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In the Labyrinth

of Time

**Reflections on temporal concepts of
Modernity and Post-Modernity in Grisey's**

"La mort de la civilisation"

Gerard Grisey:

"Quatre chants pour franchir le seuil"

No.: 2: "La mort de la civilisation"

This essay is extracted on a comprehensive study of the "Quatre chants pour franchir le seuil" by Gerard Grisey under the title: "Auf der Schwelle von Moderne und Postmoderne" (on the threshold of modernity and postmodernity), which discusses the aspects of post-modern thinking in the compositional structure of this song cycle. It refers to the score: "Gerard Grisey: Quatre chants pour franchir le seuil" published in 1998 by Editions Ricordi. My analysis is based on this score. The study was written in fall 2004 as a Diploma Thesis during my studies at Robert Schumann Hochschule Duesseldorf, Germany. The author translated all texts and sources from German and French.

„La musique n’a pas cessé de faire passer ses lignes de fuite, comme autant de ‘multiplicités à transformation’, même en renversant ses propres codes qui la structurent ou l’arbrifient ; ce pourquoi la forme musicale, jusque dans ses ruptures et proliférations est comparable à de la mauvaise herbe, un rhizome.”

(Music has always allowed its directions to float freely like ‘transforming multiplicities’, which even reverse their proper codes, by which it is structured or made into a ‘tree’-form; that is why the musical structure, down to its ruptures and proliferations, equal the weeds, - a Rhizom)¹

Musical time is ambiguous: on one hand we experience it passing from linearly, directional, as a musical artwork unfolds, while at the same time, music can organise connection underneath this mono-directional temporal surface. It builds lines and relations that undermine our simple directional temporal experience. Music can also produce moments of non-time (Boulez referred to them as flat time – *temps lisse*), maybe one could refer to music as a form of Art, in which time is not the precondition only, but the material, which is manipulated. Different periods had different attitudes towards time and the musical structures often reflect more than a mere compositional approach towards time, but might in some cases actually develop a temporal model, which exemplifies the experience of time determined by the period in which the piece was composed.

Gerard Grisey’s “Quatre chants pour franchir le Seuil” are such a work. Already the title, crossing the threshold, implies a new beginning and thus a temporal activity. I would like to suggest, that this threshold is more than a meditation about death (as the text proposes on the surface), but that it is in fact a threshold between different attitudes towards time: the threshold from a flat, historic, directional time towards a complex maze of time, in which

¹ Gilles Deleuze / Félix Guattari: Pilles Plateaus – Capitalisme et Schizophrénie II : Introduction: „Rhizom“, © 1980, Les Éditions de Minuit, Paris, France

different timelines point to different directions in a rhizomatic structure. In short, I would like to suggest that Grisey's "Quatre chants pour franchir le Seuil" cross and determine the threshold between modern and post-modern time concepts.

Modern and Post-modern Time – two models of time:

We might first try to describe the concepts of modernity and post-modernity more carefully. Firstly, in many cases post-modernity is opposed to modernity. While modernity refers to a teleological concept of history, post-modernity tries to grasp a "beyond-history" (if history is understood as a linear idea)². Modernity is the idea of movement, but also the concept of history, as a directional process. Modernity follows the path inaugurated by enlightenment, a journey on which man-kind embarked to finally arrive in the promised land of reason. Post-modernity on the other hand is sceptical of the purpose of this journey. In this sense, post-modernity might become a sort of contra-enlightenment, a shadow that accompanies modernity, and criticises what the teleological concept leaves behind. *"Modern in the way which has to be criticised would be a historical-philosophical belief in conciliation and redemption through progress. That is the idea of the salutary and happiness-bringing enlightenment, which makes the earth finally gleam in the sign of "triumphal calamity" as it is written in the "dialectic of enlightenment". Modernity in this sense would represent, the naivety of the beginning, which believes in the enlightenment as in a religion. Post-modern, on the other hand, would be a reflexive self-enlightenment of enlightenment."*³

² Although in which case it is a question in how far the idea of a "beyond-history" in itself is too much teleological a concept to serve our description of a different approach to time.

³ Walter Reese-Schäfer: Vom Erhabenen zum Sublimen ist es nur ein Schritt. Moderne und postmoderne Ästhetik bei Jean-François Lyotard (It is just a step from the elevated the to sublime. Modernity and

Post-modernity in this sense would avoid the modern momentum and abandon an idea of history or a concept of historic directionality. If modernity is defined by an organic process, a developmental attitude, then a post-modern aspect could be described more as the being in the presence without the consciousness of to what this presence would need to develop to or without desire to shape the direction which the reality has to take, a passive submission to the process of reality.⁴ Post-modernity could such be essentially the change of attitude from men being the subject of history to being the object, as the men-made movement of history has not proven to lead to the glorious futures modernity promised. However, as a point outside the modern history of progress, the post-modern attitude claims for more than being a mere reaction, or criticism, as it were, of modernity. If the concept of a time beyond historic thinking, claims for its own right, it must have more to offer, then a mere criticism of what came before.

The great narratives, or the one great narrative of enlightenment – as Lyotard puts it – is to be replaced by another logic. *“In the general narratology, a metaphysical element can be found, a hegemony, which was assigned to one genre – the narrative – above all others ...”*⁵ *“By simplifying it to the extreme, post-modernity can be understood as the incredibility in the regard of the Meta-Narratives”* as Lyotard writes in *“La condition postmoderne”*.⁶ What

post-modern Aesthetics in the works of Jean-François Lyotard, in: Walter Reese-Schäfer/Bernhard Taureck (Hgg.), Jean-François Lyotard, © Junghans 1989, Cuxhaven

⁴ “Beflügelt von einem geschichtemachenden Gemisch aus Optimismus und Agressivität, hat sie [die Moderne] die Herstellung einer Welt in Aussicht gestellt, in der es kommt, wie man denkt, weil man kann, was man will, und den Willen zur Macht des Selberkönnens, der in moderner Zeit den Weltlauf laufen macht. [...] Das Projekt der Moderne grüdet [...] in einer *kinetischen Utopie*.” (Bewingt by a mixture of optimism and aggressivity, that creates history, modernity promised the creation of a world, in which things go the way we think, because we can do what we want and we have the will to learn what we cannot do by now. It is the will of the power of being able to do it yourself, which makes makes the movement of the world move in modern times.) Peter Sloterdijk “Eurotaoismus – Zur Kritik der politischen Kinetik” © Suhrkamp Verlag Frankfurt am Main 1989

⁵ Jean François Lyotard: “Post-modernity for children” © Edition Passagen (German version) 1987

⁶ Jean François Lyotard: “La condition postmoderne” © Les Éditions de Minuit 1979

takes the place of the great narrative is a maze of small narratives, post-modernity in this sense is not in fact a contradiction of the modern narrative, it rather puts it back in its place, it is nothing more than one option among others. Post-modernity claims to be not a new meta-narrative, but a new meta-narrator, who's agenda is not to find the one common logic or direction, the story which contains all stories, but who provides a body of potential narratives, which can be anything but only one, which have to be permanently multiple in directions, forms and goals, a multiplicity of stories, of potentials and of temporal directions. In this reality we are not the makers of history, humanity, instead of finding the one all-connecting story, remains around the campfire in which now all different stories are told, without the preference of one over the other and without competition.

Gilles Deleuze tries to grasp this reality as a "rhizome". He writes: *"...Let's sum up the main characteristics of a rhizome: in contrast to trees or their roots the rhizome connects every arbitrary point with every other point, even though not each of its lines refers to other similar lines; it brings completely different sign-regimes or even relations without signs into the game. The rhizome can't be restricted neither to the "One", nor to the "Multifarious". It is not the "One", which becomes two, or directly tree, four or five, etc. It is not something multifarious, which comes from one and to which one can be added (n+1). It does not consist of unities, but of dimensions, or rather of moving directions. It has neither beginning nor ending, but always a centre, from which it grows and spreads out." ... "...the rhizome is a sort of Anti-Genealogy".⁷*

This conception defeat both, a state of directional time and a state on non-time. Beyond history means being beyond stasis and development, in a network of directions.

⁷ Gilles Deleuze: "Mille Plateaux – Capitalisme et Schizophrénie II; Introduction: Rhizome" © Les Éditions de Minuit 1980.

Compositional approaches to the concept of time in music:

« Il semble qu'il y ait deux types d'appréhension du temps: l'un directionnel, c'est le temps irréversible de la biologie, de l'histoire, du drame, le temps 'occidental'; l'autre non directionnel, c'est le temps de l'inconscient et des psychotropes, l'éternel présent de la contemplation, le temps 'oriental'. La musique que j'écris s'inscrit résolument et consciemment dans le premier type d'appréhension. »

(It seems to me that there are two types of perception of time: a directional one, which is the irreversible time of biology, history, drama, the 'occidental' time; the other one, non-directional, which is the time of the unconscious and of the psycho tropes, the eternal presence of contemplation, the 'oriental' time. The music I am writing writes itself resolutely and consciously into the first type of perception.)⁸

Griseys' simple yet convincing differentiation between two different ways to work with the time brings the discussion, on compositional models of time back to its simple basic possibilities. It might be only added that this differentiation would not be found so purely in reality, as it is very well possible to find pieces, in which both ideas are mixed or in which they reflect each other. Linear movements could be interrupted by static (circular) parts: movement can be accelerated, or decelerated, etc. and we will see in how far the "Quatre chants" do write themselves in the 'occidental' concept of time, or if there might be in fact a way in which this 'modern' dialectic of two conflicting possibilities could be transformed by a rhizomatic concept of time.

It seems, however, that the temporality of sounds was crucial to Grisey for his musical inventions and ideas. He often drew his attention to the temporal –

⁸ (Gerard Grisey during a program at „Radio France“ (Journée Gérard Grisey, Perspectives du XXème siècle, 15 mars 1980), 1979, quoted in Jérôme Baillet: Gérard Grisey: „Fondements d'une écriture“ © Harmattan / L'Itinéraire 2000)

that is the horizontal – analysis of sounds rather than to the spectral analysis – that is the vertical dimension – of sounds (the harmonic contents). The beginning of “Partiels”, for instance, is rather based on the temporal augmentation than on a spectral idea. The initial sound, which is derived from the analysis of the low E of the trombone, comes into being and gains its characteristics by a temporal augmentation. A sound that takes only parts of a second in reality is prolonged with the help of the ensemble to a few seconds. Grisey does not put a vertical, but a horizontal magnifying glass on the sound, which augments the temporality.

In his early works, Grisey was very much concerned with the idea of augmenting time, later he rather tried to use ideas of diminution of time. All these techniques, however, are part of his concept of an occidental idea of time, as augmentation and diminution refer to a linear concept of time. In his own descriptions, Grisey liked to refer to metaphors as the time of rocks, of whales, of men (the “normal” time) and of insects to illustrate his ideas. We will find these techniques of augmentation and diminution used in the second song of the “quatre chants pour franchir le seuil”, but, as they are not directly related to the question of post-modern time concepts, I want to draw the attention to another point.

The aspect that seems more important in the context of a post-modern concept of time: the question of direction. It is well possible to imagine a musical movement, which returns to its starting point again; we may, for instance, find this structure in the music of Brahms, when the last movement of a piece returns to the initial idea in the first movement (for instance in the Clarinet Quintet) or in the music of Schumann, where everything is built on one single motif, which returns to itself again and again and rather explores different aspects, than describing a development (which might be found in

the Symphonies of Beethoven). In these works, we find an idea of time, which has a rather circular structure, or which is constructed concentrically around a static centre. This concept is strangely placed in-between the pure ideas of 'occidental' and 'oriental' time; it has for sure movements, but this movement does not have a direction. This difference can certainly be found in the 'teleological' pieces of Beethoven and the rather wandering pieces of Schubert. In a linear, teleological concept of time, everything goes into one direction. In the other concept, the music moves back and forth negating every clear goal. The first one has a direction; the second one is a sort of musical strolling.

In this context, it is also possible that different parameters of the composition write themselves into different concepts of time.

In his song cycle "quatre chants pour franchir le seuil", Grisey realizes a conflict between the teleological concept of time and a rather circular, direction-less model. The last song, hereby, exposes both concepts most clearly. While the first part of this song ("La mort de l'humanité") has a clear developed direction, the second part ("Berceuse") is completely static. The second song at which I will take a closer look, exposes both concepts, too, but in a more sophisticated manner.

"La mort de l'ange" – a distorted funeral march

On the first view, the second song seems to be the most simple and clear piece in the whole cycle. The choice of the text is quite peculiar: Grisey took the text from an exhibition catalogue, published in the context of an exhibition of Egyptian sarcophaguses, in which the inscriptions on these sarcophaguses are listed. The text has therefore two strata: the listings from the catalogue

and the Egyptian fragments. Thus one could say that the two layers bring a modern and an ancient stratum into context or they could be described as well as a prosaic and a poetic stratum.

La mort de la civilisation

n° 811 et 812
 (presque entièrement disparus)
 n° 814 : « alors que tu reposes pour l'éternité... »
 n° 809
 (détruit)
 n° 868 et 869
 (presque entièrement détruits)
 n° 870 : « j'ai parcouru... j'ai été florissant... je fais une déploration... Le lumineux tombe à l'intérieure de... »
 n° 961, 963
 (détruits)
 n° 972
 (presque entièrement détruits)
 n° 973 : « qui fait le tour du ciel ... jusqu'aux confins du ciel ... jusqu'à l'étendue des bras ... Fais-moi un chemin de lumière, laisse-moi passer... »
 n° 903
 (détruit)
 n°1050 :
 « formule pour être un dieu... »

(Sarcophages Egyptiennes)

The death of civilization

Nr. 811 and 812
 (almost completely destroyed)
 Nr. 814: "Now that you rest for eternity"
 Nr. 809
 (destroyed)
 Nr. 868 and 869
 (almost entirely destroyed)
 Nr. 870: "I traveled... I was flowering... I make a lamentation... The light falls Inside of..."
 Nr. 961, 963
 (destroyed)
 Nr. 972
 (almost completely destroyed)
 Nr. 973: "I make the way heaven... until the borders of until the range of my arms... make a passage of light for me, let me pass..."
 Nr. 903
 (destroyed)
 Nr. 1050
 "Formulate to be a god..."

(Egyptian Sarcophaguses)

The text:

In comparison to other works of Grisey, Grisey composes the text very closely in this song. He only changes the order of the fragments compared to the catalogue. It seems as if he rearranges the text from the catalogue under poetical aspects, inserting a clearly dramatic concept: the text-fragments get longer and longer, while the enumeration gets less towards the second third of the "poem", and back to the previous state to the end.

The music follows the structure defined by the text very closely: the catalogue-part – the prosaic layer – is put into music in the form of a recitative (the text is extremely understandable), while, in the fragment-part – the poetic layer –, a more cantabile style is used. This cantabile gesture gains more and more importance during the piece.

Grisey calls this song: "La mort de la civilization" (the death of civilization). This seems confusing, as it does not deal with "The Civilization" but only with one specific one. An interesting point about this observation seems to me that the death and disappearing is not really described, but the continuation of this civilization through its heritage in the timeless vestiges of this culture. The song therefore takes a perspective beyond the death, and describes a rather paradox situation: the continuation of a civilization in the vestiges of its disappearance.

This paradoxical attitude explains why Grisey used fragments for his text. On one hand, a fragment describes the loss (as we have to assume that they were complete texts before). On the other hand, it opens a space (through its incompleteness), which encourage to further think about them.⁹ Past (as

⁹ It is not surprising, that the fragment was understood as the Medium of reflexion by the romantic thinkers. „Nur das Unvollständige kann begriffen werden, kann uns weiterführen. Das Vollständige wird nur genossen. Wollen wir die Natur begreifen, so müssen wir sie als unvollständig setzen.“ (Only the

transience) and the possibility of future are combined in the form of the fragment.

This concept is emphasized by Grisey through the quotation of the catalogue-parts where the original text is described as destroyed; in these passages, the ancient texts are present through the fact that they are destroyed, which is probably the culmination of the paradox described before.

Taking a closer look at the used fragments, it is quite conspicuous that the first three metaphors are dealing with the idea of passing to death. The first describes the eternal rest, the second one describes the lament about a sudden death, and the third one is about the passage into the empire of the death. The fourth fragment takes another position: it states the identity with god by formulating: "Formule pour être un dieu...". Considering the Egyptian practice of overcoming death in a quite material sense – by preserving dead bodies or by building huge monuments – it could be said that this fragment emphasizes this continuation if formulating is understood in a broader sense as every cultural activity of a civilization. Basically, the act of formulating, of creating cultural heritage to overcome the temporality and transience of the material reality is common to most cultures. As the being-remembered the eternal life, if only in cultural monuments, means the identity with a god, formulating is the way to achieve it. Only by formulating and by objectifying transience can turn into continuation. This fragment therefore also describes the concept of artworks: grasping the moment and preserving it.

Thus, the main topic of this song is not disappearing, but the duration and continuation. Not the death of the civilization is the crucial point, but the transgression of the threshold of death through the cultural achievements of a civilization.

incomplete can be understood and can lead us further. The complete can be only enjoyed. If we want to understand nature, we have to think it as incomplete) Friedrich Schlegel: Athenäumsfragmente, in Schlegel ges. Werke Bd. II / 1 © Ferdinand Schönigh München

The music:

The second song is, as I mentioned already, rather simple. It reminds in some aspects of the "style dépouillé" which we can find in some pieces of Ravel (for instance in his piano music such as "ma mère l'oie" or even more radical in the song "ronsard à son âme"). Griseys' piece seems to follow this tradition.

The instrumentation is rather reduced compared to other pieces of the cycle. The voice has the leading part and is accompanied by a texture, which does not change throughout the piece: three pizzicato-impulses, played by the harp, the cello and the contrabass (later also supported by the percussion-group), which lead into a chord.

The overall-structure is very clearly organized: the piece has 60 bars, which are organized in a regular order and which can be grouped according to the digits in the score. The tempi become slower and slower from each group to the next one according to a simple system (Grisey gives two tempi in-between which the tempo should be found; in my listing I referred to the slowest version – the fastest one would be 10 steps faster on the metronome). The complete picture looks as follows:

Digits	Number of bars	Tempi, slow version
	6	100
1	6	90
3	5	100
4	5	90
5	5	80
6	4	90

7	4	80
8	4	70
9	4	60
10	3	70
11	3	60
12	3	50
13	3	40
14	2	30
15	2	40
	1	30

This clear formal plan describes a slowing down, which gets – paradoxically – faster and faster. As the tempo gets slower, the duration of the bars naturally increases, but the changes of the tempo always occur in smaller and smaller distances. As a consequence, the music within the bars gets prolonged, the duration of the single section (with the same tempo) does rather stay the same, only with some slight movements in tempo (for instance the section from digit 1 to digit 3 has more or less the same length as the section from digit 15 to digit 16, even though the latter one contains much less beats). It can be stated that this structure rather affects the perception of the tempo within the sections than the duration of those sections.

To further complicate this principle, Grisey changes the duration of the pizzicato gesture, which initiates every bar. Over the structure of durations (which can be found in the tempo development), another structure is placed above, following its own rules. The result is a very flexible perception of tempo, which seems regular, but changes permanently. All those changes are very smoothly done. Thus they are not really clear on the surface – even

though we can find quite huge differences –, and through the gradual changes in duration, an impression of regularity is produced.

The music tries to realize a state of uncertainty. The whole gesture reminds of a funeral march. The tempo gets slower in a regular way from the first to the last section, but the amount of beats within the section gets also reduced so that the duration of the whole section stays more or less the same. At the same time, the pizzicato gesture is prolonged and shortened according to another principle and obscures the perception more. The duration changes in the pizzicato gesture works in a way against the other structures. The result is a suspended time perception. Even clear changes are not as such perceived, because other structures obfuscate them. A one-directional perception of movement is avoided, in favor of a direction-less wandering.

If this construction is put in context with the voice-part, then it is striking how the two strata – the prosaic and the poetic one – interact with the slight variations in the durations: while the prosaic parts keep their basic tempo (the more the general tempo slows down, the faster are the note values), the poetic parts react more to the tempo of the surrounding. This benefits the musical expression a lot: the prosaic part keeps its removed, neutral identity, while the fragments gain an expressive quality (one example may be the part from digit 12 – 14 in the score, where the pizzicato gesture gets faster and faster to illustrate the dramatic quality of the text: "... I make the way through heaven... until the borders of heaven... until the range of my arms... make a passage of light for me, let me pass..." other examples can be found).

Another very effective medium in this song is the use of harmony. Although the harmonic language of this song is also rather simple, it allows expressive and very colorful moments. Basically two main groups of sounds are used. The

first group consists of very clear and lucid chords consisting of three pitches (they are found in the following parts: digit 5 – 8, one bar before 10 – 12, and 14 to the end). In these sounds, the range of chords is rather wide which produces a clear sound that is also supported by the instrumentation, which uses harp and strings (in the initiating pizzicato gesture) – all instruments with a comparatively “clean” spectrum. However, Grisey tries to vary the color of these chords by shifting from rather harmonic towards more inharmonic chords. These color-variations do not really develop, but are rather put side by side.

The other group uses very dense, inharmonic sounds – often played in a low range of pitches – with a rich spectrum of overtones (they are found in the score from digit 4 – 8, 8 to one bar before 10 and 12 – 14). These sounds develop throughout the piece and become more and more inharmonic: when they occur for the first time (digit 4) we can find only three low frequencies producing a dense spectrum promoted by the use of the gong and the vibraphone. The second occurrence already uses chords of six voices (digit 8 – 10) with strong, narrow dissonances in a low pitch-range. In the last occurrence (digit 12 – 14), the instrumentation is much more inharmonic, as the percussionists replace the harp and the strings completely.

This harmonic dualism is used again to support the text: the dense, inharmonic chords accompany the fragments – the poetic stratum – while the harmonic, rather simple chords are combined with the prosaic stratum of the text.

Another aspect about the harmonic level – especially in the context of what was observed in the temporal organization – is that the harmonic changes are not related to time or rhythmical variations; it rather seems, Grisey wants to avoid their coincidence. The harmony seems to present another independent

structure. It could be only stated that the temporal organization and the harmonic language share a structural homology: both develop without having a real direction; the changes of harmonies and the organization of the time have both a rather wandering, peregrinating structure. It could be added that the harmony-changes themselves vacillate between occasional developments (we can find a gradual change from rather harmonic chords towards rather inharmonic chords from digit 5 – 8) and direct oppositions (as at digit 8 or in other places). The harmonic language clearly follows the wandering structure of the temporal organization.

The second song describes the duration of a culture beyond the death in the eternity of vestiges. The idea of duration is complex in its structure as it could be seen as a process in which development and duration (immutableness) go side by side. The experience of the continuation of the Egyptian culture is experienced in the changes since then and the presence of the past at the same time. Movement and immutableness are together in the concept of duration.¹⁰ The memory produced through the artifacts of an old culture is a permanent reinterpretation moving around the same center. It is therefore not a developmental thinking which has a linear concept of time, but rather a concept of infinite connections.¹¹

¹⁰ “...denn was ist Ruhe, wenn nicht der Gegensatz zur Bewegung? Sie ist allerdings kein Gegensatz, der die Bewegung von sich aus-, sondern einschließt. Nur das Bewegte kann ruhen. In der Bewegung als bloßer Ortsveränderung eines Körpers ist die Ruhe freilich nur der Grenzfall der Bewegung. Wenn Ruhe die Bewegung einschließt, so kann es eine Ruhe geben, die eine innige Sammlung der Bewegung, also höchste Bewegtheit ist, gesetzt, dass die Art der Bewegung eine solche Ruhe fordert. Von dieser Art ist jedoch die Ruhe des in sich ruhenden Werkes.“ (...so what is rest, if not the opposite to movement? But it is not an opposite that excludes movement, but includes it. Only the Moved can rest. In the movement as a simple displacement of a body, rest is just a borderline case of movement. When rest includes movement, there could be a rest, which is the inner meaning of movement and therefore the highest stage of movement, supposed, that the way of movement requires such a rest. This however is the nature of the rest of the in-itself-resting artwork.) (Martin Heidegger: „Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes“ © Reclam 1960)

¹¹ This might be actually referred to the concept of “Rhizome”.

The musical structure of the song composes this concept out. The music is constructed in different layers of permanent changes placed upon each other, which are independent from each other, which interfere from time to time and which produce a wandering movement, completely suspended between movement and rest. On one hand, the material is permanently newly interpreted, changed and developed. On the other hand none of these developments defines a direction or can be reduced to a teleological concept. The piece is wandering in different directions without preferring one of them.

For this reason, the piece – despite of its repetitive structure – is far away from any minimalist fatuity. At the same time it does not fall into the simple opposition of pure developing, teleological approaches against pure immobility or static. It rather shows a way beyond a thinking in simple oppositions.

Crossing the threshold to postmodernity:

It is quite clear that the musical language Grisey found in his piece reflect an idea of musical development, which contradicts any linear movement. At the same time he does not negate movement as such. The music tries to create a network, a maze of different directions.

In its choice of text, it already seems to refer to a poly-stylistic idea, crossing time and bringing the old text into a new context. Thereby, the interesting question of how these texts act for us today and how we describe their duration is raised. The music answers these question in a musical development that represents the connection of everything with everything else: a wandering movement that rejects both: a simple idea of beyond time where

all movement stops, as well as a teleological concept of time. Instead of that, a complex network is composed in which different directions and layers move into different directions at the same time. This compositional concept is realized with very clear, simple methods, but – for this reason – highly effective.

This idea of a musical artwork as a maze where different movements and directions are displayed at the same time, place Grisey in a context of post-modern composers, who tried to develop a concept of time that replaces the concept of modernity. Grisey's piece is an interesting example how this can be realized in the musical texture itself. Post-modernity in this sense is not just an aesthetical concept but it also affects the compositional technique itself.

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