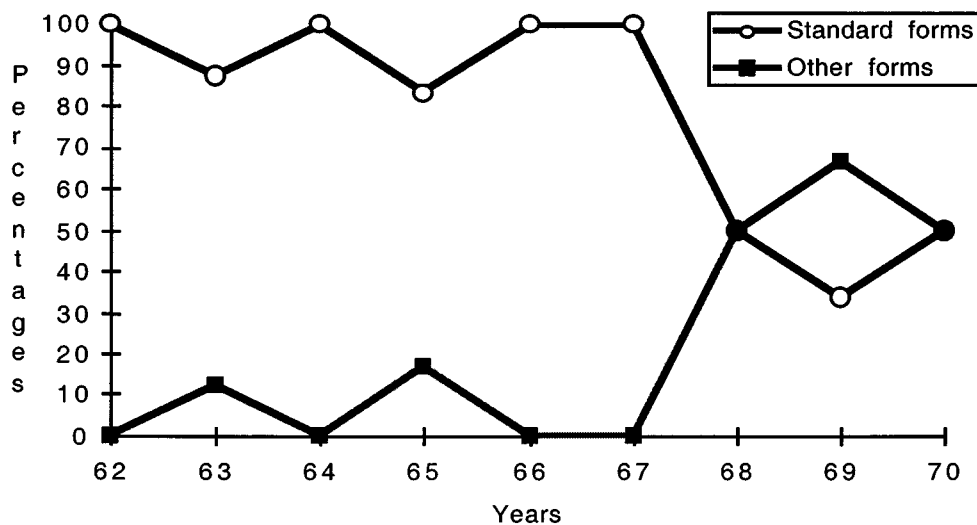


Figure 1. The forms in the time periods

The difference in the use of standard forms and other forms was clearly shown. The high rate of standard forms during the 1962-67 was significant. The use of 'other' forms in 1968 increased dramatically. One can certainly conclude that there was a change in the use of form from the year 1962 to the 1970, more so between the early (1962-67) and the late years (1968-70).

Figure 2 presents other results. There are three factors for each year: the prototypicality rate, the standard deviation of the prototypicality rates and the relative value of used normative standard forms.

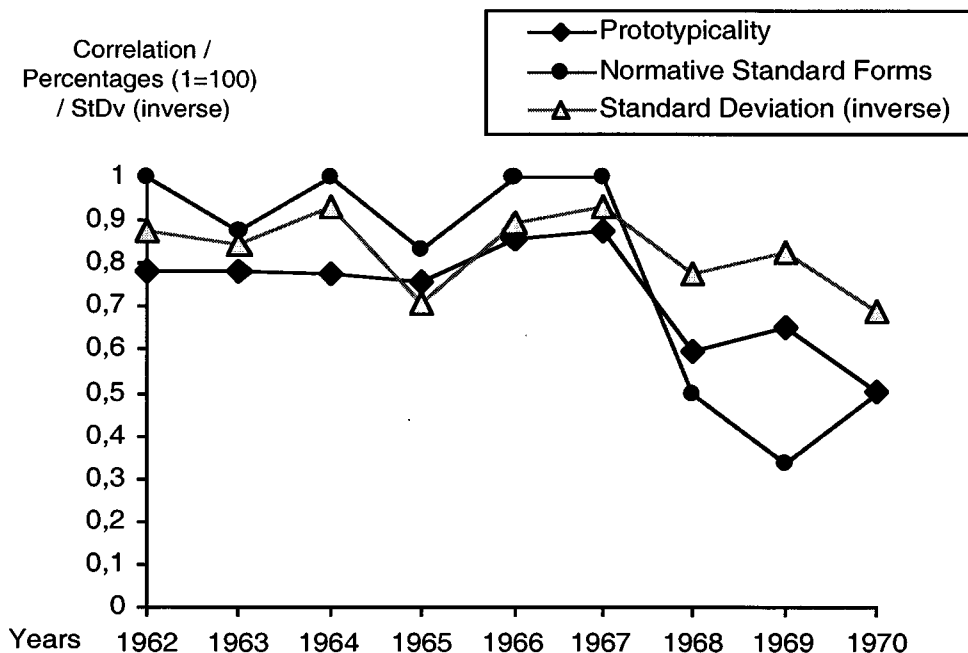


Figure 2. Prototypicality rate, Standard Deviation of the prototypicality rates and normative standard forms in relative values per each year

As seen also in Figure 1, the use of the normative standard forms distinctly illustrated the development of the concept of form. The most typical standard forms were used mainly from 1962-67. The highest peak was in 1966-67, which was followed by a sharply descending tendency. The prototypicality rate showed the same rising tendency when it came to the years 1966-67, after which it dropped. The most significant difference between the use of standard forms and the prototypicality rate was in the year 1969, when the former decreased and the latter increased. The standard deviations of the prototypicality rates of each year supported these results. The deviation was smallest when the prototypicality was highest. At the beginning (1962-65), the tendency of standard deviations was similar to that of normative standard forms until 1965-67, whilst all three aspects had similar tendencies, but after which the standard deviation had the same tendency as the prototypicality.

## Entire Selection

### *Standard Forms*

Table 2 presents the number of normative standard forms that were illustrated in a Figure 1 in percentages in the entire selection

Standard Forms	AABA	47,7% (21#)
	ABAB	29,5% (13#)
	AABC	2,3% (1#)
Other forms		20,5% (9#)
		100%

TABLE 2. The uses of standard forms in percentage values

Almost 80% of all the songs were based on normative standard forms, nearly half of them had the |AABA| form structure.<sup>10</sup> The second group |ABAB| comprised almost one third of the material. The group of other forms included one fifth of the whole material. Some forms in this group were considered as varied standard forms in which an "extra" section was placed within the normative sections (e.g. |ABWA|B, 17b, which is varied ABAB - |AB(W)AB| ) but which were not classified as standard forms. Some songs had the form |AAAA|, which indicated the use of the 12-bar blues pattern or some other repeated chord progression. The material did not include all the established standard forms; |ABAC| and |ABCA| did not occur. However, the results from all of the material confirmed the hypothesis that the forms used by the Beatles were on average based on standard forms.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Standard Extensions of the Standard Forms*

Table 3 illustrates how the standard forms were extended. All songs except one had an extension. The forms of the songs did not necessarily appear as presented in Table 3 (e.g. |AABA|BA) but they might have included sections even after the standard extension e.g. |AABA|BABB. However, they were included in these categories. If a solo had replaced an A or B section within the normative standard form it was considered as belonging to the 'other' forms. An intro was used in 70,5% (#31) and a coda in 81,8% (#36) of the songs. The most common extensions were |AABA|BA and |ABAB|CAB, each used in seven songs (15,9%). The extensions of |AABA| were altogether the largest group of all extensions (38,6%). This was no surprise because |AABA| was also the most used normative standard form (47,7%). The rest of the groups — extensions of |ABAB|, 'Other extended standard forms' and 'Other forms' — comprised about one fifth of the songs each. An interesting fact was that more than 20% of extended standard forms did not fit in any of these categories, so they were unique extensions. However, it seemed that

<sup>10</sup> Only one song, *This Boy* (no. 5b, 1963), in the whole material represents the pure |AABA| standard form, all the others have added forms.

<sup>11</sup> The form of each song was presented in Appendix 1. The normative form is placed vertically in the same column.

Normative standard form	Extensions	The numbers of the songs	%	
AABA	BA	1b, 5a, 9b, 11b, 12b, 15a, 18a	15,9	
	SBA	6a, 6b, 7a, 8b, 14b	11,4	
	AB	3a, 12a, 22a	6,8	
	BSAB	13b, 21b	4,5	->38,6
ABAB	CAB	2a, 4a, 4b, 7b, 9a, 13a, 16b	15,9	
	AB	10a, 14a	4,5	->20,4
Other extended standard forms		1a, 2b, 5b, 8a, 11a, 15b, 16a, 17a, 20b	20,5	->20,5
Other forms		3b, 10b, 17b, 18b, 19a, 19b, 20a, 21a, 22b	20,5	->20,5
				= 100,0

TABLE 3. Extended standard forms in percentages

the Beatles had some basic strategies as to how to use normative standard forms as well as how to extend them. Still only a few songs had precisely the same structure considering the whole form.

In some songs there were sections placed even before the standard form, as e.g. in 6a *Can't Buy Me Love* (1964) B|AABA|SBA|B. The song was based on an |AABA| form, extended with sections SBA. The B-sections 'framed' the normative standard form and its standard extension. This was one example of a song in which the form was constructed in the studio and on which producer George Martin had an influence. He often suggested the song should begin with the chorus as in this case (Martin & Hornsby 1979, 132-33)

### *Prototypicality*

The average prototypicality of the entire selection was 0.756, which is quite high. Table 4 shows the ten songs with the highest correlation values.

Year	No	Song	Correl	Form		
1967	15.b	Baby, You're A Rich Man	0.956	In	A A B A  B	co
1963	5.a	I Want To Hold Your Hand	0.953	In	A A B A B A	co
1966	12.b	Rain	0.953	In	A A B A B A	co
1967	15.a	All You Need Is Love	0.941	In	A  A A B A B A B B	co
1965	11.b	We Can Work It Out	0.932		A A B A B A	co
1965	10.a	Help!	0.925	In	A B A B A B	co
1963	3.a	From Me To You	0.922	In	A A B A A B A	co
1965	9.b	Yes It Is	0.916	In	A A B A B A	
1967	14.a	Strawberry Fields Forever	0.899	In	B A B A B A B	co
1964	8.a	I Feel Fine	0.898	In	A A B A S A B A	co

TABLE 4. The TOP 10 list of the most prototypical songs of the singles of the Beatles

Four of these ten songs were from the period 1966-67, which was the period of highest correlation values (Figure 1). Eight of the ten songs were based on |AABA| normative form, which was the most typical form used in the whole material (47,7%). Five of the most prototypical songs were based on this form, and continued with an A-section at the end in four cases.

### The Time Periods

The focus in this part of the study is on the same aspects as in the Entire Selection: standard forms, their extensions and prototypicality. The results of each period are summarized in Table 5.

Year	a) 1962-93	b)1964-65	c)1966-67	d) 1968-70
Standard form	AABA 50% ABAB 40%	AABA 58,3% ABAB 33,3%	AABA 60% ABAB 40%	AABA 25% ABAB 8,3% AABC 8,3%
	Other 10%	Other 8,3%		Other 58,3%
Extensions	AABA BA 20 %  ABAB CAB 30 %	AABA BA 16,6 %  ABAB CAB 16,6 %  AABA SBA 33,3 %	AABA BA 20 %  ABAB CAB 20 %	
Correlations	0.781	0.767	0.869	0.608

TABLE 5. The standard forms, extensions and correlations of the time periods



A glance at this table reveals and confirms the differences between these periods, presented above, at the beginning of the Results. Each period will be presented in detail separately in the following section.

1962-63

The use of the standard forms during this period was fairly close to the average of the entire material. The percentage of |AABA| was approximately the same, |ABAB| was used some 10% more and 'other' forms about 10% less than in the whole material. Their extensions were the most frequently used ones in the whole material as well, although during this period the percentages were higher (both of them were 15,9% in the entire selection).

The average prototypicality (0.781) of 1962-63 was very close to that of the whole material (0.756). In Table 6 the songs of this group were presented according to their correlation values.<sup>12</sup>

Year	No	Song	Correl	Form	
1963	5.a	I Want To Hold Your Hand	0.953	In  A A B A B A	co
1963	3.a	From Me To You	0.922	In  A A B A A B A	co
1962	1.b	PS I love you	0.87	B A A B A B A	co
1963	2.a	Please Please Me	0.857	In  A B A B C A B	co
1963	4.b	I'll Get You	0.857	In  A B A B C A B	co
1963	5.b	This Boy	0.838	In  A A B A	co
1962	1.a	Love me do	0.692	In  A A B A S A	co
1963	4.a	She Loves You	0.689	C A B A B C A B C	co
1963	2.b	Ask Me Why	0.625	In  A B A B C D A B D C D	co
1963	3.b	Thank You Girl	0.511	In  A A B W A	co

TABLE 6. The songs of 1962-63 arranged in order according to the correlation value

All the correlation values were high and the standard deviation (0.14) was low. The standard forms did play a significant role here. All but one song was based on standard forms. The only exception, *Thank You Girl* (3b) had the lowest correlation value in this selection. On the other hand, *This Boy* (5b), whose form was 'pure' |AABA| did not have the highest correlation but quite an average one. Thus, the songs that belonged to this time period were typically based on standard forms with their standard extensions.

<sup>12</sup> In this and following similar figures the numbers indicating the lyrics are excluded since this presentation is clearer and it does not affect the results in any way. They are, however, shown in the table in Appendix 1.

1964-65

The use of standard forms in this group was similar to the first period and the entire selection as well, though slight differences occurred. The |AABA| forms were used 10% more and the 'other' forms 12% less than in the whole material

The extensions used in this period were the three main extensions used in the entire selection as well, with the exception that the |AABA|SBA form was used much more than in the entire selection. This is explained by the fact that this is the only group where it appears in more than one song.

The average prototypicality value 0.767 of this period was closest to that of the whole material. Yet this group included the song with the lowest prototypicality value in the entire selection (10b). The standard deviation of the prototypicality rates was 0.20.

Year	No	Song	Correl	Form	
1965	11.b	We Can Work It Out	0.932	A A B A  B A	co
1965	10.a	Help!	0.925	In  A B A B  A B	co
1965	9.b	Yes It Is	0.916	In  A A B A  B A	
1964	8.a	I Feel Fine	0.898	In  A A B A  S B A	co
1965	11.a	Day Tripper	0.836	In  A B A B  S A B	co
1964	6.a	Can't Buy Me Love	0.814	B  A A B A  S B A B	
1965	9.a	Ticket To Ride	0.765	In  A B A B  C A B C A B	co
1964	7.b	Things We Said Today	0.765	In  A B A B  C A B C A B	co
1964	8.b	She's A Woman	0.754	In  A A B A  S B A	co
1964	7.a	A Hard Day's Night	0.723	A A B A  S B A	co
1964	6.b	You Can't Do That	0.706	In  A A B A  S B A	
1965	10.b	I'm Down	0.173	A A S A  S A A	co

TABLE 7. The songs of 1964-65 arranged in order according to the correlation value

Again the |AABA|BA form was on the top of the list. It is interesting, however, to notice the effect of the intros and codas in these forms. The first song (We Can Work It Out 11b) and third song (Yes It Is 9b) were based on exactly the same forms, except that the former had a coda and the latter an intro. Yet the one with a coda had highest correlation value in this period, which indicated that a coda was a more typical factor in this material than an intro.

1966-67

The songs belonging to this group were entirely based on standard forms. |AABA| included 60% and |ABAB| 40% of the forms. The extensions were also the same as the two most frequently used ones in the whole material.

The average prototypicality value of this group (0.869) was the highest of all the groups. The standard deviation of the prototypicality values was the lowest of all the groups, 0.08.

Year	No	Song	Correl	Form		
1967	15.b	Baby, You're A Rich Man	0,956	In	A A B A  B	co
1966	12.b	Rain	0,953	In	A A B A  B A	co
1967	15.a	All You Need Is Love	0,941	In	A  A A B A  B A B B	co
1967	14.a	Strawberry Fields Forever	0,899	In	B  A B A B  A B	co
1966	12.a	Paperback Writer	0,897		B  A A B A  A B	co
1966	13.b	Yellow Submarine	0,871		A A B A  B S A B	co
1967	16.b	I Am The Walrus	0,857	In	A B A B  C A B	co
1967	16.a	Hello, Goodbye	0,842		A B A B  S B A B	co
1967	14.b	Penny Lane	0,769		A A B A  S B A A B B	
1966	13.a	Eleanor Rigby	0,703		C  A B A B  C A B	

TABLE 8. The songs of 1966-67 arranged in order according to the correlation value

Even the lowest correlation value in this group was quite high. The single 15 'All You Need Is Love'/'Baby You're A Rich Man' had the highest prototypicality rate in the entire selection and the first song in this period, 'Baby You're A Rich Man' (15b), had the highest rate among all the songs. Again, the extension |AABA|B(A) dominated the top of the list.

#### 1968-70

The last period differed from all the previous periods. The relative amount of the standard forms was the lowest, the group of 'other' forms was 58,3% of all forms, and there were not two similar extensions in this group.

The previous results of this study did imply that the prototypicality of this group was low. In fact the average prototypicality value of the selection (0.608) was the lowest of the entire selection. The standard deviation was 0.197, which was the second highest of the selections. The diversity of the forms during this period was obvious. There were some songs whose correlation value was above the average of the entire material, but in ten cases out of twelve it was below the average. Many songs had an extremely low correlation value. *Hey Jude* (18a) was based on normative |AABA| form extended by the normative BA-extension. The low correlation value of this particular song is, however, explained by the long extension of C-sections at the end.

Year	No	Song	Correl	Form		
1969	21.b	Come Together	0.871	In	AABA BSAB	co
1968	17.a	Lady Madonna	0.831	In	ABAS ABA	
1969	20.b	Old Brown Shoe	0.736	In	ABAB CSSCAB	co
1969	19.b	Don't Let Me Down	0.728	In	B ABCB ABB	
1970	22.a	Let It Be	0.721	In	AABA ABBWSSBAABB	
1969	20.a	The Ballad Of John And Yoko	0.643		AAAB AA	co
1968	18.b	Revolution	0.637	In	AABC AABCSAABC	co
1968	17.b	The Inner Light	0.611	In	ABWA B	co
1969	21.a	Something	0.566	In	AABS A	co
1969	19.a	Get Back	0.363	In	ABSB SABSB	co
1968	18.a	Hey Jude	0.298		AABA BACCCCCCC	co
1970	22.b	You Know My Name	0.286	In	AAAA AAASS	co

TABLE 9. The songs of 1968-70 arranged in order according to the correlation value

### A and B sides of the singles

A comparison of the material can be made between the A and the B sides of the singles. The different sides had a different role or purpose in the marketing of the singles. A side was of the main commercial interest and therefore it was brought to the fore more strongly in marketing. In some cases the Beatles released singles with two A sides. Then both of the songs were marketed in parallel without emphasizing one over the other. Sometimes this was due to the competition between Lennon and McCartney: both of them simply wanted to have an A side of the single and neither of them would give up. However, both sides of these double A side singles are considered here as A sides.

I compared the percentage values of used standard forms and standard extension with the percentages of other used forms. The results are shown in Figures, 3 and 4.

The A-sides of the singles were firmly based on the standard forms, they were used 100% from 1962 until 1967. The percentual amount of the extensions was precisely the same as that of the normative standard forms. The 'other' forms had a peak in the years 68-69, which was seen also in the results of the whole material.

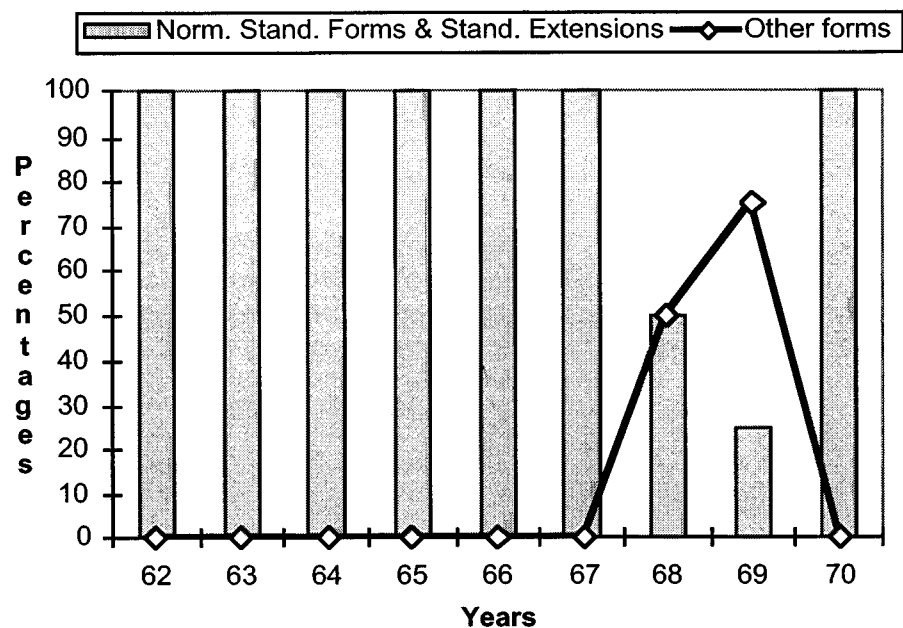


Figure 3. The percentage of normative standard forms and standard extensions compared to other forms in the A sides of the singles (# 26)

The results of the B sides are presented in Figure 4.

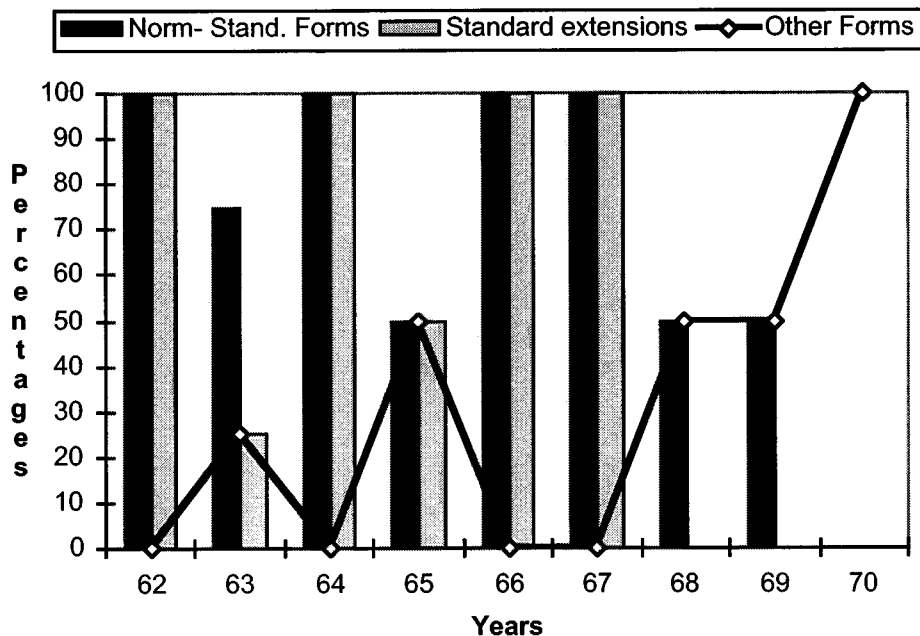


Figure 4. The percentage of normative standard forms and standard extensions compared to other forms in the B sides of the singles (#18)

The results of the B-sides of the singles were much more diversified than those of the A-sides. The normative standard forms were not always automatically followed by standard extensions as in the case of A-sides, and the amount of the used standard forms was smaller and varied from the beginning. The 'other' forms were used since the second year and the amount increased at the end.

The prototypicality rates and the standard deviations of the correlation values support the difference between A and B sides of the singles.

	A-sides	B-sides
Average correlation	0.778	0.71
Standard deviation	0.167	0.215

TABLE 10. The correlation values and the standard deviations of the correlation values of the A sides and the B sides of the singles.

The average prototypicality of the A-sides was higher than that of the B-sides, yet the standard deviation is smaller, too. The more normative forms have also high prototypicality rates. The average correlation of the A-sides is (0.778) also above the average of the entire selection 0.756, whereas average correlation of the B sides is below that.

## CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed at shedding light on the concept of form and its change in the music of the Beatles in 1962-70. The main concepts in this study were standard forms and prototypicality. The main hypothesis of the study was that the use of the standard forms was stronger during the early years than the late years. The more specific purpose of the research was to study the percentages of the used standard forms and their extensions and prototypical examples. The findings support the main hypothesis that the standard forms were dominant in the early material. However, the change in the use of form occurs at a fairly late stage, during the last period (1968-70), which differs strikingly from the others. During this period the standard forms and their extensions become the minority after being the main form types during the first three periods (1962-63, 1964-65, 1966-67).

Popular music was rapidly changing during the 60's and the music of the Beatles seems to follow this general trend, too (Björnberg). The results concerning the last period can also be interpreted as an indication of moving towards the verse/chorus form. According to Davis (1989, 33), this is a form

type used from the mid-sixties and it is still used very much today. Verses alternate with a chorus and songs become longer. This is what actually happened in the music of the Beatles. Today the verse/chorus form has more or less replaced |AABA| and |ABAB| forms.

Many previous studies support these results. Firstly, the strong use of standard forms during the early years (1962-65) was expected. The standard forms were indeed used as models in the songwriting process. This is confirmed by the research of Heinonen (1995, 109). He has studied the compositional processes of the Beatles. He came to the conclusion that the typical song writing and recording process of a Lennon-McCartney song, which are 92,3 % of the analyzed songs, was based on six stages:

- 1) getting an idea and developing it further;
- 2) grasping the A section (verse);
- 3) writing the B section (chorus, middle eight) and working out the basic unit of the overall form (usually AABA);
- 4) grasping the overall form (the amount and order of the verses and choruses, writing the intro, solo and coda);
- 5) arranging and determining the timbre;
- 6) recording and mixing.

The standard forms had a specific and acknowledged influence on the construction of form, and the extensions were often made based on the normative standard form. Further, stages 1-3 were often done during the actual writing process (standard forms), while stages 4-6 took place in the studio (extensions).<sup>13</sup> Later, at the time of the last period, the Beatles started consciously breaking these models and patterns of form.

Eerola (1997) has studied the stylistic periods of the Beatles. His study supported the generally accepted division of the styles of the Beatles into three periods: early period, experimental period and late (cf. Heinonen and Eerola, p.3 in this book). Figure 2 of the present study (p. 70) showed the average prototypicality, the standard deviation of the correlation values, and used normative standard forms of each year. The changes in this figure can be compared to the division confirmed by Eerola and divided into three phases. The first phase is from 1962 until 1965, where the amount of normative standard forms and the standard deviations have similar figures. This corresponds to the 'early period' in Eerola's study. Second phase is from 1966 until 1967, where all the three parameters follow the same direction. This corresponds to the 'experimental period' in Eerola's study. In the last phase the standard deviation line follows the direction of the average prototypicality line, this was the 'last period' in Eerola's study. What

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<sup>13</sup> Even though this article does not concern the actual writing and arranging process of the songs, it should be mentioned that the producer of the Beatles, George Martin, had an influence on the final construction of form during the studio stages. In the beginning his 'speciality' was intros and codas and solos. He often suggested e.g. whether a song should begin with a B or A section (Martin & Hornsby 1979, 132-3).

can be made of this connection? The standard deviation always seemed to follow the figure, which had higher ratings. In the beginning it was the normative standard forms, in the end the prototypicality. One thing is certain, the middle phase, where all three had the same direction and the lines were close to each other, the result emphasizes the general findings of my study: that period had the highest average prototypicality and amount of used standard forms.

There are also incidents that happened to occur at the same points where the phases and the style periods according to Eerola changed. Those are changes in the recording team of the Beatles (cf. Heinonen, p. 101 in this book). It seems that the 'original' recording team (Martin, Smith, Langham, Lincoln, Emerick or Scott) was working with the Beatles in the studio during the first phase. In the second, 'conventional', period the staff changed a little, though the main source of influence, Martin, stayed (Martin, Emerick, McDonald or Lush). During the last period, during which the experiments on forms started, the changes in the recording team are most radical. Martin did not produce the songs anymore, Smith and Emerick were not involved, practically all the names mentioned before were absent and the Beatles were responsible for the decisions made in the studio. This can not be ignored since as it has been stated earlier that often constructing the final form of the songs was part of the studio work rather than the writing process (cf. p. 72 in this article). Evidently it was George Martin whose handprints can be seen partly in the results of the present study.

There are, however, controversial results, too. The results of my study were not completely compatible with the study of Eerola. They did not support the change from the early to the experimental period, which happened during 1964-66. Stylistically both of these periods had their own distinctive features and the difference is quite clear. However, in the present study the period 1966-67 differs from the two previous ones slightly because of the purer use of standard forms and higher prototypicality. What can be said about the experimental period regarding the use of form at this time? The forms used during this period are certainly not very experimental since all songs were based on standard forms. Further, the most prototypical examples are found during this period and the average prototypicality is the highest.

There is also a similarity between these two figures. The curve after 1967 — sharply descending prototypicality — represents the fall of the experimental period in Eerola's study. It clearly indicates the differences between the experimental and last period. However, these two figures look similar but represent different things. The peak during 1966-67 in Eerola's figure represents the experimental elements in the music. The figure of prototypicality represents the conventional, traditional concept and use of form. The experiments in form started after the stylistical experimental stage. In some sense the "purity" of form supports the life span of the experimental period, thus not in a way one would expect - it is not part of the experiment



but rather a non-experimental feature. Form is not a stylistic feature of music in the same sense as the parameters Eerola has studied.<sup>14</sup>

An explanation for this difference can be offered. When the experiments were carried out in the other features, the form remained as a solid, familiar basis, on which the other experiments could be built. The statement from Meyer (1973, cf. p. 67 in this article) regarding variation can be understood in a larger context and it supports this view. When something new was tried, some other things had to remain stable, everything could not be experimented with at the same time.

The differences between the A and the B sides were also clear. Because the A-sides were intended for the main markets they were significantly more strongly based on the standard forms and standard extensions than the B-sides. This is a very logical and expected finding and supports the view that the more commercial music is more "standard" and typical than the other songs.

There are three critical points in this study. The first involves the analysis of form, the second the method and the third the relation of this sample to the entire production of the Beatles.

Firstly, in the analysis of music there are always decisions the analyst has to make. In the actual procedure of analyzing the form I have followed the rules presented above as strictly as possible. Yet I am aware that there is always some space for different interpretations. The analyst also has the power to influence the results of the study e.g. by choosing the parameters taken into account in the analysis. I am aware that I have had to face similar decisions as well and a different selection of the parameters might have altered the results. A parameter that could be significant but is left out in the present study is the length of the sections. In the analysis of standard forms and prototypes all e.g. AABA forms are considered to be the same whether the length of each section is 8 or 24 bars (both examples are found in the material). Naturally the closer to 8 bars the length, the more "standard" a form is viewed to be. This aspect will be considered in the future research.

Secondly, statistical analysis has often been a target of heavy criticism by music researchers. It has not been considered a proper tool for analysis and some researchers avoid it because it is traditionally considered to be a method used only in the natural sciences, not the humanities. However, I am convinced that statistical analysis is an appropriate method in the analysis of music and form<sup>15</sup>. What is typical or prototypical is not always perfectly clear when defined by intuition or memory because of the ways of thinking of human beings. Although frequently occurring features are often considered typical ones, our minds also tend to remember atypical examples of a style or schema (Mandler 1982, 105; Eerola 1997, 82). Categorization is typical of people's everyday thinking but it is biased. Therefore statistical analysis can be used in order to avoid incorrect results. It reveals the biased

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<sup>14</sup> These are e.g. meter, instrumentation, effects, lyrics, and harmony (Eerola 1997, 31.f).

<sup>15</sup> See also Rautio 1993, 113.

representations based on the way our mind works. (See also Eerola's article in this book.)

Thirdly, the results of this study are based on a sample, which covers only a small part of all the songs released by the Beatles. Moreover, the singles were released for the commercial markets and they had a far greater importance as purchased goods than they have now. This certainly had an effect on the selection of the songs chosen to be released as singles and thereby also on the results of this study. However, I believe that this study provides a direction for the study of the concept of form and its change on the Beatles albums, too. Whether this is the case remains to be seen in my future research.

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APPENDIX. 1.  
The table of the forms of the 22 singles by the Beatles (1962-70) (based on the list of the officially published singles in UK [Lewisohn 1996, 350])

Year No	Song	Correl	In	Form / number of bars			Recording	Mixing	Released
							co		
1962 1a	Love me do	0,692	X 8	A 13	A 13	A 13	X 6	6/6/62; 4,11/9/62; 25/2/1963	5/10/62
1962 1b	PS I love you	0,87	B 8	A1 10	B 10	A1 10	X 4	6/6/62; 11/9/62; 25/2/63	
1963 2a	Please Please Me	0,857	X 4	A1 8	A2 8	B 8	X 5	11/9/62; 26/11/62	11/1/63
1963 2b	Ask Me Why	0,625	X 2	A1 7	B1 6	A2 7	X 5	6/6/62; 26/11/62; 25/2/1963	
1963 3a	From Me To You	0,922	X 4	A1 8	A2 8	B 8	X 4	5/3/63	11/4/63
1963 3b	Thank You Girl	0,511	X 4	A1 12	A2 12	B 12	X 12	5,13/3/63	
1963 4a	She Loves You	0,689	C 8	A1 8	A2 8	B 8	X 13	1/7/63	23/8/63
1963 4b	I'll Get You	0,857	X 4	A1 8	A2 8	B' 8	X 4	1/7/1963	
1963 5a	I Want To Hold Your Hand	0,953	X 4	A1 12	A2 12	B 12	X 3	7/10/63	29/1/63
1963 5b	This Boy	0,838	X 4	A1 8	A2 8	B 8	X 4	17/10/63	
1964 6a	Can't Buy Me Love	0,814	B' 6	A1 12	A2 12	B 12		29/1/64; 25/2/64; 10/3/64	20/3/64

Year No	Song	Correl	In	Form / number of bars				Recording	Mixing	Released			
1964 6b	You Can't Do That	0,706	X	A1 12	A2 12	B 8	A3 13	S(a) 12	B 8	A3 13	25/2/64; 22/5/64	26/2/64; 10/3/64	10/7/64
1964 7a	A Hard Day's Night	0,723		A1 12	A2 12	B 8	A1 12	S(a) 12	B 8	A1 12	X 16/4/64 4	20,23/4/64; 9,22/6/64	10/7/64
1964 7b	Things We Said Today	0,765	X	A1 8	B 9	A2 8	B' 8	C 8	A3 8	B' 8	X 2,3/6/64 4	9,22/6/64	
1964 8a	I Feel Fine	0,898	X	A1 10	A2 10	B 8	A3 10	S(a) 14	A2 10	B 8	X 18/10/64 6-	21,22,27/10/64	27/11/64
1964 8b	She's A Woman	0,754	X	A1 24	A2 24	B 4	A1 24	S(a) 12	B 4	A1 24	X 8/10/64 6-	12,21/10/64	
1965 9a	Ticket To Ride	0,765	X	A1 8	B 8	A2 8	B 8	C 9	A1 8	B 8	X 15/12/65 6-	18,23/2/65	9/4/65
1965 9b	Yes It Is	0,916	X	A1 8	A2 8	B 5	A3 8	B 5	A3 9		16/2/65	18,23/2/65	
1965 10a	Help!	0,925	X	A1 16	B 16	A2 16	B 16	A1' 16	B 16		X 13/4/1965 2	18/4/65; 18/6/65	23/7/65
1965 10b	I'm Down	0,173		A1 14	A2 14	S(a) 12	A3 14	S(a) 12	A' 12	A' 12	X 14/6/65 6-	18/6/65	
1965 11a	Day Tripper	0,836	X	A1 10	B 10	A2 10	B 10	S(a) 12	A3 10	B 10	X 16/10/65 10-	25/10/65; 10/11/66	3/12/65
1965 11b	We Can Work It Out	0,932		A1 8	A2 8	B 12	A3 8	B 12	A3 8		X 20,29/10/65 2	28,29/10/65; 10/11/66 10/11/1966	

Year No	Song	Correl	In	Form / number of bars							Recording	Mixing	Released
1966	12a Paperback Writer	0,897	B 8	A1 12	A2 8	B 8	A3 12	A4 12	B 8	X 13,14/4/66 16	14/6/66; 31/10/66	10/6/66	
1966	12b Rain	0,953	X 4	A1 9	A2 10	B 12	A3 9	B 12	A4 10	X 14,16/4/66 8	16/4/66; 2/12/69		
1966	13a Eleanor Rigby	0,703	C 8	A1 10	B 8	A2 10	B 8	C 8	A3 10	B' 9	28,29/4/66; 6/6/66	5/8/66	
1966	13b Yellow Submarine	0,871		A1 8	A2 8	B 8	A3 8	B 8	S(a) 8	A4 8	B 8	2,3,22/6/66	
1967	14a Strawberry Fields Forever	0,899	X 4	A1 8	B 11	A2 8	B 11	A3 8	B 11	X 24,28,29/11/66; 16- 8,9,15,21/12/66	28,29/11/66; 9,15,22,29/12/66; 26/10/71	17/2/67	
1967	14b Penny Lane	0,769		A1 8	A2 8	B 8	A3 8	S(a) 8	B 8	A4 8	B 8	29,30/12/66; 4,5,6,9,10,12,17/1/67	
1967	15a All You Need Is Love	0,941	X 3	A1 8	A2 8	B 8	A' 8	B 8	A3 8	B 8	X 14,19,23,24,25, 16- 26/6/67; 9/10/1968	21,26/6/67; 1/11/67; 7/7/67	
1967	15b Baby, You're A Rich Man	0,956	X 8	A1 11	A2 11	B 12	A3 11	B 12		X 11/5/67 8-	11/5/67; 22/10/71		
1967	16a Hello, Goodbye	0,842		A1 7	B 9	A2 7	B 9	S(a) 7	B 9	A1 7	B' 14	2,6,15/11/67	
1967	16b I Am The Walrus	0,857	X 7	A1 6	B1 9	A2 11	B2 13	C 9	A3 6	B3 9	X 5,6,27,28/9/67 8-	5,6,28,29/9/67	
1968	17a Lady Madonna	0,831	X 8	A1 16	B1 16	A2 16	S(b) 16	A3 16	B2 16	A1' 15	3,6/2/68	6,15/2/68; 2/12/69	

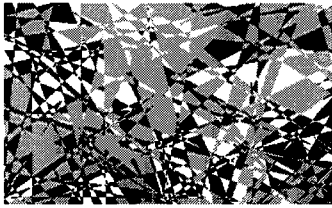
Year No	Song	Correl	In	Form / number of bars										Recording	Mixing	Released							
1968	17b The Inner Light	0,611	X	10	A1	B1	W	A1	B1	A1	B1	A1	B1	A1	B1	A1	B1	X	12/1/68; 6,8/2/68	6,8/2/68; 27/1/70			
					8	7	10	8	7	10	8	7	10	8	7	10	8	7	12				
1968	18a Hey Jude	0,298			A1	A2	B1	A3	A1	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	X	29,30,31/7/68; 1,2/8/68	30/7/68; 2,6,8/8/68	26/8/68		
					8	8	13	8	13	9	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4				
1968	18b Revolution	0,637	X	4	A1	A2	B1	C	A3	A4	B2	C	S(a)	A5	B	C	X	9,10,11,12/7/68	12,15/7/68; 5/12/69				
					7	7	6	8	7	7	6	8	9	7	7	6	8	8					
1969	19a Get Back	0,363	X	4	A1	B	S(a)	B	S(a)	A4	B	S(a)	B	S(a)	A4	B	X	23,27,28,30/1/69	5/2/69; 26/3/69; 4,7/4/69; 26/3/70	5/5/69			
					8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8-					
1969	19b Don't Let Me Down	0,728	X	2	A1	B	C	B	A2	B	B	B	B	A2	B	B	X	22,28,30/1/69	5/2/69; 4/4/69				
					8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8						
1969	20a The Ballad Of John And Yoko	0,643			A1	A2	A3	B	A4	A5	A4	A5	A4	A5	A4	A5	X	14/4/69	14/4/69	30/5/69			
					16	16	16	8	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	8						
1969	20b Old Brown Shoe	0,736	X	4	A1	B	A2	B'	C1	S(a)	S(b)	C2	A3	B	C1	S(a)	X	25/2/69; 16,18/4/69	25/2/69; 16,18/4/69				
					8	10	8	8	12	8	8	12	8	12	8	12	16-						
1969	21a Something	0,566	X	1	A1	A2	B	S(a)	A3	A3	B	S(a)	A3	A3	B	S(a)	X	25/2/69; 16/4/69; 2,5/5/69	25/2/69; 6/5/69; 11/7/69; 19/8/69	31/10/69			
					9	10	8	9	8	8	9	8	9	8	9	8	4						
1969	21b Come Together	0,871	X	4	A1	A2	B	A3	B	S(a)	A5	B	B	B	S(a)	A5	X	21,22,23,25,29,30/7/69	7/8/69;				
					12	8	6	8	6	10	8	6	6	6	10	8	16-						
1970	22a Let it Be	0,721	X	4	A1	A2	B	A3	A4	B	B	W	S(a)	S(a)	B	A5	A6	B	B	25,26,31/1/69	4,8/1/70; 26/3/70	6/3/70	
					4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	30/4/68; 4/1/70		
1970	22b You Know My Name	0,286	X	2	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	S(a)	S(a)	A5	A6	A7	X	17/5/67; 7,8/6/67	7,9/6/67; 30/4/69; 26/11/1969				
					16	14	11	11	9	11	12	11	11	11	9	11	8	30/4/1969					

Appendix 3.

LIVERPUDLIAN IDENTITY OF THE BEATLES FROM 1957-62.







**BEATLES 2000**

## LIVERPUDLIAN IDENTITY OF THE BEATLES FROM 1957-62

Terhi Nurmesjärvi

The Beatles was formed at the turn of the 1960's in Liverpool, Northwest England. At the same time and in that same place there developed a style or sound called Merseybeat.<sup>1</sup> It was considered to be a typical Liverpoolian style of playing beat music or rock'n'roll. The purpose of this study is to examine the Liverpoolian identity of the Beatles through the development of Merseybeat. The term "early" Beatles refers to the period from the formation and development of the band from 1957, when the first skiffle group formed by John Lennon was called Quarry Men, to the end of 1962 when the Beatles started their recording career.

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<sup>1</sup> Merseybeat is also known as Mersey Sound or Liverpool Sound.

There are some studies of the music scene and Merseybeat in Liverpool that are related to this study<sup>2</sup> but most of them are more biographical than analytical or speculative. This study of the Liverpoolian identity and especially its expression Merseybeat and the Beatles, is based mainly on the writings of Sara Cohen who discussed the musical scene in Liverpool in the 1980's (1991) and also her article "Identity, Place and the 'Liverpool Sound' " (1994), in which she deals with "the issue of identity and the construction of locality through music".

## LOCALITY AND IDENTITY

The key concepts of this study are locality and identity. Locale "refers to the physical setting of social activity as situated geographically" (Giddens 1990, 18; quoted in Stokes 1994, 3). Our activities are tied into the surrounding space and locale, also to the geographical location. The sense of place and locality

"may reflect political motivations and geopolitical assertions of affiliation, roots or ethnicity, economic motivations, [...], ideological motivations [...], or social motivations resulting in other assertions of difference" (Cohen 1994, 129-130).

In his book "Key Concepts of Popular Music" Roy Shuker (1997) describes locality as "the notion of localized sounds", which in this case means strongly Liverpoolian style Merseybeat.<sup>3</sup> The concept of locality is also related to the study of Cultural Geography, which according to Shuker means the way in which music may serve as a marker of identity. As Shuker writes, one of the main questions to be asked is, "Why they [sounds] develop at a specific location at a particular time" (Shuker 1997, 179). Why Merseybeat came into being in Liverpool in the end of the 50's?

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<sup>2</sup> Sara Cohen has written about the Liverpoolian identity (1991, 1994). Also Janne Mäkelä wrote a chapter concerning the Liverpoolian identity of the Beatles in his Licentiate theses (1998). "Merseybeat – Let's Go Down to Cavern" by Spencer Leigh (1984) is a biographical book about the scene.

<sup>3</sup> In this connection, the alternative term for Merseybeat, the Liverpool sound, indicates more clearly its location.

The other concept, identity, is closely related to that of locality. Identity in this case is to be understood as the collective identity created through the music. Cohen's research has

“indicated various ways in which people create an image or sense of place in the production and consumption of music. This may be revealed in processes of musical composition and rehearsal, in the collective memories embodied in the music, in patterns of buying and use, and in discourse surrounding the music which can involve territorial negotiation and conflict over sound and meaning.” (Cohen 1994, 129)

Several factors influence and mark the formation and existence of identity and locality. Based on Cohen's work (1994) I have constructed the following figure, which presents the essential aspects that are dealt with in this particular study.<sup>4</sup>

Locality and identity reflect social, economic and political factors. Social factors deal with the people, the history and background of the inhabitants of the location, as well as the traditions that have influenced them. Political and economic factors are not isolated to the social factors but they have a specific impact on the production of music and the music industry, which has to be taken into account.

The concepts of locality and identity are closely linked together and it is not always sensible to use them separately.<sup>5</sup> The interaction between them is affective in both ways. Cohen talks about *local identity*, which in this case is found to be a more useful concept than the separate notions locality and identity. However, locality may be seen as a more concrete and physically binding factor, as opposed to identity which is more abstract and difficult to quantify, yet a powerful presence in subjectivity and its discourses.

The construction of identity requires separation of *us* from *others*. In England it meant opposing Liverpool against the rest of Britain (north / south opposition), especially against Manchester (Cohen 1994, 124). The social meaning of music emerges because it offers means through which people may identify identities, locations and borders that distinguish them. In Liverpool this comparison was evident particularly in the sharp contrast within the musical scenes of its neighbouring Manchester, and the music industry

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<sup>4</sup> Some of the aspects that were listed by Cohen have not been considered in this case, e.g. ethnicity, gender and religion.

<sup>5</sup> However, collective identity is not always tied into a specific location, especially when it has nothing to do with ethnicity.

capital, London. Through this contrast it was possible to find the essential characteristics which separated "us" from the "others".

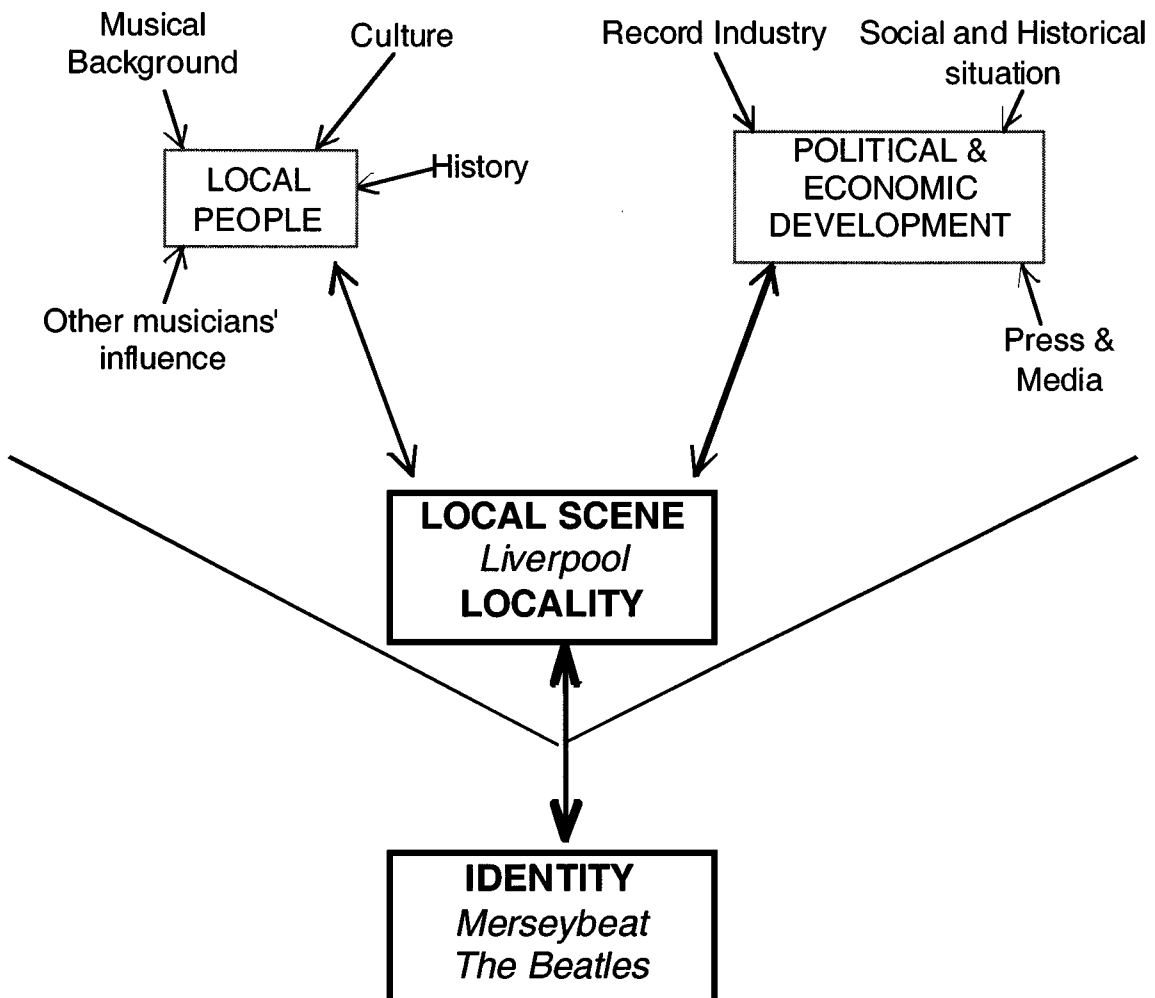


Figure 1. The Construction of Locality and Identity based on Cohen (1994).

## SOME NOTES ON SOURCE CRITICISM

The research material includes mainly biographical literature, often reproduced by journalists. Some of the material was documented during the

1960's (Davies 1968; Braun 1964) but most of the interviews etc. have been compiled during the 1980's and 90's.<sup>6</sup>

The material about the careers and lives of the Beatles was not documented by scientific researchers. Those who were on the scene or whom have written about the Beatles were not "fieldworkers" with theoretical frameworks and methods, neither were they troubled by the questions of reliability and validity, nor objectivity.<sup>7</sup>

The primary documents in biographies and journalistic writings are often oral sources,<sup>8</sup> which are by no means valuable in historical documentation. That involves, however, some problematic aspects:

Written records speak to the point of *what happened*, while oral sources almost invariably provide insights into *how people felt about what happened*. Written history is, ideally, objective and unbiased, although historians are increasingly coming to recognize the ideal of "objectivity" as illusory, since any historical account is necessarily biased in some respect. Orally communicated history, on the other hand, deriving as it does from the personal experiences of individuals, tends to be more subjective and evaluative, so that individual and community attitudes are clearly expressed in oral accounts of historical events." (Allen & Montell 1981, 20-21)

Oral presentations also reflect attitudes, opinions, emotions, values, and beliefs. A factor, which is clearly tied into the problems of oral history, is memory, which influences the accuracy of the interviews and biographies.

"Memory is known to be fallible due to such factors as passive decay (e.g. Brown, 1957), systematic distortion of the memory traces (e.g. Wulf, 1922), interference between traces such that similar memories cannot be distinguished (e.g. Postman 1972), motivated forgetting, retrieval failure (e.g. Tulving, 1969), and displacement of existing memories by incoming material (e.g. Waugh and Norman, 1965). Additionally, physical trauma, drug abuse and senility are other causes of forgetting."<sup>9</sup> (Bull & Clifford 1979, 154)

The factors influencing memory are numerous. If the informant is interviewed alone, he/she is always "right" and things are easily coloured, embellished and/or changed. Furthermore, it is possible that leading questions or pressure from the interviewer may lure the informant to "remember"

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<sup>6</sup> See also Heinonen, pp. 111-146 in this book.

<sup>7</sup> See Kirk & Miller, *Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research*, 1986.

<sup>8</sup> Oral sources include conversations and interviews, but also orally communicated secondary data in the form of written material, including *letters, autobiographies* (which can include materials derived from oral sources), *family histories, diaries, travel accounts*, and *newspaper columns*. (Allen & Montell 1981, 22.)

<sup>9</sup> Stress is also one influential factor (Jones 1979). About the drug abuse see also *Alcohol and Human Memory* 1977 (Introduction), Idzikowski 1988, and Lowe 1988.

something that has not really happened. This is partially unintentional; the mind has a "need" to fill in empty spaces. Pictures in our mind may also be forgotten, distorted or made complete due to the wish to forget, the time that has passed, or the external interferences. Another influencing factor may be the information received after the event, which makes the person believe he/she has seen or experienced something that he/she really has not. These complementary images may come from others involved but also from the media, whose impact can be great. The statements must not be seen as black and white but in proportion to the overall context and other sources (Rasilainen 1995, 65).

In the case of the Beatles there are also other motivations that might influence the material. Those who were close to the members of the Beatles were few. It is possible that some informants like to come forward because of the guaranteed publicity it brings. However, there are always those who would like to tell the stories about those times, some just for fun. It is possible that the informant made use of the situation and turned it into his/her advantage by colouring the stories, which after a while began a life of their own. In some cases the same events have simply been experienced and understood in different ways. Drugs and alcohol were a part of everyday life for the Beatles and their friends.

There are contradictory statements from Lennon and McCartney for example about the author of some songs – they both claim them to be their own.<sup>10</sup> The two have also confessed that they have made up stories for the press, because they knew that they wanted new and juicy stories. John Lennon stated about the Beatlemania times: "We were funny at Press conferences because it was all a joke. [...] They'd ask joke questions so you'd give joke answers" (Davies 1968, 196). The informants are the same in various writings and the authors use cross-references. Yet the original sources are often poorly marked if marked at all.

The most reliable sources could be those, which have been published shortly after the events took place. On the other hand at that time the Beatles intentionally gave misleading statements, which have to be critically interpreted. (Heinonen 1994, 153.) It must also be noticed that contemporary people can not have the same perspective to see the whole context nor the

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<sup>10</sup> There are two of these songs, *Eleanor Rigby* (Miles 1997, 283-4; Dowlding 1989, 133-136) and *In My Life* (Dowlding 1989, 122)

ability to distinguish the essential elements. This is always the task of future generations. The more sources that contain the same information the more reliable is the information. However, it should be remembered, that mistakes in small details are not of great importance in the evaluation of the entirety. (Rasilainen 1995, 61,64.) Further, underneath the factual accuracy there are truths contained in values, attitudes, beliefs, and feelings (Allen & Montell 1981, 89).<sup>11</sup>

## LIVERPOOL AND THE BEATLES – HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

King John founded Liverpool in 1207. It was a suitable port from which to launch an army to Ireland. A castle was build first, and was soon surrounded by a growing town. In the 18<sup>Th</sup> century, Liverpool became one of world's most important ports as a result of the slave trade. By then, the number of inhabitants had tripled from the mere 2000 to 6000. The main exports from Liverpool were tobacco and cotton. They were taken to Africa as payment for slaves, who were then shipped to America where they were sold. The slave trade ended in 1807 but the city maintained its status as a major port.

People from all over the Europe started to “voluntarily” emigrate to America, Canada and Australia seeking a better life, many sailing from Liverpool. The town grew rapidly during the 19<sup>Th</sup> century. During the First World War Liverpool was once more a place of importance because of its port and geographical location. Its development was seriously compromised in 1918 when a deep recession reduced trade drastically. (Harry 1992, 398-99; Miles 1997, 1-4.)

The population of Liverpool was and still is multicultural. Most of the inhabitants were originally from Ireland or Wales, but there was also a relatively large Chinese population, and, because of the slave trade, a considerable black community. (Miles 1997, 1-4.) In the year, 1951 there were approximately 900 000 inhabitants in Liverpool (Cohen 1991, 2).

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<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately there is no possibility to deliberate upon every statement and source. Yet it should be acknowledged that these 'truths' do exist.



During the Second World War Liverpool suffered greatly from successive German bombings. Men were recruited into the armed services; the economic situation was poor and life difficult. Liverpudlians were, however, known to have a strong differentiated identity, which they maintained during the war. The presence of sailors throughout the town's history, contributed to the hard-living, hard-drinking and aggressive character often associated with the stereotypical Liverpudlian. (Harry 1992, 398-99; Miles 1997, 1-4; Cohen 1991, 10-11.)

### **Liverpool's musical background**

Liverpool enjoyed a vivid musical culture from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and still throughout the 1950's various musical traditions, from old Music Hall to new skiffle, were very much alive. Jazz has traditionally been popular in Liverpool, and a style has even been named after a local river: Merseysippi Jazz. Other musical influences were American Tin Pan Alley and Big Band music, as well as the latest popular music styles Rhythm & Blues and Country & Western. (Leigh 1984, 28.) The influence of Irish music owing to the large Irish population in Liverpool was also evident (Harry 1992, 339; Leigh 1984, 21).

The backgrounds of the members of the Beatles were not uncharacteristic of average Liverpudlian. John Lennon's mother Julia had taught him to play some banjo (Davies 1974: 19; Howlett & Lewisohn, 1990, 19). Paul McCartney's father was an amateur musician and they frequently used to play at home, with Jim McCartney on piano and Paul singing harmonies with his brother Mike. McCartney also took some lessons in trumpet and piano. According to McCartney himself, however, the greatest influence has been rock'n'roll. (Leigh 1991, 12; Miles 1997, 23-24.) Like all of the others, George Harrison became interested in playing during the skiffle boom, and Richard Starkey also bought his first drum set in 1957 (Harry 1992, 292, 623).

The influence of comedy was strong in Liverpool, where the local Music Hall tradition had always attracted stand-up comedians. The hard lifestyle promoted the belief among sailors that one had to be a comedian in order to live in Liverpool! (Harry 1992, 399). Life after the Second World War was

marked by poverty, slum-life, and unemployment. Humour helped the people to bare the everyday life. (Harry 1992, 399.)

### **skiffle**

During the 1950's the most important new musical style before rock'n'roll in Britain, and in particular Liverpool, was skiffle. It is a musical style adopted from America, where it came into being during the 1930's. It started from the Southern States of the U.S.A where people had rent parties, "which encompassed blues, barrelhouse, boogie-woogie, and other styles of black popular music" (Skiffle 1988, 464).

"If one of the guys was short of rent, he'd hold a party and people would come round with bottles and guitars for a bit of a whoop-up. He'd pass the hat round during the proceedings just like Phil the Fluter's Ball 400 years earlier." (Leigh 1996, 29)

It was at the time of the folk revival in early 1950's the skiffle revived among white people. In Europe the style became popular in Germany, though flourished mainly in Great Britain. (Skiffle 1988, 464.) Skiffle was "poor peoples" music; the instruments – acoustic guitar, washing board, jug, and tea-chest bass – did not cost a lot of money. The repertoire included old tunes, therefore the music was easy to play. (Lewisohn 1992, 12; Miles 1997, 25.)

The models were Lonnie Donegan<sup>12</sup> and a band called the Vipers<sup>13</sup>. Their music was even played by Radio Luxembourg. In 1956 Lonnie Donegan had his first skiffle hit both in the U.K and U.S.A – 'Rock Island Line' – which was an American folk song from the beginning of the century, though he had learned it from a Leadbelly song (Norman 1996, 34; Leigh 1996, 29; Donegan 1991, 718). Within only one year there had been three skiffle groups ranked in U.K top 30 and during the next five years Donegan had thirty-one top 30 hits. In the whole of Britain there were approximately 5000 skiffle bands, of which hundreds emerged from Liverpool. (Lewisohn 1992, 12; Miles 1997, 25.) "[...] sales of guitars doubled as hundreds of skiffle

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<sup>12</sup> Lonnie Donegan was a banjo player who had played in Chris Barber Jazz Band (Norman 1996, 34).

<sup>13</sup> Tommy Steel, who was one of the first rock stars in Great Britain, played with the Vipers (Vipers 1989, 1202).

groups were formed all over the country – among them the Quarry Men, started by John Lennon." (Miles 1997, 25).

### **new influences from overseas**

The main influences from America were country & western and rock'n'roll. The port played a central role, with ships arriving directly from overseas carrying sailors who brought, among other merchandise, new recordings which they sold to the locals. New influences thus arrived regularly into Liverpool before reaching London. Hank Williams, Elvis Presley, Carl Perkins and Buddy Holly, for example, were known in Liverpool long before their records were released in Britain (Leigh 1984, 47); the Beatles heard those records locally.

Groups arrived from America to perform in England in the late 1950's, beginning with Bill Haley, Crew Cuts and Buddy Holly (Leigh 1984, 109; Miles 1997, 18).<sup>14</sup> The U.S influences also spread through the media, primarily through radio and TV, which played a pivotal role in the early developmental stage. The two radio stations available were BBC and Radio Luxembourg. Some sources emphasise the role of Radio Luxembourg over BBC (Norman 1996, 34; Miles, 1997, 24). BBC did not seem to play a lot of rock'n'roll during the 1950's, only few times per week.

"The BBC did not play rock'n'roll. Popular music on the radio was played by BBC combos like the NDO, the Northern Dance Orchestra. They just played the tunes, sometimes making a feeble effort to imitate the arrangement of the original record. [...] The main way to hear rock'n'roll in Britain was to tune in to Radio Luxembourg, broadcast at 208 metres on the medium wave from the tiny European principality."<sup>15</sup> (Miles 1997, 24)

George Harrison confirms the role of BBC in a book *Ticket To Ride* (Somach, Somach, Gunn 1989, 300): "In England, there was the BBC and they played very middle-of-the-road stuff" – that was Rosemary Clooney, Doris Day, Frankie Laine, Vera Lynn and Frank Sinatra (Miles 1997, 18). Also Bill Harry

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<sup>14</sup> Bill Haley's song 'Rock Around The Clock', which was featured in several movies, and had a great influence on the youth of Liverpool. There were even riots on the streets after it was shown in the cinema (Pawlowski 1989, 6).

<sup>15</sup> Paul used to listen to the rare English broadcasts in the evenings in bed. His father had provided the brothers with headphones they could listen to on an extension chord leading from the radio in the living room. (Miles 1997, 24.)

presented Radio Luxembourg as an alternative to BBC. "It promoted pop music and one of its most popular programmes was weekly Top Twenty chart programme which played the twenty leading records in each week's *New Musical Express* chart listings" (Harry 1991, 543). It played a wider variety of records that were directed towards young people and it also gave greater opportunities to new artists, which might have appealed to the young musicians. The signal of the station was stronger in Northern England, and was heard clearly in Liverpool. (Harry 1991, 543.)

This is contradictory to the statement of Charles Hamm (1989, 113): "By early 1956, the Armed Forces Network, Radio Luxembourg and the BBC were broadcasting many hours of Haley, Presley, Berry and the like." Regardless of the amount of rock'n'roll each station played Radio Luxembourg seems to have been a source of inspiration for many. Lennon and McCartney used to learn new songs by listening to the radio and watching TV, as McCartney remembers:

"I watched the Shadows backing Cliff Richard one night. I'd heard them play very clever introduction to 'Move It' on the record, but could never work out how they did it. Then I saw them do it on TV. I rushed out of the house straight away. It gave us a little bit of flash to start off our numbers. I also got some good chords from listening to 'Blue Moon.'" (Davis 1996, 57.)

The few radio and TV programs that played popular music were listened to with dedication.

### **Merseybeat**

Most of the young musicians started off by playing skiffle in the 1950's. As soon as they had money for more expensive instruments the style was replaced by rock'n'roll and beat music. When the music of Elvis Presley and Chuck Berry spread to Liverpool it created another band boom. The old dancing halls, which used to have jazz combos, started to turn into beat clubs, because the younger generation would otherwise not attend. At first both jazz and rock'n'roll were played in the same venues, for instance, jazz was played as dance music and rock'n'roll during the intermission. (Leigh 1984, 30-32.) Rock groups have remained an essential part of Liverpool's culture and identity since the 1950's (Cohen 1991, 1).

The new beat style in Liverpool was named Merseybeat.<sup>16</sup> It was a typical Liverpoolian style that started to develop in 1959, flourishing in 1961 and reaching its peak in 1963. The legend of Liverpool as the 'Beat City' started in that year through a BBC documentary 'The Sound of the City', after which Merseybeat started to gain national attention (May&Phillips 1974, 6).

The style was given the same name as the newspaper, Mersey Beat, founded in June 1961. The name was conceived by the paper's founder Bill Harry after the river that flows through Liverpool, which has always been of great importance in the lives of Liverpoolians. Harry was a fellow student of John Lennon at Art School, and so was involved with the Beatles. Although the paper was supposed to deal with jazz, he preferred to write about beat music. (Leigh 1984, 49.) The first issue of Mersey Beat ran to 5000 copies, it was published every fortnight (Harry 1977, 6).

The newspaper influenced the development and popularity of Merseybeat. It reported the latest news on local musicians and gigs, and consolidated the already strong musical scene in Liverpool. In addition, musicians themselves, including John Lennon, wrote for Mersey Beat (Harry 1977, 6).<sup>17</sup> Brian Epstein also contributed record reviews (Leigh 1984, 49).

The main influences on Merseybeat came from rock'n'roll stars, such as Elvis Presley, Buddy Holly, Everly Brothers, Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Carl Perkins and Roy Orbison; black vocal groups Shirelles, Coasters, Drifters and Miracles; country&western singer Hank Williams and from skiffle (May&Phillips 1974, 5-6). In addition films such as *Rock Around the Clock*, *Jailhouse Rock*, TV-shows, (*Perry Como*) and the tours of the American rock'n'roll stars, provided models and inspiration for those wishing to play. Most of the groups wrote very little material of their own, and the Merseybeat standards were covers, such as *Money*, *Twist and Shout*, *Love Potion no. 9* and *The Hippy Hippy Shake* (May&Phillips 1974, 5). Most groups played their own arrangements of the standard repertoire.

The gigs primarily took place in clubs, most important of which was the Cavern in central Liverpool. Other important clubs were the Jacaranda and Blue Angel Clubs, owned by Alan Williams, and the Casbah club, which was

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<sup>16</sup> Note the difference between 'Merseybeat', referring to the style, as opposed to 'Mersey Beat', referring to the newspaper. See also Heinonen pp. XX-XX in this book.

<sup>17</sup> The first issue of Mersey Beat included Lennon's column: "Being a Short Diversion on the Dubious Origins of Beatles - Translated from the John Lennon" (Harry 1977, 17).

organised by Mona Best. Other venues outside the town included congregation halls, dance halls, social clubs, town halls etc. Music was played at the lunch sessions as well as at night. (Leigh 1984, 109.)

An important musical feature of Merseybeat was the drumbeat, with the bass drum stroke on every fourth beat (Leigh 1984, 39; Davies 1974, 144). The volume as well as the image of Merseybeat has been described as 'harder' than, for example, Manchester music. The stereotype of the whole style including its performance image was primitive, individualistic, harsh, combative and aggressive. These adjectives are also often related to the music. They do, however, relate more to the people than music. Therefore it has even been said that Merseybeat was more like an attitude rather than a sound. In subchapter 'Musical Background of Liverpool' humour was presented as one of the typical features of the stereotypical Liverpudlian. That is related to the hard life, as Cynthia Lennon has said (Somach, Somach, Gunn 1989, 160): "They say to live in Liverpool you must have a sense of humour – it's born in you. You have to, to exist and survive there, because it's a very tough place to live."

There is also another side to this story. Gerry Marsden (from Gerry and the Pacemakers) raises another typical feature of the Mersey Sound (1989, 46):

"It was all nice and light, with not too many messages. Even the slow ballads were pleasant, no moaning, all nice romantic things. We've always been a bit romantic in Liverpool. To come from Liverpool – you've got to be a comedian or a romantic."

The romantic attitude is present in the music of many Mersey Beat bands and it broadens the image of Liverpudlians and makes it more real.<sup>18</sup> Romanticism is a large part of teenage music. Rock'n'roll surely gave the possibility to express aggressiveness but one should not forget that many ballads were also played.

Contrary to the previous history of popular music in Britain, this was the first time that a particular style was identified so strongly with one particular town. Liverpool, hitherto regarded as having produced nothing of cultural interest, provided quite a surprise with this sudden explosion of musical talent.

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<sup>18</sup> This observation is based on listening music.

## formation of the Beatles

In early 1957 John Winston Lennon formed his first skiffle band, *The Quarry Men*, with Pete Shotton.<sup>19</sup> Other members came and went. In the July of the same year, Lennon met Paul McCartney, who was accepted into the band a short time later. (Leigh 1984, 12-14.) In March 1958, McCartney introduced a 15-year old guitarist George Harrison to Lennon. He joined the band – however in the beginning of 1959 he played in other bands as well. (Lewisohn 1992, 12-14.)

Even though the Quarry Men started as a skiffle band it was rock'n'roll that had a strong affect on the young lads. They were excited, thrilled and they wanted to learn every song. John, Paul and George listened to the songs, noted down the words and chords, and sometimes added them to their act. (Miles 1997 26 & 47.) It was an influence that changed it all. John Lennon was especially influenced by the King of rock'n'roll:

"One day in 1956, his mother played an Elvis Presley record for him on the gramophone. The music made him feel as if he had never gotten out of bed before. It was a new start. It was emancipation. He heard not so much a singer on the gramophone as a disembodied voice gliding through the air on a magic carpet woven of teenage secrets. It made him take flight as the music of the dwarves makes Tolkien's Bilbo Baggins suddenly want to trade in his walking stick for a sword. Lennon had of course heard rock'n'roll before, but it was rock'n'roll by Elvis that took him over" (O'Donnell 1996, 43)

They shifted from skiffle to rock'n'roll as soon as they could afford better instruments. This occurred soon after July 1957, around the time when McCartney joined the band. Even though it was an important factor for the development of their musical interests, the skiffle period was quite short in the history of Quarry Men. Most of the songs they played were soon rock'n'roll standards. (Lewisohn 1992, 13.) As a horror to their parents they had become teddy boys. However, their repertoire varied depending on the occasion, in 1957 they advertised Quarry Men on their business card as a band playing country, western, rock'n'roll and skiffle (O'Donnell 1996, 46).

During 1958-59, the gigs of The Quarry Men were few and far between. They auditioned a couple of times without success. Allan Williams, their promoter from 1960-61, organised their first tour of Scotland, backing up

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<sup>19</sup> For more detailed history of the history of the band and the name "the Beatles" see Heinonen p. 111 in this book.

Johnny Gentle. At that time, the band was called *the Silver Beetles*.<sup>20</sup> (Lewisohn 1992, 19.) After couple of months and drummers Pete Best joined the group in August 1960. His mother Mona owned Casbah Club, where they began a residency. Alan Williams owned Cafe Jacaranda where they also played on Mondays, and they even played for one week in a strip club also owned by Williams. Through his contacts in strip clubs Williams was able to book Liverpudlian bands to play in Red Light district in Hamburg, Germany. The Beatles played there in five separate occasions during 1960-62. (Lewisohn 1992, 86; Leigh 1984, 36.)

A crucial point in their growth of popularity is said to have been a gig in Litherland Town Hall in December 27th 1960, after the first trip to Hamburg. They were advertised as a group "straight from Hamburg", which misled the people to think that they were a German band. They had a tough image and the music was described as raw and brutal (Leigh 1984, 38-39), in increasing contrast to the prevailing style in Britain at that time as typified in the neat, restrained style of the Shadows. However, Merseybeat was the dominant style in Liverpool and The Beatles came to represent it. The change in their style towards more aggressive playing is said to have started in Germany. John Lennon himself stated that:

"It was Hamburg that had done it [...] That's where we'd really developed. To get the Germans going and keep it up for twelve hours at the time, we'd really had to hammer. We would never have developed as much if we'd stayed home. We had to try anything that came into our heads in Hamburg. There was nobody to copy from. We played what we liked best. And Germans liked it, as long as it was loud.

But it was only back in Liverpool that we realized the difference and was what had happened. Everyone else saw playing Cliff Richard shit." (Davies 1996, 93.)

In December 1961, The Beatles signed their first contract with manager Brian Epstein, who was determined to help the band on their path to success. He owned a NEMS record store, which provided him with suitable contacts and colleagues in the music business. This turned out to be crucial since Liverpool had no music industry of its own. Epstein was able to organise an audition for Decca records in January 1962, which did not prove very successful. They also tried several other record companies but were rejected.

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<sup>20</sup> The trip was not a great success for the Silver Beetles and they were rather happy to return home, nevertheless, it was good experience for them. The drummer at the time was Tommy Moore, with Stu Sutcliffe on the bass. (Lewisohn 1992, 19.)



However, persistent Epstein arranged an audition with EMI/Parlophone, whose producer was George Martin. Parlophone's reputation at that time was based mainly on light classical music and popular comedy releases such as those of Peter Sellers. However, Martin had decided to let the Beatles record and so the first contract was signed. (Leigh 1984, 60; Harry 1992, 224-229.)

At the same time the drummer Pete Best was let go from the band.<sup>21</sup> The boys knew a drummer called Richard Starkey who played in another Liverpoolian band called Rory Storm and the Hurricanes. Lennon and McCartney simply went to ask him if he would like to join the band. He agreed. From 1962 they enjoyed increasing success, and with the explosion of Beatlemania in 1963, there was no turning back.

The members of the Beatles were the first fully professional Liverpoolian popular musicians with no other occupations, and who became nationally, and later internationally, successful. It inspired hope in other musicians, and hundreds of new bands spawned in Liverpool. (Braun 1964, 58.)

### **the Beatles and the Merseybeat**

The Beatles emerged simultaneously with Merseybeat. The 275 performances and over 800 hours they played in Hamburg influenced their individual style, sound and cohesive group playing. John McNally from the Searchers has described their sound using Phil Spector's concept of "a wall of sound". This was before effective PA systems were invented. They played rock'n'roll but with Liverpool accent. (Leigh 1984, 39.)

Why the music of the Beatles was said to be louder than that of other bands? There was no difference in the PA systems, so how is it possible that they played louder than others? There are at least two possible explanations. They were not afraid to raise the volume controls. When the volume was turned up this produced other changes that made them sound different to others. In addition, the reason why they started to play loudly was because of

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<sup>21</sup> For many years there has been frequent speculation over the reasons for this. One of the suggested explanations was that George Martin was not satisfied with his drumming skills (Davies 1996, 138), or that Lennon, McCartney and Harrison were going to let him go anyway and Martin's reaction was just the last straw (Leigh 1984, 62). It has also been said that Best was too good looking, or that there had been a disagreement with Mona Best about the band's management, which she wanted to take over (Leigh 1984, 63; Harry 1992, 94).

the high noise level in the Hamburg clubs, with audiences of sailors and prostitutes, amongst others, who liked loud music. In spring 1961 Sutcliffe resigned from the band and McCartney took over on the bass. It was the first time they had both a good drummer and a bass player. (Leigh 1984, 38, 47; Lewisohn 1992, 86; Miles 1998, 4.)

The Beatles often used vocal harmonies in their music. McCartney had a history of playing and singing with his brother and father.<sup>22</sup> His first public performance was in August 1957 duetting with his brother Michael in a talent competition, where they sang Everly Brothers' 'Bye Bye Love' as the McCartney Brothers (Miles 1997, 29). The backing vocals of doo wop style (e.g. the Drifters, Platters, Silhouettes), and the harmony singing of the Everly Brothers in the end of the 1950's seems to have been one of their first influences. In the arrangements of the Beatles, McCartney often sang the harmonies to the songs from the very beginning of their musical careers. The Quarry Men made their first demonstration record in mid-1958, Lennon sang lead on both sides of this two-sided shellac disk.<sup>23</sup> The topside was Buddy Holly's 'That'll Be The Day', but on the other side was a Harrison-McCartney song, 'In Spite Of All Danger', sung in late 1950's doo-wop style. (Lewisohn 1996, 13.)

In the beginning of the 1960s the doo wop singing style was adopted by the girl-groups and Motown groups that had become popular. (Miles 1997, 23-24.) Those were popular among the Beatles, as well, and it reinforced singing in harmonies. McCartney himself says:

"We used to steal consciously particularly from American black acts like the Marvellettes and after a bit. Something you love, something you're passionate about, is always a great starting point." (Miles 1997,92.)

They made six girl-group and Motown covers during 1962-63 – 'Chains' (performed by "The Cookies" in 1962), 'Boys' (performed by "The Shirelles" in 1962), 'Please Mister Postman' (performed by "The Marvellettes" in 1961), 'You Really Got A Hold On Me' (performed by "Smokey Robinson and The Miracles" in 1962), 'Devil In Her Heart' (performed by "The Donays" in 1962), and 'Money' (written by Bradford & Gordy). Furthermore, 'Ask Me Why' has

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<sup>22</sup> See "Musical Background of Liverpool", p. xx.

<sup>23</sup> The musicians were John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and John Lowe, Colin Hanton did not participate. It was recorded in the back room of a house at 53 Kensington (Lewisohn 1996, 13.)

been said to be inspired by Smokey Robinson and the Miracles – one of their favourite Motown groups, and 'P.S. I Love You' as being written in the style of The Shirelles – one of their favourite girl-groups. (Miles 1997, 92.) In the BBC's radio show "Saturday Club" and "Here We Go" McCartney sang songs like The Coasters 'Searchin', Lennon and McCartney duetted on Everly Brothers 'So How Come (No One Loves Me)', and all three of them sang the Coasters' 'Three Cool Cats'. Over all the Beatles seemed to be interested in pop music and hits than the black American blues tradition, which led bands like Rolling Stones, Yardbirds and Who. (Riley 1988, 39.)

The main question, however, is what actually was the influence of the Beatles upon Merseybeat? It has even been said that the Beatles created Merseybeat. Yet it has to be remembered that there were hundreds of beat groups in Liverpool simultaneously. Hamburg seems to have been an important factor in the development of the sound. Many Liverpoolian bands were playing there, e.g. Rory Storm and the Hurricanes, Derry and the Seniors, Kingsize Taylor and the Dominoes and Swinging Blue Jeans (Leigh 1984, 36). They have also influenced Merseybeat. The fact is that Williams was requiring Liverpoolian bands to Hamburg and he chose the Beatles simply because no other bands were available at the time. (Lewisohn 1992, 21.)

The Beatles is remembered above all because they were the first full time rock musicians from Liverpool to gain national and international success. This helped to put Liverpool on the map as a place of musical importance in Britain; yet Leigh (1984, 71) states that "Liverpool would have become a focal point for the music industry even if the Beatles had emigrated to Australia in 1961". Gerry Marsden confirms:

"I don't think it could have happened anywhere because there were so many bands in and around Liverpool. I don't think there were as many bands in London, Birmingham, or Newcastle. So when we made the records and came out, there were lots of bands to follow. So I think that the reason was there were loads of bands playing in Liverpool." (Somach, Somach, Gunn 1989, 46)

The beat movement in Liverpool was strong.

## LOCALITY AND IDENTITY – SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ASPECTS

It is common to link musical styles, instruments, sounds, characteristics and stereotypes with places (Cohen 1994, 121). Merseybeat was acknowledged in Liverpool. The recognition itself represents a symbolic desire to nurture difference and local identity. The factors involved with the connections between Liverpool, Merseybeat and the Beatles were presented in Figure 1. They are either social (people) or economic-political (society, history, music industry), which are generally reflected in local identity (Cohen 1994, 117).

### **unemployment**

After the Second World War life in Liverpool was tough, it was a poor area with a high unemployment. This is by no means a minor or incidental factor in the city's musical life. When studying the rock scene in Liverpool in the 1980's Cohen (1991) noticed, that the number of bands increased rapidly at the time of high unemployment rate. In the 1980's Liverpool was struck by a similar wave of unemployment than in the 1950's. Ironically, though for clear logical reasons, this was musically enriching. Playing in a group gives social pleasure, enabling one to maintain relationships with other people, spend time and be creative. It also gives hope that there is always a chance to succeed and gain social and economic benefits. (Cohen 1991, 2-3.) Unemployment in the 1950's did not affect members of the Beatles directly, since they were at school at that time, and they moved directly into their professional musician careers. Significant consequences, however, were seen and heard in Liverpool, where the Beatles lived, in the form of 1950's skiffle and 1960's Merseybeat booms and the city's intense musical life.

### **music politics and geographical location of Liverpool**

The music industry at that time was mainly centred in London, which controlled political and economic power. In order for a regional band to make it to the top groups had to be able to convince the business moguls in capital.

This was not an easy task. Liverpool was considered to be a marginal town and the Beatles faced many problems in their early days. Liverpool was just not taken seriously. The move to London was problematic for the whole group. Paul McCartney described the situation:

"I had this strange entrance into London, coming from Liverpool where everyone had said, 'You'll never make it, coming from Liverpool'. Which had angered us a bit, so we stayed up in Liverpool a lot. We didn't just all move down to London, we tried to prove ourselves from Liverpool. Hamburg, Liverpool, the north - you know, 'Fuck you!' And we had our original success up in the Cavern. But this got us national success and then came the inevitable move to London. (Miles 1997, 97.)

Magazines did not want to write stories about Liverpoolian bands because the town and its music were considered off-centre.

Brian Epstein, their manager, encountered his share of scepticism: "You'll never make it, from the provinces. Move down to London and you'll really get moving." (Braun 1964, 31.) He and promoter Alan Williams, had to pull a lot of strings just to get the Beatles into auditions and tours. Later, after the second single when the Beatles were recording *Please Please Me* in 1962, the producer George Martin introduced the band to his friend, music publisher Dick James. The initial reaction was: "Liverpool? ... You're joking. So what's from Liverpool?" (Davies 1996, 166). The Beatles' early career was therefore somewhat unstable, however, the attitude of the music industry changed dramatically following their success. This can be seen as the record companies sent talent scouts in search of new acts particularly in Liverpool (May & Phillips 1974, 6).

At the same time there was a need to emphasise the contrast between the various geographical locations. It has been pointed out several times that the Liverpoolians were "different", mainly in relation to Londoners (since it was the centre of the just about everything in Britain at that time), and Manchester (due to its proximity to Liverpool). The Liverpoolians themselves emphasised a distinctive identity (Cohen 1991, 1994; Leigh 1984). Thus, Merseybeat was not the sole factor that made Liverpool different. Its characteristic identity already existed and Merseybeat was a timely phenomenon to strengthen it. In all probability, it was the strong pre-existing identity helped to nurture the style.

In the case of the Beatles there is another influencing factor. Playing in Hamburg on five separate occasions, they naturally spent a lot of time in Germany. There are interesting connections between Liverpool and

Hamburg. Both are towns in which the port plays a major role. There were a lot of foreigners and sailors and both towns are characterised by tough and harsh lifestyles. Both climates are wet and windy, since they are located by the sea, and on almost the same latitudes. They both have nasal accents, even though the languages are different.<sup>24</sup> Hamburg hardly created new identities for the lads but; rather, it reinforced certain pre-existing features of their own Liverpudlian identity. Hamburg was twice as big and harsh as Liverpool. The trips to there from 1960-62 gave important experiences to the band.

"The atmosphere in Hamburg was electric, and it was pretty rough. The Reeperbahn was a very rough area of Hamburg. The people that John and the Beatles had to play to were mostly drunks. There were a lot of fights. There was a tremendous atmosphere.

But they learned their trade and their skills there. They learned how to project themselves across. They didn't have time to be smart. They just had to get in there. It was raw rock'n'roll. They got years of good experience there."  
(Cynthia Lennon in Somach, Somach, Gunn 1989, 163-4)

Their playing, especially their sound was shaped from having to play loudly in noisy clubs. Furthermore, they played together for hundreds of hours, which dramatically improved the group's cohesion.

## MERSEYBEAT – MUSICAL STYLE OR ATTITUDE

On the basis of the proceeding text one may ask what Merseybeat actually was? How it could be defined as a style? It seems, as there are only few musical features identifiable as typical to this style. Sound is the most important of them. The loudness was related to the playing style of the Beatles, which they adopted in Hamburg, but also in the Cavern club, a "cave", the number one club in Liverpool. There the bands had to play loud because it reduced the huge echo of the venue. Other features are relatively difficult to identify. Musically Merseybeat was not a unique phenomenon. The songs were mainly the same rock'n'roll standards played by various other

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<sup>24</sup> Heinonen's (1998) study of a band called Dingo indicated a similar relationship between the unemployment rate and a band boom in Pori, Finland, during the 1980's. An interesting point is that Pori is also a town located by the sea and a harbour has been a major employer there.

groups. In her report Cohen tested Liverpoolians ability to differentiate Liverpoolian bands from others. They claimed to be able to do it, but consistent characteristics could not be identified (Cohen 1991, 14). Nonetheless, Merseybeat existed. It was essential and significant to the locals as part of their local identity that differentiated them from others.

The same thought has been confirmed by members of the Beatles. George Harrison stated in 1963:

"we don't like to call it anything but the critics, you know, the people who write about it, you know, they have to call it something so, they didn't want to say it was rock'n'roll because rock is supposed to have gone out about five years ago, so they decided, it wasn't really rhythm and blues, so they decided to call it Liverpool, the Liverpool sound, which is, you know, it is stupid really because as far as we were concerned it was just, you know, the same as the rock from five years ago. Oh, it's more like the old rock, it's just, you know, everything is bit louder and more bass and bass drum. And everybody sort of sings louder and shouts louder, that's it. All the records now everybody's sort of making records in that style". (Giuliano 1995.)

During the course of this study some aspects of the Liverpoolian identity, Merseybeat and the Beatles emerged. During the 1950's Liverpool already had a strong identity. The Merseybeat style was clearly a local phenomenon, which reflected and reinforced that identity. The Beatles represented Merseybeat, later becoming its public icon. Many factors influenced the beginning of the Merseybeat, and the identity, formation and development of the Beatles. The most important of these were the lively and active musical scene in Liverpool, particular individuals, such as Epstein and Williams, that had helped the lads to start their careers, the Mersey Beat newspaper, Cavern club and the trips to Hamburg.

While Merseybeat did not decisively renew the music, it reinforced the local identity. Merseybeat influenced the Beatles and later the band in turn influenced the style. One must be bare in mind, however, that there were several other bands influencing the scene at the same time. Furthermore, an extensive social youth movement underpinned the birth of the style. The study indicates that the local identity expressed through Merseybeat was more of a social, and even economic and political phenomenon rather than a musical one, even though it was both.<sup>25</sup> In addition Cohen states that the Liverpool Sound, "does reflect the desire to *symbolically* assert difference and a sense of local identity" (1994, 129). I raise the question, then, of

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<sup>25</sup> An idea for future study could be to extend the study of Merseybeat to music analysis in order so study the musical features and differences in detail.

whether Merseybeat would have occurred at all without the prior existence of a strong local identity.

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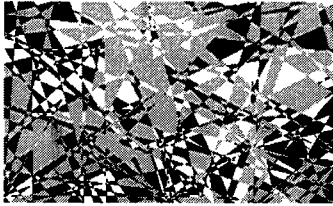


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Appendix 4.

**YOU NEED ANOTHER CHORUS.**  
Problems with Formal Concepts in Popular Music





**BEATLES 2000**

## **YOU NEED ANOTHER CHORUS** **Problems with Formal Concepts in Popular Music**

**Terhi Nurmesjärvi**

**P**opular music is often undermined in musicological sense and its forms are commonly considered to be simple. Despite the fact that it played a central part in the traditional music analysis, form is seldom discussed in regard popular music. However, it offers intriguing challenges for the researcher.

Many studies have emphasised a holistic approach towards the analysis of popular music, that is, to comprise both intra- and extramusical aspects in the analytical process (e.g. Tagg 1979, Middleton 1990). According to this idealistic approach, one should be able to cover several issues in the analysis: basic musical parameters (melody, rhythm, harmony, sound), levels of meaning in music (e.g. musical and textual connotations and denotations), and the social and/or cultural context within which the music is presented. However, I believe that in order to develop a better holistic approach studies that concentrate on only one or a few selected

features are needed. The synthesis of several aspects that comprise into one complex method cannot be formulated overnight.

By careful consideration of form one has the possibility to shed light on the subject and the methodology used in the analysis. There is still room for discussion concerning the interaction between various musical parameters that are, indeed, the ones that construct and articulate form, which is by no means an autonomous element of the music. There are several questions to be asked and discussed in relation to the concepts and analysis of form. In this article I wish to express some aspects related to popular music form, which will then be demonstrated through a comparative case study of the Beatles song 'I Saw Her Standing There' (1963).

## TWO ILLUSIONS CONCERNING FORM IN POPULAR MUSIC

The problematic aspects in the study of form are related to analytical concepts and methodology. Often the analysis is based on implicit principles and preassumed unanimity regarding the terminology, based on which the "result" of the analysis is then explicitly presented. Form is often taken for granted, or disregarded entirely. There are, however, some studies in which form is one of the analysed aspects. One such example is Alf Björnberg's dissertation (1984) in which he deals with form as one of the main parameters of the musical analysis of Swedish Eurovision Song Contest representatives during the years 1959-83. Sheila Davis (1985) has successfully dealt with form types in her book concerning lyric writing which I refer to often in this text. Also Jon Fitzgerald (1996a, 1996b) has dealt with form in his more general musical analysis of the popular songs of the 1950's and 1960's.

The general interest in the study of popular music has increased during the past few decades. Allan F. Moore's book *Rock: The Primary Text* (1993) draws attention to the music and its sound as the main focus of the study of rock music. He summarises this awakening from the 1970's on:

"Fortunately, over the past twenty years, a few musicologists have begun to focus their attention on rock and its related musics, and it is to them that I now turn. Although these writers have adopted a number of different approaches, they seek one of three goals. The first is to elucidate theoretical approaches pertinent to music. This activity is best considered preanalytical, since any analysis must be based on theoretical preconceptions, which too often remain implicit. [...] The remaining approaches are both strictly analytical. Of these, one aims to unearth the 'meaning' of individual songs, while the other aims to discover the characteristic features of particular styles." (Moore 1994, 11)

In popular music research, the aim of the theoretical and analytical approaches has often been to underline the inappropriateness of the tools of the traditional music analysis in the analysis of popular music. There are no doubt problematic aspects that have been discussed, for example, by Richard Middleton (1990, 103-107). Many of the concepts in use, however, have remained the unchanged – for instance, harmony, melody and form – even though their contents have been, and should be, redefined.

Despite the increased attention towards popular music its analytical approaches, such as analysis of form, have not been considered as important subjects for study. According to prevailing conception all forms may be discussed in terms of 'verse' and 'chorus' and their implicit criteria, explicit criteria or principles are considered unnecessary. This applies to analysts as well as musicians, who traditionally have relied on these concepts. For Moore form does not play central part in the analytical musicology of rock. Instead, the analysis of form is just an intermediate stage towards the analysis of harmony.

"Contrary to critical belief, rock is rich in harmonic formulae (see Moore 1992). In order to investigate the various strategies used, it will be necessary first to call attention to the conventional formal divisions found in rock: verse, refrain (or chorus), bridge, introduction, coda and solo (break). These are categories frequently used by writers and performers, and **their ubiquity is sufficient to ensure their analytical value.**" (Moore 1993, 47-48. My bolds)

I cannot agree with the last sentence. It is true that two people may have mutual understanding in everyday discussion, for instance, about the verses and chorus of a song, as two musicians would when about making music. This is sufficient for those discourses and its contexts. The musicologist, however, should not be content with these implicit assumptions. In the analysis concepts of form require explicit questioning and discussion.

Based mainly on unexpressed, tacit knowledge of the musical structures, there appears to be two illusions concerning form in popular music that I would like to express. Since form does not *seem* to deserve attention,

there are underlying thoughts, that (1) all forms utilised in popular music are simple; and (2) analysis of form is a simple, non-complex procedure.

### **simple and/or standard?**

These thoughts are embodied in Adorno's much criticised culturally homogeneous view of form as a standardised schemata, in which the

"whole is pre-given and pre-accepted, even before the actual experience of the music starts: therefore, it is not likely to influence, to any great extent, the reaction to the details, except to give them varying degrees of emphasis. [...] no stress is ever placed upon the whole as a musical event, nor does the structure of the whole ever depend upon the details." (Adorno 1990, 302.)

Adorno denies the originality, creativity or individuality that should be seen, or indeed heard in popular music.<sup>1</sup> Everything can be reduced into a standard. This is all, naturally, opposed to "serious music" (i.e. classical), in which every detail and affects the whole and changes the unique experience. (Adorno 1990, 305-307.)

Adorno's view is narrow and one-sided. It undermines the musical events that constitute form. Furthermore, he, among many others, all too often equates "standard" and "simple". I cannot agree with his view, that the standardised form is a specific feature of popular music. It can be easily shown that similar examples of Tin Pan Alley music can be easily found within "serious music" (many forms utilised in Renaissance, Baroque or Classical Era, for instance) and other music traditions. Middleton (1990, 46) points out some of these exceptions to standardisation in Tin Pan Alley songs.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The differentiation of details, according to Adorno, is explained by pseudo-individualization. "By pseudo-individualization we mean endowing cultural mass production with the halo of free choice or open market on the basis of standardization itself. Standardization of song hits keeps the customers in line by doing their listening for them, as it were. Pseudo-individualization [...] keeps them in line by making them forget that what they listen to is already listened to for them, or "pre-digested". (Adorno 1990, 308). This is all on contrast to "serious music", where "the significance on the details and of the totality mutually create each other, with the result that every piece is unique" (Ibid, 45). Adorno gives examples from Tin Pan Alley music in order to verify his view. Middleton discusses the theory with credit and he points out Adorno's problematic starting point and several missing element.

<sup>2</sup> See also Lee 1970, 220 and Koskimäki & Heinonen 1998, 130.

In spite of Adorno's disparagement towards popular music some of his thoughts can be viewed in a positive manner. As Middleton says, it can be agreed that "at this macro-structural level it is certainly true that almost all popular music works within the sphere of the known" (Middleton 1990, 49). The form functions as a frame or schemata, of which the most are "standardised" (Lilliestam 1994, 215; Middleton 1990, 49). The pre-existing knowledge of a competent listener does play a great role in the musical experience and creating its meaning. The whole question of standardisation is style related.

"In a broader perspective [...] standardization, with its pejorative implications, might be more usefully renamed 'formula'. Formulaic schemes are common in very many kinds of music" (Middleton 1990, 55.)

The formulae used in music can be harmonic, rhythmic, melodic, etc.<sup>3</sup> Form types are kinds of formulae used, for instance, in songwriting.<sup>4</sup> (Lilliestam 1994, 215.) Formulae are, however, different kinds in different styles.

As well as standardisation, repetition is a common feature of popular music. This has also caused confusion in the understanding of form.

"Form, in this sense of architectonic structure, is easily dealt with in considering popular music, since almost without exception, it consists, as it always has, of the immediate repetition of a tune several times." (Lee 1970, 175)

It is true that musical elements like tunes, are often repeated in popular music and that helps to identify the formal units. That does not, however, make the identification of various form types any easier since repetition of tunes or sections is not the character that separates them from one another. There are, however, different modes of repetition that may be of use within the analysis.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> 'Formula' is an equivalent term to 'schema' used in cognitive musicology (Bartlett 1932; Treitler 1974).

<sup>4</sup> The Swedish term used by Lilliestam is 'formel'.

<sup>5</sup> This refers to terms 'musematic' and 'discursive' repetition by Middleton (1983, 1990) and 'formative', 'focal' and 'textural' repetition by Lidov (1978) (also Nurmesjärvi 1997). Their use as distinctive features in analysis is yet to be studied further.



## about the analysis of form

The second statement – *the analysis of form is a simple, non-complex procedure* – contradicts my experiences of formal analysis. There are several factors complicating the procedure. The use of concepts and their criteria are not analogous due to the lack of definitions given to them. Forms vary and sometimes become quite complicated in which case the commonly used concepts, for instance, verse and chorus, are not solely sufficient to discuss and explain all forms, and changes in form. Definitions of these concepts are ambiguous. These problems become even more problematic when the material includes a large number of songs. The more songs the material includes the more difficult it is to find consistent principles and rules that apply to all cases, especially when dealing with an extended time period.

According to common opinion, popular music is constructed in an assembly line manner from simple and four square 8-bar blocks, creating similarly simple and four square 32-bar standard forms. The reality is not, however, that simple.

"This statement about 8-bar units is the one most commonly made, but needs qualification, since a not insubstantial number of tunes (e.g. 'How High the Moon') are built up of sections which can only satisfactorily be analysed as two 16-bar units. Furthermore, though in practice 8- and 16-bar units are the normal length of comprehensible sections, or 'sentences', the fact that the fundamental unit of popular music composition is really 2 bars becomes important in considering exceptions." (Lee 1970, 220.)

This is also evident in the music of the Beatles. Most songs are, indeed, constructed of something other than four square blocks. In many songs the blocks are not even dividable by even numbers, the lengths of seven, nine or eleven bars are not rare. Yet, it is a surprising that ten bars is very popular. Furthermore, the length of various formal sections within one song is often different.<sup>6</sup>

It is up to the analyst to make decisions concerning the concepts and the principles of the analysis. Their choice should be based on at least two considerations. Firstly, one must consider the aim and purpose of analysis. Secondly, drawn from the first, one must consider what are the appropriate

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<sup>6</sup> There are many examples of such songs. For instance, see detailed analysis of 'Cry Baby Cry' by the Beatles (1968) in *Beatlestudies 1* (Koskimäki & Heinonen 1998). For the uneven length of the sections of the songs 'Michelle' and 'Yesterday' see Heinonen 1992.

means and concepts to approach the task. Further, the material itself as the starting point sets requirements for the analysis and it should be seen in an historical context. The question should be about the choices that the analyst has to make, the procedures and interpretation that are evident in every analysis. The question cannot be about revealing the "absolute truth" since it does not exist.

Perhaps as a result of the two illusions the concepts of verse and chorus are commonly – and uncritically – used in the analysis of form in popular music. This results in unavoidable analytical problems. The aim of this article is not to try to reveal the truth in this matter for I do not believe it is "out there". Instead, the purpose is to elucidate some of the aspects related to form, its terminology, methodology and analysis in popular music, based on the discussion above. I will proceed by examining the historical aspects of the development of form in popular music and discussing the possible explanations behind the obscurities and confusions. Finally, some of the problematic aspects are presented in three analyses of the Beatles' song 'I Saw Her Standing There' (1963).

## TANGLE OF CONCEPTS

'Verse' and 'chorus' are widely used concepts of form. Even so, more concepts are needed in the study of popular music form. Those, which do exist, are problematic because of the way in which they are used (or not used). The same concepts often have different (implicit) meanings in different contexts, which complicates the understanding of them. Historically there have been many types of form and their variations used in various styles of popular music. Some forms have remained basically the same throughout the 20<sup>th</sup>-Century (strophic forms, e.g. blues form, AAA-ballad form), some of them have undergone changes (standard forms, verse/chorus), merged and influenced each other.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> I would like to thank my supervisor Yrjö Heinonen and musicologist and musician Olli Heikkinen for the discussions concerning this following chapter.

As stated above verse and chorus are commonly and uncritically used concepts. This causes several problems. Firstly, there is not only one kind of verse/chorus form. During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup>-Century an older verse/chorus form was utilised and evolved into a new distinctive form that became evident by the beginning of the second half of 20<sup>th</sup>-Century. Secondly, there are other form types such as standard forms and strophic forms. Contrary to general belief verse and chorus are not concepts that can automatically be used to describe all form types. Various form types require different terminology. Thirdly, if and when the terms 'verse' and/or 'chorus' are used to define individual sections of music, it must be acknowledged that they are not equal to the verse/chorus form type.

The use of abstract symbols, letters (A, B, C ... ), is common in the analysis of traditional music analysis. For example A A B A form is used also in folk and lied music as well as in popular music. (Fiedler 1996, 74). According to Bent (1980, 374) the basis of form-building includes three processes: 'recurrence' (A A), 'contrast' (A B), and 'variation' (A A'). The forms derived from these are called, for instance, binary forms or ternary forms, which are also the basic aspects in the implication realisation model of music by Narmour (1991). Although Bent talks about these processes in the context of classical music, they are the basic processes involved in music of any kind or genre.

## AN HISTORICAL SURVEY

In order to clarify the differences between the two verse/chorus forms and other form types, the historical context of popular music forms must be considered. The historical discussion is based on interpretation of the development of popular music form by Yrjö Heinonen (Figure 1), which he has presented in his popular music history lectures.

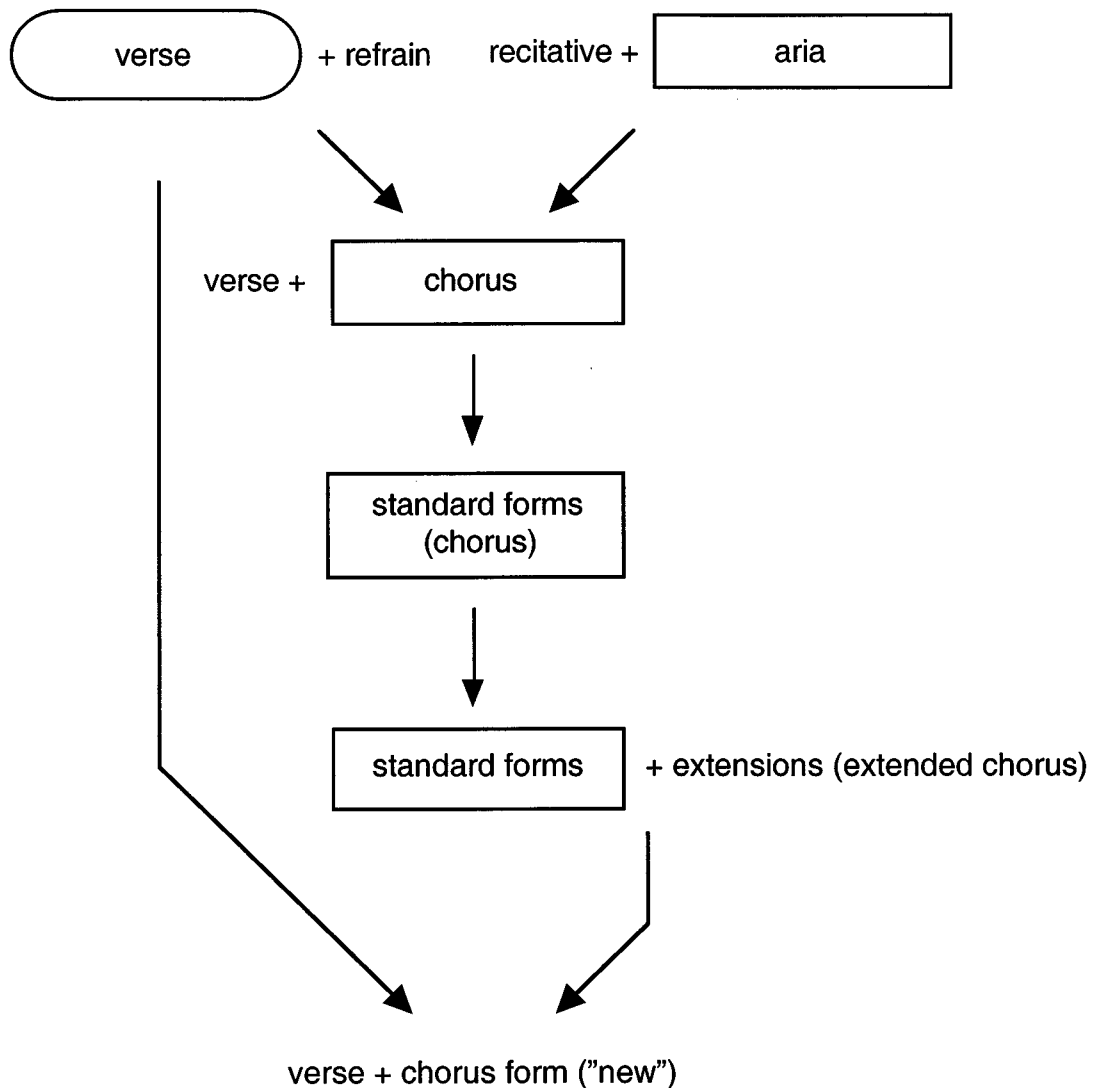


Figure 1. The historical development of verse and chorus form (Heinonen).

There are many concepts in the Figure 1, some of which are perhaps surprising. One will notice links between opera and the today's verse/chorus form. The following is a general overview of the history, with the intention to outline some of the influences on these form types

### **roots of the verse-chorus form**

Originally, the verse/chorus form is an old popular song form that is different from the verse/chorus form we know today. This "old" version was used

especially at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>-Century in Tin Pan Alley<sup>8</sup> music by famous composers such as Cole Porter, George Gershwin, Richard Rogers, Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, to mention but a few. Sometimes it is called a standard form, which more precisely refers to the form of the chorus of the old verse/chorus form<sup>9</sup>.

In the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century an average verse/chorus song included six or seven verses consisting of about ten lines, and a chorus, sometimes called also the refrain<sup>10</sup> (Davis 1985, 61). Verses were quite long and their nature was generally narrative – the text varied. The chorus was not a repeated, unvaried section as it is now but, rather a contrast to the verses that functioned more as a bridge<sup>11</sup>. Chorus included the main message and the title of the song (Davis 1985, 31). Today we remember many of the choruses of old verse/chorus songs – such as 'Over The Rainbow' - and the verses have been forgotten.

#### *recitative and aria*

Recitative and aria are clearly concepts of classical music, which have been rarely used in popular music discourse. They are, however, not irrelevant in the history and development of popular music form. As popular music evolved in the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century it was partly influenced by the opera, operetta and musical comedy.

Recitative and aria were the fundamental elements of the 18<sup>th</sup>-Century opera from in which the "lighter" and more entertaining, "semi-classical" style, operetta, was born. Opera had been popular and entertaining until the release of more "serious" and demanding operas of Wagner and Verdi. This resulted in the need for a "new" popular form of theatrical music. (Lamb

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<sup>8</sup> Tin Pan Alley refers to a centre of popular music industry in Manhattan, New York, in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>-Century. It is actually a city block where many songwriters worked. Tin Pan Alley also includes the music of Broadway songwriters.

<sup>9</sup> More about standard form in the next section.

<sup>10</sup> 'Refrain' is sometimes used as a synonym for 'chorus', which might cause confusion. In this case, however, I wish to separate these concepts. The definition of 'refrain' will be given further in this chapter. Another synonym for chorus is 'reprise'.

<sup>11</sup> A bridge is the contrasting part in AABA and it is fundamental to that form. The 'bridge' can appear as an optional part of a verse/chorus song, though it is not essential. An instrumental break may also serve as a bridge. (Davis 1985, 32.) It works to provide contrast in lyrical content, metre, melody. A bridge usually occurs only once, and rarely employs the primary hook. (Fitzgerald 1999, 227.)

1980c, 90.) In the narrative sense the function of opera recitative was quite similar to that of popular song verse - they both tell a story which is developed. Choruses and arias, on the other hand, allow one to stop for the sake of sentiment and enjoy the moment. The concentration is lyrical and focuses on the main message of the song, which is emphasised and perhaps repeated. The most popular arias were sung in popular concerts and became widely known by the general public. (Westrup & Walkner & Heart 1980, 573-579; Westrup 1980, 643-648)

"The term 'popular music' has most commonly been applied to the music of, and since, the 'Tin Pan Alley' era, i.e. the 1880s onwards in the USA and the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Europe" (Lamb 1980c, 87). Popular music included not only popular songs from popular theatre, but also hymns and ballads that were often played at home, orchestral pieces of waltz, polka, quadrille, overture, aria, and marches that were played by military bands, nickleodeons and fairground organs. (Lamb 1980c, 89-90.) The Music Hall was the predominant form of popular music in England, especially in London<sup>12</sup>. The repertoire consisted largely of ballet and opera pieces, the songs had to be both comic and entertaining. (Lamb 1980c, 91.)

Musical Comedy developed from comic opera and burlesque in London during the 1890s and it has been the chief form of popular music theatre of the 20<sup>th</sup>-Century. Musically it encompasses catchy songs, ensembles and dances (Lamb 1980a, 815). The equivalent form of entertainment in USA, which developed from the Musical Comedy of Broadway, New York, was Musical Play. The more general term 'Musical' became commonplace around the time of World War II.<sup>13</sup> The popular song employed in the Tin Pan Alley and the Music Hall traditions was influenced by the "hits" of Musicals and several tunes by the Musical composers were included in the repertoire. In England Music Hall genre was moving nearer to the variety theatre and family entertainment since the drinking was banned from the body of the hall. Operetta on the other hand was increasingly acquiring some of the characteristics of Music Hall entertainment. (Lamb 1980c, 92.) Popular song at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century employed the old verse chorus form. The songs

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<sup>12</sup> In Paris, France, the similar entertainment was provided in *Cafés chantants* and *Vaudeville operettas* (Lamb 1980 [c], 91).

<sup>13</sup> For more detailed history see Lamb 1980a, pp. 815-823.

were quite long (when compared to the typical three minute format in popular music), perhaps as a result of the influence of opera and operetta traditions.

#### *strophic forms with a refrain*

At the same time as the standard form another evolution was influenced by the ballad and folk traditions. These two musical styles employ the strophic form of AAA.... They consist of successive verses in which the hook (title) or the main message is often repeated at the end of each verse. The term 'refrain' refers to this phrase (a line or two), that often occurs at the end of the verse and recurs in successive verses. (Davis 1985, 33; Björnberg 1989, 55; Lilliestam 1994, 212.) The same technique was and is used in 12-bar blues, where in a piece lyrically structured A A B the text of the last B-phrase is often repeated - a refrain. Folk and ballad songs have influenced popular songs since the beginning of its development.

"Before the advent of Tin Pan Alley strophic forms had been the norm; whether texts were narrative or contemplative, popular songs had been written, performed and printed with several verses to the same music. Some had a short refrain or chorus (often for four voices) at the end of the verse; the music for this was often a repetition or extension of the music for the verse and could be omitted without serious damage to the song. It was for the music of the verse that the song was known and remembered. But in the late 19th century and the early 20th the chief melodic material began to be put in the chorus, and the verse took on the nature of preliminary or introductory music; these songs came to be known by their choruses and it is by their choruses that they are remembered." (Hamm 1980, 105.)

Strophic forms dominated both folk and ballad music. The refrain could have been placed at the end of the song, as in 'When The Saints Go Marching In'. Sometimes a song included a chorus, which was melodically similar to the verse but with a different text, as in 'John Brown's Body'. The changes to the chorus led to the development of standardised forms.

#### **standard forms and their extensions**

The old verse/chorus form started to undergo changes during the early 20<sup>th</sup>-Century.

"By the 1920's both the number of verses and their length had been greatly reduced. By the mid-thirties, even the one- or two-verse introduction had become an optional feature. What slowly evolved was a 32-bar chorus composed of four

sections of equal length: within that tight structure a number of musical patterns emerged the ABAB, ABAC and AABC, the most enduring of them all, the AABA." (Davis 1989, 59.)

This 32-bar chorus, *standard form*, was all that was left of the popular song form. Sometimes an introductory verse was included (until the mid 1940's). It was not really an essential part of the song, its main function was "to give the stage or screen star more to perform by way of a charming set-up for the chorus" (Davis 1989, 59).

The most typical standard form is AABA, in which the B-section is often called a bridge or release. The song could not finish before all of these sections have been presented. The hook is often the song title which is usually placed within the A-section. Another typical standard form is ABAB. The title is usually placed within the B-section (Davis 1985, 73). Another standard form is ABAC. Standard forms are not comparable to the newer verse/chorus form (A=verse, B=chorus), the B-section is not a chorus. (Davis 1985, 31-32; Collier 1977, 99.)

Standard forms were soon extended and altered to form longer entities in order to accommodate the longer, three to four minute record format. New sections were then added to the end of – for instance, AABA : **BA**. (Davis 1989, 67-68.) Standard forms and their extensions were typical in the 1950's and 1960's in Brill Building<sup>14</sup> music.

Another problematic aspect in addition to the definitions of the form types presented above concern the term 'chorus'. The chorus of the old verse/chorus form is partly the same, partly contradictory to the term 'chorus' that is used widely, for instance, in jazz music.

"Popular songs usually have two sections: a verse, which is often through-composed (i.e., having no repeated phrases) and ends on the dominant; and a refrain (also called chorus). In jazz performances the verse is little used, if at all; in early jazz it was usually placed only once, at the beginning of the piece, and after the 1920s it was generally discarded altogether and the refrain was taken as the sole material for the piece. Thus in jazz the term "song form" or "**popular song form**" refers to the structure of the refrain alone. The refrain is usually 16 or 32 bars long and made up of four- or eight-bar phrases grouped into designs such as *aba* (or *aa'ba'*, or *aaa'a*), *abac*, or *abcb*.

In *aba* form the *b* section is called the "bridge", "channel", "release", "middle eight", or "inside"; the contrast it provides with the *a* section is not only melodic and harmonic but also tonal, for it often modulates to the subdominant, dominant, submediant, or mediant." (Owens 1988, 396)

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<sup>14</sup> Brill Building is alike Tin Pan Alley related to professional songwriters in New York, however, during 1950's and 1960's.



The chorus is borrowed from the old verse/chorus form but, since in jazz there is no verse it is just a "chorus song". Form in this 'chorus' can be, for example, that of standard form. Nevertheless, the term 'chorus' is commonly used to indicate any repeated pattern or cycle that is repeated. The plan or form of the song is chosen beforehand by deciding the number of repeated choruses and their function in the song. This allows the musicians to improvise and play solos etc.

"(1) In general usage the refrain of a song or hymn, that section which is repeated, always with the same tune and text, after each verse; for the use of harmonic and metric structures of song refrains as the basis of jazz piece.

(2) In jazz any statement, or, more particularly, any restatement with variations, of a theme. The term is commonly applied to those clear cut forms that consist of a theme, followed by a series of variations on the theme, and then a repetition of the theme itself; it is not generally used in discussing those styles of jazz in which free improvisation takes place of the series of variations on the theme."  
(Chorus 1988, 208)

Many choruses of popular songs have been used as a harmonic and thematic basis for jazz pieces. Then there is no contradiction in the use of the term 'chorus'. The form of these pieces is actually an extended standard form - the first chorus is the AABA, after which it is repeated a number of times.

The chorus can, however, be based on any theme or music that has nothing to do with the old or new verse/chorus form. The use of the 'chorus' concept was established amongst jazz musicians and this must be acknowledged in the analysis of form.

### **new verse and chorus form**

There are two main contributors in the development of the verse and chorus form as it is known today. One is standard form. Gradually the bridge (i.e. B in AABA) started to become more independent and evolved into a separate musical statement from the A-section, as opposed to the standard form AABA, which had been a seamless entity. Another source is the refrain of strophic form. It was during the folk boom in the 1960's that folk songs influenced other popular music and the use of refrain became increasingly common in pop and rock music (Lilliestam 1994, 214). Emphasis on the refrain grew and it developed into a more independent and stronger part of the song. An extended refrain became the chorus, which now had an independent formal function and was clearly separated from the verse (e.g. in story line, length,

harmonic structure). Strophic songs with refrain or standard form/refrain songs should be separated from the newer verse/chorus songs. (Davis 1985, 32-33, 47; Lilliestam 1994, 214.)

The strophic AAA form was also bent, with the refrain. This resulted in forms such as AA+refrain AA+refrain (= AAB AAB).<sup>15</sup> This differs from the general AAA form due to the placement of the refrain - it is not within every A-section but rather a separate segment that follows only every second verse. Its purpose is to divide the song into parts. (Davis 1989, 40.)

In today's verse/chorus form both sections are repeated, usually several times, and their number varies depending on the song. There are usually 2-3 verses, which alternate with a second musical section, the chorus. The most typical distinction between a verse and a chorus is the text. Verse normally conveys the song's information or story, lyrics tend to change from one verse to the next. In a verse-verse-verse form, each section contains the primary a hook<sup>16</sup> – often on the last line; but in a verse-chorus form, the verse does not normally contain the primary hook. (Fitzgerald 1999, 229.) The arrangement of the verse is repeated unvaried or with slight changes (e.g., V1 appears again at the end of the song), or the verses may be repeated successively identically, with the hook may then be in the verse, not the chorus (Fiedler 1996, 74).

The chorus is a separate musical statement from the verse in which the text is often unvaried, unlike the verse. It contains the song title and the main hook – it summarises the message of the song. Even if the text of the chorus is partly changed it must still maintain distinctive characteristics and the title must appear according to expectations. The chorus is a necessary part of the verse/chorus form, without it the song would not survive. (Davis 1985; Fiedler 1996, 74; Fitzgerald 1999, 227; Björnberg 1986, 55.)

These concepts and their brief history are sufficient for the analysis of the popular music the 1960's. Some have been modified during the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup>-Century and new styles, for example, hip hop, techno, rap, ambient, etc. have set new challenges for the analysis of form. They are, however, beyond the essence of this article. The description of the new

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<sup>15</sup> AAB is known as Bar form in musicology, it also appears in folk music (Koskimäki&Heinonen 1998, 130).

<sup>16</sup> A hook is a repeated element, which is intended to grab the listener's attention (lyric, melody, rhythm etc. – or combination of these), "hooks" them like a fish" (Fitzgerald 1999, 227). A successful song will normally feature one primary (i.e. especially notable or prominent) and a number of secondary hooks.

verse/chorus form primarily applies to today's mainstream popular music. In order to illustrate the tangle presented above the following chapter will take this theoretical discussion and put it into practise by means of an example.

## ANALYSIS EXAMPLE: 'I SAW HER STANDING THERE' BY THE BEATLES

Lennon and McCartney have themselves used concepts of form, such as 'verse', 'chorus', 'middle eight', 'bridge' (Miles 1990, 177).<sup>17</sup> Even though they did not have formal musical education it is likely that they picked up some of the terminology from the studio staff and producer George Martin. They were also familiar with the older verse/chorus and standard forms, which were alive and in common use as they were growing up. During the early years Lennon and McCartney utilised mainly standard forms in their music, strophic forms (ballads or blues form) were not so frequent, and the new verse/chorus form was just developing during the 1960's<sup>18</sup>. When recording it was Martin who, at least in some cases suggested that the song should have more "choruses" ('Please Please Me') or to start the song with a "chorus" ('Can't Buy Me Love') (Martin 1979, 132-133).

'I Saw Her Standing There'<sup>19</sup> is a suitable example to demonstrate how some of the conceptual and analytical problems discussed above may affect the analysis. I will present three analysis of the Beatles' song, the first by Alan W. Pollack, the second by Jon Fitzgerald, and the last by myself, in order to demonstrate the various analytical possibilities for this song. The analyses are presented in Table 2.

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<sup>17</sup> Sheff 1981, Playboy 4/1981, The Compleat Beatles (originally in Hit Parader 1972).

<sup>18</sup> Verse/chorus form became more popular in their songs in the end of their career as the Beatles.

<sup>19</sup> The song is the first track from the first Beatles album *Please Please Me* published in March 22, 1963 in UK. The lead vocal is sung by McCartney. The authorship of the song is listed for Lennon and McCartney, though the main contribution was made by McCartney, whereas Lennon helped with the lyrics (Dowling 1989, 23).

POLLACK:																			
form	<b>V 1</b>				<b>V 2</b>				<b>Bridge</b>				<b>V 3</b>						
bars	16				16				10				16						
FITZGERALD:																			
form	<b>A</b>				<b>A</b>				<b>B</b>				<b>A</b>						
bars	16				16				10				16						
NURMESJÄRVI:																			
bars	2	2	4	4	4	2	2	4	4	4	2	2	2	4	2	2	4	4	4
phrases	a1	a2	b1	c1	d	a3	a4	b2	c2	d	e1	e2	e3	f	a5	a6	b'2	c3	d
form	<b>A1</b>			<b>B</b>		<b>A2</b>			<b>B'</b>		<b>C</b>				<b>A3</b>		<b>B''</b>		
bars	8			8		8			8		10				8		8		
	She was just			How could I		Well, she			She wouldn't		Well my heart				We danced		I never		
	17...			dance with		looked at me...			dance with		went. boom...				through the		danced with		
				another...					another...						night...		another...		

Table 1. The Forms of the Beatles' song 'I Saw Her Standing There' (1963) by Pollack (1999), Fitzgerald (1994) and Nurmesjärvi<sup>20</sup>

The Table 1 presents the first 62 bars of the song, which are sufficient to illustrate the differences in analyses.<sup>21</sup> The differences in these analyses are on several levels. Firstly, the concepts used to describe the form vary. Secondly, the lengths of the sections are not similar. There is one link between all presented analyses: the length of the bridge in Pollack's analysis, the section B in Fitzgerald's analysis and the section C in my analysis is the same.

Allan W. Pollack published his first comments on the Beatles music through the Internet in May, 1989. Of the 28 published songs he also included 'I Saw Her Standing There'.<sup>22</sup> (Pollack 1999.) He is a musicologists

<sup>20</sup> In my analysis I have chosen to represent the changing lyrics in A sections by numbers (A1, A2 ...). The lyrics in B-sections, however, change only in the first two bars of the total eight bars, the rest is always the same.

<sup>21</sup> The complete form of the song according to my analysis is *In - A1 - B - A2 - B' - C - A3 - B'' - S - C - A3 - B - co.*

<sup>22</sup> He completed his notes in February, 2000 – now the pages cover all the Beatles songs. The analysis of 'I Saw Her Standing There' is identical in 1999 and 2000 sources.

with musicological ambitions concerning the “Notes on ...Series”.<sup>23</sup> However, his publication is not a scientific study and cannot be judged from those bases. Furthermore, form is only one aspect of his work and it is not on the main focus of his interest.<sup>24</sup> Pollack presents ‘I Saw Her Standing There’ as a song with “a strong bluesy flavor ” (Pollack 2000). With regard to the form he writes that it “[...] is quite fully cranked out with two bridges, a guitar solo, intro, and full outro” (Pollack 1999). He interprets the song, not as a verse and chorus song, but a verse/bridge song. One could also view his VVB as AABA.

Fitzgerald (1996a, 1996b) has interpreted ‘I Saw Her Standing There’ as an AABA.<sup>25</sup> He does not present detailed analyses of any songs or their principles of the analysis – he simply presents a list of AABA songs, which includes ‘I Saw Her Standing There’. The sections are of the same length as in Pollack's analysis but Fitzgerald does not use the term ‘verse’, instead he refers directly to the established standard form type of AABA. Fitzgerald writes about the songs of the Beatles:

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<sup>23</sup> He lists (good) reasons that made him start this enormous task that took him over ten years to complete (compressed) (Pollack 2000, authors bold):

- ❖ Rediscovery of the Beatles albums on CD [...]
- ❖ The Suggestion and proof-by-existence that the Beatles were a worthy subject of “formal Scholarship” provided by the examples of Lewisohn’s *Recording Sessions book* [...] and [...] the newsgroup rec.music.beatles [...]
- ❖ The slow realization that **even the most scholarly treatments of the wealth of Beatle bootleg material to-date were focused almost entirely on issues of discography and provenance, while largely missing out on the profound musicological significance of the material** in terms of the light shed on the Beatles’ compositional processes.
- ❖ [...]

In his interview (presented on the Internet pages) he was asked about the usefulness of the ‘school’ tools in the task. Pollack answers:

“the overall success of the series rests on the extent to which my tool set for the project is a not-too-doctrinaire personal synthesis of a number of music theory “schools,” further adapted to the particular challenges of the material under study. The downside of this approach is that it allows my work to potentially “fall between two stools;” i.e. my lay readership finds the tech talk inscrutable such as it is, while my academic colleagues resent that this same tech talk is not cast in terms of a more rigorous and easily identifiable doctrine.”

<sup>24</sup> Other aspects that he deals with (depending on the song in question) include words, harmony and modality, melody, and arrangement, and A-section-by-section walkthrough (Pollack 1999, 2000). The form is always dealt with in terms of verse, chorus and bridge.

<sup>25</sup> In his dissertation (1996b, 37-38) *Popular Songwriting 1963-1966* he divides form types into following categories: verse/chorus; verse/chorus/bridge; AABA; AAA; irregular.

" Lennon-McCartney use very simple and regular forms, and clearly prefer the A A B A scheme. Several of their A A B A songs (e.g. 'Love Me Do,' 'A Hard Day's Night,' 'I Don't Want to Spoil the Party') involve an immediate statement of the lyric hook, rather than placing it (as is more common) at the end of the 'A' section. " (Fitzgerald 1996b, 215.)

Contrary to the 'typical' Beatles AABA song the title of 'I Saw Her Standing There' is placed at the end of the A-section. This, however, according to Davis (1985, 63) is typical of AABA songs: "Traditionally, there are two title spots in the AABA; in either the first line or the last line of the verse".

Fitzgerald's analysis is taken to the macro level: the sections are the largest possible repeated units in this song. This results in a discursive pattern in which B-section is understood as a bridge, after which A-section is repeated again. The song could not end after the B-section. This analysis does not, however, confirm the idea of symmetry in the length of the sections. The standard forms were often 32 bars long (4x8 bars). In this analysis sections are not of same length, not so unusual in popular music, but the four times eight bar structure (ABAB) is found in the song on another level.

The result of my analysis presented in Table 1 is an ABABCAB form. In this case I would interpret the first ABAB as a standard form, even though all songs that begin with ABAB are not necessarily standardised forms. However, in this song there are several factors that support the idea of an ABAB standard form.<sup>26</sup> The length of the sections is that of the normative standard forms – four times eight bars. The hook is stated early in the song, as is also typical of an AABA song. The title is often the closing line of the each AB-unit, as is the case in this Beatles' song (Davis 1985, 75).

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of the comparison of these analyses is not to pinpoint right or wrong results but rather to present the different possible ways of interpreting and understanding the form, depending on the analyst and the purpose of the

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<sup>26</sup> The cognitive principles for my analysis are presented in *Beatlestudies 1* (Nurmesjärvi, 1998).

analysis. The implicit information – definitions of the concepts, principles of the analysis – are crucial in understanding the result of the analysis. The main problem concerns the terminology commonly used by musician that is "borrowed" to the analysis (e.g. verse/chorus). These examples show that however useful they are, these concepts do not apply to all form types. Standard form, for example, is a case in point. Therefore it is suggested that this "borrowed" terminology should not be used uncritically. There is also an "unintentional" factor that affects the understanding of the various verse/chorus form types. The younger generation, including myself, do not have much contact with the older verse/chorus form. It is rarely heard, even though the choruses are still played, the tradition no longer continues. Standard forms are more familiar, and they are still used. Extended AABA is still quite common in mainstream pop music.

There are indeed problems with the actual analysis procedure. Even though one tries to formulate as consistent and logical principles as possible difficulties still occur. Pollack (2000) states some difficult aspects of analysis that are familiar also in the present body of research:

- ❖ a form that could not be easily pigeonholed into the standard pop designs;
- ❖ chord Progressions that relied on voice leading rather than root movement;
- ❖ uneven phrase lengths or meter changes.

Even though 'I Saw Her Standing There' appears to be a very standardised pop song the above comparison showed that there are many possible ways to interpret form. Much more complex examples could be pointed out within the Beatles' vast repertoire.

Since the concepts of verse and chorus are not applicable to all songs other indicators must be chosen. The alphabets (A, B, C ...) representing each section of form are neutral in the sense that they do not refer to any specific form type. However, there is a danger that the form is interpreted as, for instance, AABA form (a standard form) yet the analyst can eliminate this by explicitly stating the grounds upon which the analysis is based. The compatibility of the results of the analysis becomes necessary when the forms are compared or statistical methods are used.

Confusing the letters from the beginning of alphabets, A, B, C etc. with the standard forms (AABA, ABAB) is possible and highly likely. However, it is as arbitrary as using other letters, for instance, O, P, Q, R, or X, Y, Z, and so on. The confusion exists in the mind of the reader since the principles and basis of the use of the concepts are not explicitly identified. For myself, as an analyst, the analytical procedure requires careful thought and consideration before the concept of form, and its changes, can be placed under close examination from a broader perspective.

Finally, I would like to return to Adorno. It is true that standardisation is a feature of popular music, as it is in many other musical genres. For instance, Tin Pan Alley is a very homogeneous style also in the sense of form (Hamm 1980, 105). Could the form be more standardised than an AABA of four times eight bars? However, there are also complex cases in mainstream pop music, not to mention other styles that perhaps require new or redefined terminology. A standard is not always simple and what appears to be simple on one level is sometimes complex on another.

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