Roaming Melodies

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Digitizing and the new media have generated new interactions between the arts and a keen scholarly interest in adaptations and translations. However, adaptation has been a key concept for a long time in Darwinian theories of evolution. Using Wilhelma Tappert's early Darwinian concept of "Wandernde Melodien" ("Roaming Melodies"), this article looks at the way in which some early-nineteenth-century folk songs underwent mutations and translations. These melodies have no fixed identities; they are, as Tappert says, roaming tourists ceaselessly changing and adapting to new circumstances. Such adaptation histories of songs show affinities with adaptations in biocultural evolution.

Keywords: literature and music / folk songs / adaptations / Tappert, Wilhelm: *Wandernde Melodien* / Scottish songs / Hebrew Melodies / intertextuality / intermediality

Wilhelm Tappert

In 1868, Wilhelm Tappert published a chapter with the title "Wandernde Melodien" in his book *Musikalische Studien*. According to Tappert, such roaming melodies "are the most indefatigable tourists of the earth":

> They cross the roaring streams, pass the Alps, surface on the other side of the ocean and lead a nomad life in the desert. They encounter everywhere others that go the opposite way. Given the truly human interest for everything foreign, some melodic Cinderella will be held in high honor far from her homeland, or it becomes, perhaps, a patriotic song, or a national hymn whose sounds unfailingly exert a most arousing effect. The vagabonds often return more or less laced, masked, and reshaped, and they live a new and glittering life as "imports" in their old home. After all, there is no music police that would ask for a birth certificate and a testimonial on moral conduct.[1]

Gone is here the romantic notion of glorified ancient originality and authenticity. Origin is of interest only to measure how each new identity is a transformation. Roaming is not limited to crossings of national or geographical borders. Tappert's next paragraph wittily describes how melodies move across various social and cultural layers within a single culture. Each visited site requires adaptation and fundamentally changes the melody's character:

> The resounding fellows are always on the move: from the workshop, they move to the road and with the itinerant journeymen to the inns, to distribute themselves from here to the furthest little town, the smallest village. From the dance floor the intruders get to the children's room, they slip from the concert halls and mix with the harvesters in the fields, accompany the hunter, or they shorten the sentinel's hours of duty. From theater and from the streets they find their way to the churches – and the other way round. Some melodies resemble the wandering Jew, the one that can never rest, never die! There are motives of such capacity and tenacity to live that they have existed almost as long as our earthly calendar. Many of them flowered already in the poetic love songs, sat professionally in the schools and banquets of the minnesingers and rest now, apparently, in the mighty spaces of the church. Some followed the push, shove of the reformer from Wittenberg, and fled from the incense and the mystic darkness of the Catholic dome in the bright and airy spaces of the protestant halls of the Lord.[2]

Without explicitly stating it, Tappert introduces here an added dimension of melodic transformation. In medieval love songs or melodies sung in church, the tunes are coupled to words for a limited period. At some point, words and melodies "divorce" and "marry" another partner. Such "recycled" products have traditionally been called "contrafacts".

Such ceaseless mutations are not unique to Western culture; they seem to be an innate feature of songs everywhere:

> Those who go around in the world, those who must adjust everywhere to the land and the people, will undergo more or less noticeable changes. They accept here and there something from the language and the customs, and they may be seen in the end indigenous abroad but a foreigner at home. This is precisely the way of our melody adventurers. Never, or only seldom, do they remain what and who they are. Indeed, no great trips are needed for small mutations, for even on the way to the neighbor certain small features disappear and are replaced by others, as we can see in the innumerable, almost daily growing, so-called popular songs. The "transformation" is endless.[3]

Tappert offers in his article twenty-five such melodic mutation sequences; in the enlarged version of the article, published as a book in 1889, he considerably increased the number of examples, but he made no attempt in either version to explain what actually drives such mutations. Is there some force behind the changes? Do the melodies improve or weaken after a mutation? Do mutation sequences lead to "better" melodies?

I present a few case studies of roaming melodies in nineteenth-century folklore revivals, and postpone answering these questions to the final part of my essay. My examples are taken from East- and West-European folklore revivals that reached Vienna during the Congress of 1815–1816 without meeting each other.

Walter Scott Returns to Ulster

A national song market emerged in Britain around 1800, when Robert Burns, Thomas Moore, Walter Scott, and others provided publishers with Irish, Scottish, and Welsh songs. The leading publisher, George Thomson of Edinburgh, started in 1793 with a volume of *Original Scottish Airs* that contained new poems by Robert Burns, arranged by Ignace Pleyel, an Austrian-born composer who later settled in France. Thomson preferred to use foreign composers and had no interest in furthering nationalist movements. He wanted to keep the Irish, Scottish, and Welsh musical traditions alive for amateur musicians in middle-class homes.

For a number of years, Joseph Haydn was Thomson's main supplier of arrangements, and by the time of his death in 1809 he completed altogether 445 arrangements of Scottish, Irish, and Welsh songs for Thomson and others. Soon after his death, Thomson turned to the readily cooperating Ludwig van Beethoven, but the arrangements that the composer sent to Thomson in July 1810 were held up for two years by Napoleon's blockade of Great Britain. The "globetrotter" melodies were stopped by border guards and the *Select Collection of Original Irish Airs … Composed by Beethoven* could appear only at end of 1814.

The published songs had remarkable adaptation histories. Thomson sent to Haydn tunes without texts and titles; he added the original texts or the newly commissioned poems once he had the arranged melodies in his hands. When Beethoven expressed his dismay at the task of arranging melodies without the texts, Thomson responded that the new poems were often "still in the poet's brain". Later he sent Beethoven French summaries, presumably of the original poems. Hence, the airs did not resuscitate a lost ethnic tradition, and could not claim to be genuine folksongs. Even the originality of the published melodies was questionable. After all, they frequently circulated in different versions across the ethnic borders of the British Isles (which effectively de-nationalized them) and they were set by foreign composers. For Beethoven, all songs were Scottish, for they came from an Edinburgh publisher.

Let me illustrate the issues by looking at Walter Scott's poem "The Return to Ulster", a contrafact that crossed many borders before it was printed in Beethoven's collection of Irish airs:

"The Return to Ulster"

Once again, but how chang'd since my wanderings began
I have heard the deep voice of the Lagan and Bann,
And the pines of Clanbrasil resound to the roar

That wearies the echoes of fair Tullamore.
Alas! My poor bosom, and why shouldst thou burn!
With the scenes of my youth can its raptures return?
Can I live the dear life of delusion again,
That flow'd when these echoes first mix'd with my strain?

It was then that around me, though poor and unknown,
High spells of mysterious enchantment were thrown;
The streams were of silver, of diamond the dew,
The land was an Eden, for fancy was new.
I had heard of our bards, and my soul was on fire
At the rush of their verse, and the sweep of their lyre:
To me 'twas not legend, nor tale to the ear,
But a vision of noontide, distinguish'd and clear.

Ultonia's old heroes awoke at the call;
and renew'd the wild pomp of the chace and the hall;
and the standard of Fion flash'd fierce from on high,
like a burst of the sun when the tempest is nigh.
It seem'd that the harp of green Erin once more
could renew all the glories she boasted of yore.
Yet why at remembrance, fond heart, shouldst burn?
They were days of the delusion, and cannot return.

But was she, too, a phantom, the maid who stood by,
And listed my lay, while she turn'd from mine eye?
Was she, too, a vision, just glancing to view,
Then dispers'd in the sun-beam, or melted to dew?
Oh! would it had been so, – O would that her eye
Had been but a star-glance that shot through the sky,
And her voice, that was moulded to melody's thrill,
Had been but a zephyr that sigh'd and was still.

Oh! would it had been so, – not then this poor heart
Had learn'd the sad lesson, to love and to part;
To bear, unassisted, its burthen of care,
While I toil'd for the wealth I had no one to share.
Not then had I said, when life's summer was done,
And the hours of her autumn were fast speeding on,
"Take the fame and the riches ye brought in your train,
and restore me the dream of my spring-tide again."

(Scott, *Works* 8: 165–67)

The Scottish Walter Scott crossed the first border by employing an Irish lyrical "I", which undergoes his own "wanderings". Scott's poem is a contrafact, for original song, "Lament for Terence MacDonough",

was written and composed in 1713 by the blind Turlough O'Carolan, perhaps the last itinerant Irish bard, who is often regarded as Ireland's national composer. The original song laments the death of a distinguished Irishman: followed by the original tune:

"Lament for Terence MacDonough"

My heart is sorely saddened, and there's no joy in my voice,
And there is no passion in my love because of your death, young Terence!
High prince of jewels, whose excellence is known in all quarters,
And since I heard of your death there's no champion of mine living!

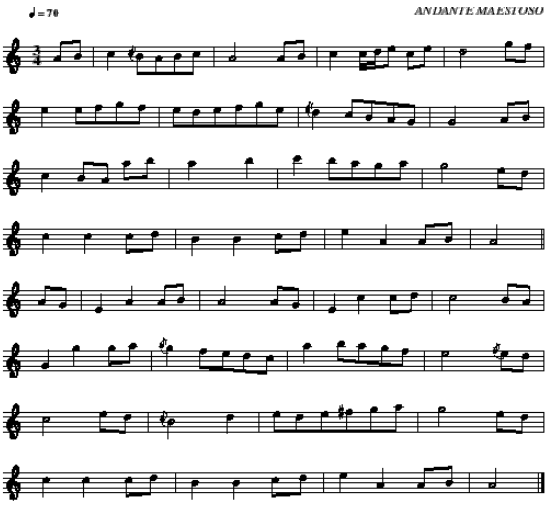
O upright pillar of every province who commanded each court,
Every action of legal sophistry disposed,
If the new king knew of the testimony of your fame,
The crushing sick difficulty of your absence would him becloud.

The Lord of Mayo and all the other lords are sorrowful;
And the Lord of Loch Glinn is shedding the tears,
Tir Conaill is greater and the Seed of Daly is forever
About your eloquent, fluent, keen mouth closed under ground.

Tis your life for our good left the harmonious in gloom,
Far from the people in Craobhaigh who are his kind,
O Mary is it not a shame and the multitudes orphaned in danger
Since he departed, the high prince who is laid out in Castle town. (30)

O'Carolan and Scott lament different things. The Irish bard bemoans the death of a national dignitary, whereas Scott's middle-aged speaker laments a bygone youth. Unconcerned about his nation, he laments his lost dreams and first love. His return to Ulster has released a mid-life crisis. Thomson obviously misread the poem when he thanked Scott for a poem, in which every line expressed a "delightful enthusiasm of joys that are past in the happiest manner" (*Letters* 24). He overlooked the admission of the concluding lines that the man would gladly give up fame and wealth if only he could renew his love for the maiden he brutally left behind.

O Carolan, The Melody for "Lament for Terence MacDonough"



(O'Sullivan, *Carolan* 284)

Beethoven's music and Walter Scott's poem were wedded in a blind date. Scott, unaware that he wrote the poem for Beethoven's music, sent off the poem to Thomson on November 28, 1811, well before Beethoven's score managed to slip through Napoleon's boycott to enter the wedding. Thomson probably sent Beethoven O'Carolan's original title, but the melody could have differed.

Thomson did ask Beethoven on January 1, 1816 to arrange *continental* songs with "purely national melodies, stamped with the musical character of each country" (Cooper 25). Beethoven sent him some, but Thomson was unable to find suitable modern texts for them and opted out. Beethoven went ahead and arranged some, but most of them were published only in the twentieth century. Unaware that Jernej Kopitar and Vuk Karadžić were working in Vienna in the same years (see below), the Beethoven scholar Barry Cooper declares that Vienna had "no readily available supply of folksongs" (68). Even scholars have missed the opportunity to let the East- and West-European globetrotter melodies meet each other in Vienna.

Lord Byron and Isaac Nathan on Jordan's Banks

The British folksong market did stimulate a project that aimed at the revival of an authentic ethnic tradition. *The Gentleman's Magazine* that announced

in May 1813 Beethoven's *Irish Melodies*, also let it be known that a certain Isaac Nathan was about to publish "Hebrew Melodies all of them upwards of 1000 years old and some of them performed by the Antient Hebrews before the destruction of the Temple". Nathan wanted to profit from the national song market with genuine ancient products, no hybrid songs in Thomson's sense, but he did follow Thomson by looking for a respected contemporary poet to provide new texts, even though he hoped to revive a genuine ancient music that was not modified by a Haydn or a Beethoven.

Walter Scott turned Nathan down; Lord Byron did not even answer him, but a friend convinced him to send five poems to Nathan. The resultant songs impressed Byron so deeply that he started to cooperate intensely with the upstart composer, and this yielded the two-volume *Hebrew Melodies* (1815–1816). Several Byron's poems lament a double void: God has withdrawn and the Jews were exiled. They correlate the Jewish yearning to return from the Diaspora with prayers for the return of the absent God. This time the text also undergoes a meaning mutation for us, in view of the present mid-Eastern conflicts. Such poems of the *Hebrew Melodies* have been called "proto-Zionist":

"On Jordan's Banks"

On Jordan's Banks the Arab camels stray,
On Sion's hill the False One's votaries pray,
The Baal-adorer bows on Sinai's steep –
Yet there – even there – Oh God! Thy thunders sleep:

There – where thy finger scorched the tablet stone!
There – where thy shadow to thy people shone!
Thy glory shrouded in its garb of fire:
Thyself – none living see and not expire!

Oh! In the lightning let thy glance appear!
Sweep from his shivered hand the oppressor's spear:
How long by tyrants shall thy land be trod?
How long thy temple worshipless, Oh God?

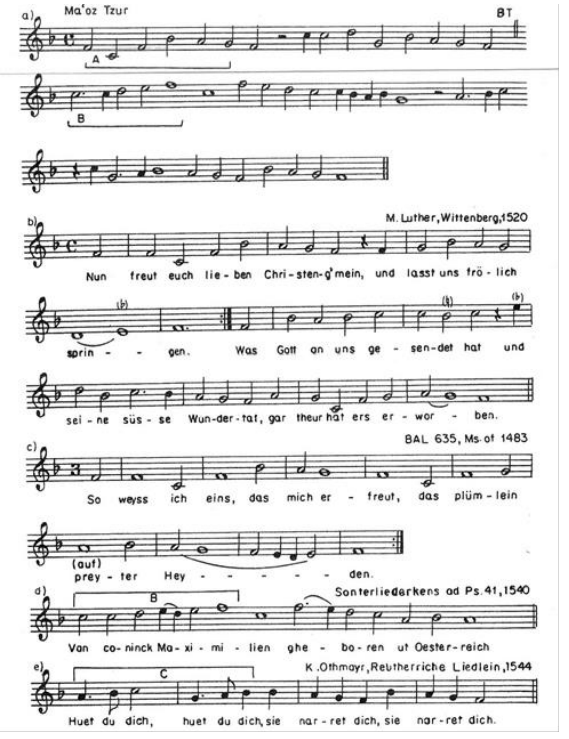
(Burwick and Douglass 78)

Nathan set the Diaspora poem to the melody of the Chanukah song "Ma'oz Tzur." The author of the lyrics is uncertain, possibly a certain Mordechai from the thirteenth century. They address God as "My refuge, my rock of salvation", retell the Egyptian, Babylonian, Hellenic, and Roman subjugation of the Jews, and close with a call to destroy the latest captors, which some Rabbis would like to remove from the service, due to its call for violence:

> Wreak vengeance upon the wicked nation, On behalf of your faithful servants.
> For deliverance has too long been delayed; And the evil days are endless.
> O thrust the enemy into the shadows of death, and set up for us the seven shepherds.
>
> (Wikipedia "Ma'oz Tzur" downloaded on February 18, 2015)

The melody of this text floated over the whole Diaspora. The first four measures took over the melody of Luther's "Nun freut euch liebe Christen gmein", which was based, in turn, on fifteenth-century Bohemian secular melodies. Having discovered the Bohemian ancestry, the Israeli musicologist Hanoch Avenary sighed with relief that Luther no longer ignites the Chanukah candles. The Bohemian ancestry also reveals Luther's strategy to popularize the new faith by turning secular songs into religious contrafacts. We have here then a threefold mutation: Luther sought popular acceptance by using secular melodies, English synagogues turned Luther's melody into the contrafact "Ma'oz Tzur", while Nathan produced from this another contrafact by means of Byron's poem.

The Melodic Sources for Nathan's "Ma'oz Tzur" Melody



(Werner, *A Voice Still Heard* 261 f)

The third tune at the bottom of the page is actually the melody of a sixteenth-century German street song "Ich weiss mir ein Meidlein huebsch und fein" (I know a girl neat and fine) with the refrain "Huet Du dich, vertrau ihr nicht, sie narret Dich, sie narret Dich" (Beware, don't trust her, she fools you, she fools you). The Chanukah celebrators trust in God, their rock, but a subtext distrusts a flippant girl, who fools you. Trust in God is accidentally undermined by distrust in the frivolous girl.

Nathan and Byron surely did not know the silent historical subtexts of the melody. Neither could they anticipate that Byron's poems would migrate over to Germany, undergo various translations, and then inspire many musical contrafacts. They include not only songs by Carl Loewe and Felix Mendelssohn, but also Max Bruch's *Kol Nidrei* (1881) for cello and orchestra, which recycles Nathan's music for Byron's poem "O Weep for Those that Wept on Babel's Stream". Especially interesting is Robert Schumann's "Mein Herz ist schwer" (My Heart is heavy) in the collection *Myrthen* (1840), which makes use of Julius Körner's translation of Byron's "Hebrew Melodies", published by Schumann's own family. Schumann composed new music for the translation of the Byron poem "My Soul is Dark", which Byron had taken from Saul's Biblical lament. Schumann's song expresses a modern secular depression and its potential healing via music – experience that Schumann himself so frequently encountered. Biblical, communal, and religious meanings fade into the background.

Vuk Stefanović Karadžić

The Slovenian philologist Jernej (Bartholomäus) Kopitar published his *Grammatik der Slavischen Sprache in Krain, Kaernten, und Steyermark* (1808) before settling in Vienna. He made use in this study of Johann Christoph Adelung's "wonderful principle" (Kopitar 179), which recommends "write as you speak". When the Serbian refugee Karadžić arrived in Vienna in 1813, Kopitar encouraged him both to collect Serbian folk songs, and to write a Serbian grammar that would be based on the spoken Serbian vernacular.

Vuk's first grammar carried the title *Pismenica serbskoga jezika po govor prostoga naroda* (1814), indicating that it was taken from the speech of the common folk. As Vuk wrote in the Preface, reflecting long and hard he always returned to the principle "write as you speak and read as it is written." Declination and conjugation were according to the language of Serbs living in the villages, far away from the cities (*Sabrana Dela*, 12: 30–31). As Vuk wrote in April 1815 to Kopitar: "[P]eople don't like getting away

from the old lettering. Some stick to it for their own gain; some are afraid like small children beginning to walk on their own; […] we shall print in the way which is most correct according to common sense and the essence of the language. I think that the Serbs should not stick for ever to the mistakes of other people (I mean the letters which they get from the Russians and the Greeks) but should be free for once to do something sensible on their own" (Wilson 109).

Vuk's work on the *Pismenica* was actually preceded by his assembly of a slim volume of folk songs, which was already finished by the end of January 1814 (the very year that Thomson published the Beethoven arrangement of Scottish songs). Vuk admits in the long preface of the *Mala prostonarodnja slaveno-serbska pjesnarica* (Wilson 91–94) that he did not collect the songs but noted them down, remembering his happy childhood days when he kept sheep and goats, and he wrote them down, occasionally to the accompaniment of the gusle.

In 1815, Vuk returned to Serbia to start collecting genuine folk songs, and, he had the luck of finding in Karlovci his first great folk singer, Tešan Podrugović, a poverty-stricken hajduk (outlaw). Soon afterwards, Vuk found other important singer, the blind Philip Višnjić. The second volume of folk songs, the *Narodna srbska pjesnarica* appeared in 1815 and opened European doors for Vuk and the Serbian folk songs. It contained mostly heroic songs, and even included music notes for six of them, added by the Polish composer Franciszek Mirecki.

O'Carolan's orientation differed from that of Karadžić's native singers, some of whom were also blind. It's not just that the Irishman played the harp instead of the gusle, he was part of a transnational literary and musical tradition: he was friends with Swift, and his tunes reworked music by Vivaldi, Corelli, and Geminiani. Beethoven's music and Walter Scott's poem further internationalized whatever was authentically Irish in his melody. The strong ethnic identity of Vuk's Serbian songs became internationalized only later, via Jacob Grimm and the East-European folksong revival that the Serbian example stimulated. In 1825, Carl Loewe (who composed the mentioned settings for the *Hebrew Melodies*) produced the first setting of Vuk's Serbian poems. They were set later also by Dvořák, Janáček, Tchaikovsky, and, above all, Brahms (see Bojić). It would be fascinating to compare these songs with Haydn's and Beethoven's arrangements of Scottish, Irish, and Welsh songs.

Epilogue

My case studies show roaming and mutating melodies, as well as mutations in text/melody relations. Did they exemplify Tappert's notion of roaming melodies? Only partly, and not only because my historical examples covered a wider range of mutation. The major theoretical issue is that Tappert endowed melodies with an intrinsic inclination to adjust to new environments, and he left little room for mutations based on an individual decision, such as Thomson's recycling of the original Irish song, Nathan's reuse of the synagogue songs, or Schumann's resetting of the translated Byron poem. (To be sure, Tappert's examples do include plenty of composer imitations, accidental or intentional melody adoptions, and even cases that come close to plagiarizing.)

It would require another paper to establish an inventory of mutations that could be brought under the heading "roaming melodies." I need to mention, however, that Tappert regarded himself as a Darwinian, and he presented the idea of endless transformations as a cultural analogy to biological evolution. He understood musical mutations as adaptions in the Darwinian sense, and he offered no explanation for the mutability of the melodies and did not think that the mutations moved towards some teleological goal.

The nineteenth-century attempts to recover authentic ethnic songs were often used to support national movements towards cultural and political independence. However, Tappert's "roaming melodies" transgress national, linguistic, and religious boundaries, and, hence, they have a "disseminating," rather than unifying effect. This may have been one reason why Tappert's pioneering idea received only a spotty reception.

Evolution theory did have an impact on music theories towards the end of the nineteenth century, but mainly on theories of folk music. Most explicit was the English folk-music collector Cecil Sharp, who wrote in 1907:

> In the evolution of species of the animal and vegetable worlds, those variations will be preserved which are of advantage to their possessors in the competition for existence. In the evolution of folk tunes, as we have already seen, the corresponding principle of selection is the taste of the community. Those tune variations which appeal to the community will be perpetuated, as against those which attract the individual only. (*English Folk-Song* 38)

While Tappert never asked the question which mutations are acceptable and who decides on the selection, Sharp created an authority for it: the community. Claiming that community pressure regulated the roaming of folk melodies, Sharp and other Darwinian folk-song theorists set up a

regulating agency, and Tappert could no longer claim that in the world of roaming melodies there was "no music police that would ask for a birth certificate and a testimonial on moral conduct".

NOTES

[1] "Die Melodien wandern, sie sind die unermüdlichsten Touristen der Erde! Sie überschreiten die rauschenden Ströme, passiren die Alpen, tauchen jenseits des Oceans auf und nomadisiren in der Wüste; überall andern begegnend, welche den entgegengesetzten Weg machen. Bei dem echt menschlichen Interesse für alles Fremde gelangt manches melodische Aschenbrödel fern von seinem Vaterlande zu hohen Ehren, wird vielleicht zum patriotischen Gesange, zum National-hymnus, dessen Klänge unfehlbar die zündenste Wirkung ausüben. Oft kehren die Landstreicher mehr oder weniger verbrämt, maskirt und umgestaltet zurück und leben als „Importirte" ein neues, glänzendes Leben in der alten Heimath. Es gibt ja keine musikalische Polizei, welche nach Geburtsschein und Führungsattest früge!" (Tappert 7). All citations were translated to English by the author.

[2] "Die klingenden Gesellen sind immer unterwegs; aus der Werkstatt ziehen sie auf die Landstraße, mit dem Handwerksburschen in die Herbergen, um sich von hier aus wieder zu zerstreuen bis in das entlegenste Städtchen, bis in's kleinste Dorf. Vom Tanzboden gelangen die Eindringlinge in die Kinderstuben, aus den Concertsälen entschlüpfen sie und mischen sich unter die Schnitter auf dem Felde, leisten dem Jäger im Walde Gesellschaft oder kürzen dem Soldaten auf der Wache die Stunden. Vom Theater und von den Gassen, bahnen sie sich den Weg in die Kirchen und – umgekehrt. Manche Melodie gleicht dem ewigen Juden, dem nie ruhenden, niemals sterbenden! Es giebt Motive von solcher Lebensfähigkeit und Lebenszähigkeit, daβ ihre Existenz fast so alt ist als unsere Zeitrechnung. Viele blühten schon im poetischen Minnesange, saßen zünftig in den Schulen und Zechen der Meistersänger und ruhen nun – anscheinend – in den heftigen Hallen der Kirche aus. Eine groβe Anzahl folgte dem Zuge und Drange des Wittenberger Reformators und flüchtete sich aus dem Weihrauchdufte und dem mystischen Dunkel der katholischen Dome in die hellen luftigen Räume der protestantischen Gotteshäuser" (Tappert 7–8).

[3] "Wer viel in der Welt herumkommt, sich überall in Land und Leute schicken muβ, der erleidet mehr oder weniger merkliche Veränderungen, nimmt da und dort etwas von Sprache und Sitte an, und mag schließlich in der Fremde für einen Eingebornen, in seiner Heimath aber für einen Fremdling angesehen werden. Genau so verhält es sich mit unsern melodischen Abentheurern. Niemals, oder doch nur selten, bleiben sie, *was* und *wie* sie sind; ja, es gehört zu kleinen Umwandlungen keine große Reise, denn schon auf dem Wege zum Nachbar gehen bisweilen kleine Eigenthümlichkeiten verloren und andere treten an ihre Stelle, wie wir aus den unzähligen, fast täglich sich vermehrenden Lesarten der sogenannten Volksweisen ersehen können. Die *Umbildung* hat kein Ende. – Ich habe hier mit Absicht ein verfängliches Wort gebraucht! Die zahlreichen Anhänger des Dogma's vom „Erschaffen", die aus jedem Tacte des „Wehen und Walten des Genius" zu hören vorgeben, wollen von den „atheistischen und destructiven Tendenzen" der Umbildunslehre Darwin's nichts wissen. Um nun – wenn möglich – zu überzeugen, füge ich hier einige Beispiele ein, welche zunächst darthun sollen, daβ eine *Umbildung* existirt (Tappert 8)."

Bohlman claims, referring to Bruno Nettl, that Tappert "attributed remarkable integrity to individual melodies" (*Folk Music* 26), but I could find no such claim in Nettl. Tappert writes above: "Niemals, oder doch nur selten bleiben sie *was* und *wie* sie sind."

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Tavajoče melodije

Ključne besede: literatura in glasba / ljudsko pesništvo / priredbe / Tappert, Wilhelm: *Wandernde Melodien* / škotske pesmi / hebrejske melodije / medbesedilnost / intermedialnost

Digitalizacija in pojav novih medijev sta ustvarila množico novih interakcij med umetnostmi in temeljito znanstveno zanimanje za priredbe in prevode v širšem smislu; najbolj znane so seveda filmske priredbe romanov.

Med vsemi umetnostmi ima glasba posebno bogato zgodovino priredb, ker gre za performativno umetnost, ki se mora prilagajati vseskozi novim pogojem performativnega, in ker mora vokalna glasba, torej najmočnejša in najsplošnejša glasbena tradicija, vselej povezovati besede z glasbenimi zvoki. Tako kombinirane strukture vendarle nikoli niso trajne, saj sta besedilo in glasba pogosto »reciklirana«, njuni sestavni deli pa prehajajo v nove kombinacije, tradicionalno imenovane »kontrafakture«. Tako je denimo Martin Luther pogosto uporabljal ljudske melodije, da bi z njimi ustvaril pobožne cerkvene pesmi v upanju, da bi svoje versko sporočilo tako približal ljudem. Okrog leta 1800 so Haydn, Beethoven in drugi zložili stotine glasbenih priredb irskih, škotskih in hebrejskih melodij, ne da bi poznali njihovo izvirno besedilo. Zgodovinske raziskave opuščenih historičnih tekstov lahko pripeljejo do komičnih rezultatov. Ko sta se proti koncu 18. stoletja pojavili sonata in simfonija, so ju mnogi kritiki poskušali razumeti skozi slike in zgodbe.

Glasbene kompozicije niso trajne čvrste strukture, temveč tavajoči nomadi, vseskozi podvrženi spremembam z vselej drugimi partnerji. Historična konceptualizacija tovrstne umetnosti bi morala temeljiti na kulturnem konceptu prilagajanja, ki bi se moral na neki točki povezati z zgodovinopisjem evolucijskih prilagajanj.

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