

# **The Performer between Heritage and Novelty: Aspects of Spatiality in Performer's Creativity**

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**ABSTRACT** – In the communication processes of Western art music, there is an inherent problem of “chain of command” versus performer’s creativity. Bluntly put, the composer, dead or alive, is held to be an authority that provides the performer with ‘what’ and ‘how’ to perform, while the performer’s task is to *interpret* those instructions, accommodate them and the relevant performance practices with one another, while adding their own, personal, innovative, expressive, creative contribution that distinguishes the performance as their artistic work and *praxis*. The performer’s task in music exceeds the *poiesis* of sound, involving the production of the acoustic object for the listener’s semiosis, which in good praxis leads to what John Dewey called *an experience*. In research on musical performance, the relationship between the analyses and interpretations of a) the instructions pertaining to the individual ‘musical works’ or ‘notations’, b) performer’s implicit or explicit knowledge of the relevant performance practices, and c) performer’s personal contribution have been addressed, e.g., by distinguishing (and synthesizing) between theorist’s analysis, performer’s analysis and performance analysis (Cook 2013: 33–55). In addition to the study of musical semiosis, this chapter contributes to that discourse by analyzing the semiotic system in practices of performing Western art music, by approaching the concept of musical work as a legisign and a prototype in conceptual space, defined by performances as sinsigns and points in conceptual space, and by exploring the spatiality of performer’s “working space” between the instructions, constraining and scaffolding performance practices, contexts of performance, and expressive freedom of performer’s creativity.

## **1 The Problem of Performer's Creativity**

The practical aim of this chapter is to contribute to the systematic inquiry on performer’s semiosis in the process of musical communication. Although the context is particularly that of Western music, and more specifically Western Art Music (WAM), ultimately, the goal is not be limited to particular styles, genres or cultures. The WAM viewpoint here is mainly a heuristic one, a tool for more broadly applicable inquiry. Ultimately, I am looking for tools to get a systematic grip of

the processes of signification in musical communication. All in all, this chapter is situated more in theoretical than applied semiotics (Nöth 1999: 5), meaning I do not here analyze individual performances, works, or practices of performance.

The topic of this chapter connects with the general topic of the book in that here, it is the performer, whose position between heritage and novelty is in focus. In traditional thinking, whether by musicians or laypersons, there is an inherent problem concerning the “chain of command” versus *performer’s creativity* in WAM. Simply put, it is the *composer*—dead or alive—who is mostly held to be the ultimate *authority* in the communication process: the authority that provides the performer with not only “what” but also, to a great extent, “how” to perform. (Clearly, this division between “what” and “how” may well be questioned.) Although this might be a trivial generalization, typically, it is assumed, the “chain of command” starts with the composer delivering *instructions* to the performer, usually in the form of Western notation. The performer’s task is then to *interpret* those instructions, and to *deliver* the interpretation for the audience to receive, perceived, and experience (Figure 1). The experience by the audience might then have its ramifications, possibly in changed habits of the members of the audience, or, in particular, in the form of feedback. The performer’s feedback to the composer (at least for deceased ones) *might* be limited to options of performing the work, or not performing.

This portrays the performer as a some kind of *craftsperson*: a professional (or an amateur) in the Aristotelian sense of craftsmanship, active in *poiesis*, making of the sound, guided by their intellectual virtue of *technē*, that is, primarily, the performer’s technical mastery of the instrument. One might consider finding a parallel to this thought in the realm of industrial design: Consider a situation where a designer, who is specialized in designing glassware, but not in glass blowing, completes their *creative process*. The design is then handed over to the glass blower for manufacturing, according to the instructions. There may well be extensive collaboration between the designer and the manufacturer over the course of the creative process, but ultimately, it is the designer who is in the position to make the final decisions and carry the responsibilities of those decisions, i.e., in control of the *esthetic* outcome, the result in the sense how the piece of glassware is received and experienced by the user, that is, the *praxis* of the design. Consequently, it tends to be the designer, and not the glass blower, whose professional role is recognized and remembered by the audience.

[Place Figure 1.]

**Figure 1.** The performer as nexus of musical communication in Western art music, between the performer and the listener. Model based on, e.g., de Saussure 1916, Shannon and Weaver 1948, and Jakobson 1960.

However, of a performer in music, presumably, more is required. (Note the passive voice here: it remains to be examined, what exactly, or who, constitutes the requirements that follow.) The performer’s task goes beyond *execution* (Navickaitė-Martinelli 2014: 33, Martinelli 2014: 60). The notion of execution as per-

former's task, driven by the quest for authenticity and fidelity to the work, comes close to the notion of a deterministic *algorithm*—a system of computation with limited steps of bounded complexity, to put it in Kolmogorov-like definition (Kolmogorov and Uspenskii 1958)—and reveals an assumption that there would be a definite preset outcome, an ideal, *the work as it truly exists* in the linear control or chain of command in WAM: the work is to be presented, not re-presented. In contrast to this, it is expected that the performer *adds* to the composer's design an own, personal, expressive, innovative, *creative contribution*. It is not enough—nor possible—for the performer to only follow the composer's instructions and produce the sound according to the design delivered by the composer. Collaboration, if possible, between the performer and the composer might give more insight for the performer as per how to “compute”, that is, how to produce the sound, i.e., how to interpret the instructions by the composer, but, essentially, the instructions given to the performer are not specific enough for producing the sound to correspond to the composer's design, nor can they be.

To cover for the underspecification of the instructions, part of the performer's job description, whether expert or novice, is to accommodate composer's instructions both with the relevant *performance practices*, and with the *context* of the particular performance.<sup>1</sup> In fact, much of instrumental study and interaction in the master–apprentice pedagogy in WAM concentrates on this process of accommodation: the apprentice is guided to learn not only to read the instructions and technically execute them, but to consider the instructions from the viewpoint of the *heritage*, the traditions and practices of performing, composing, and listening (e.g., Burwell 2012). At the same time, there remains the question of the performer's contribution, performer's creativity: *To what extent must, may, and can the performer follow the instructions versus make an own creative contribution in the performance?* As a matter of communication, this concerns the *message of the composer* (e.g., as communicated in the form of notation, the instructions), versus *the message of the performer* (that is, the sound produced, to exclude other aspects of performance, for now), and their mutual relations.

Illustrative of this, Heinrich Schenker, for instance, as Allen Forte (1977: 8) pointed out, “believed that a composition could be reproduced correctly only if the performer had grasped the composer's intentions as revealed by the score.” Heinrich Neuhaus (1987: 192; see also Razumovskaya 2014: 69) famously claimed that “[t]he performer, in the search for truthfulness, is guided by the formula—*there is truth, not everything is permitted*”. Contrary to this, and acknowledging the active role of the performer *with* and *as* composer, Grisell Macdonel, for instance, has proposed a multi-directional model where the composer, performer, and the score, “all the components influence each other”, envisioning “performer and composer as historical, cultural, social, and temporal entities” both with agency in the process (Macdonel 2014: 49–50).

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<sup>1</sup> To put it Peircean terms: in interpreting the composer's signs, the performer uses *collateral observation*, that is, “previous acquaintance with what the sign denotes” (CP 8.179, “Lady Welby, What is Meaning?”).

Especially for the professional performer, it is the personal contribution to the composer's design, i.e., the ways the particular performances add to the instructions, that distinguishes the performance as *their* performance, and thereby differentiates the performer from other performers. In terms of the profession, then, the performer is in a situation where, through each and every performance, they negotiate their own profile, their *identity* as performer, their *artistic praxis*, as distinctive from those of other performers—again, dead or alive. This is not only a matter of professional self-identity and esthetic-ethic positioning in the field of the arts, but also, in very concrete terms, a matter of career choices with practical consequences, regardless of whether they are made consciously or subconsciously.

What I mean by *spatiality in performer's creativity* here, is the performer's *Spielraum* within the problem, the space delimited, on the one hand, by the extents of the performer's message and the extents of that personal contribution, and, on the other hand, by the fidelity to and understanding of the composer's message, the *Werktreue*, and the authenticity, and by adherence to the performance practices. (The performance context could be considered secondary to this question, as it pertains more to the relationship between the performer and the particular audience.)

My tools of choice to addressing this problem is a combination of Peircean pragmatism and semiotics, and cognitive metaphor theory, moving towards the embodied cognition paradigm. To avoid the perils of rhizomic expansion on the subject matter, I will now pass much of the earlier literature, dealing with matters such as musical canon (e.g. Kerman 1983, Goehr 2007), notation (Kurkela 1986, Poli 2010), creativity (Deliège & Wiggins 2006), or agency, competence, orientation, and identity in music (Davidson 2017, Rink 2017), or even performance studies (Dunsby 1995, Cook 2013, Clayton et al. 2013), regardless of how relevant they are. Furthermore, I will not much go into outlining my semiotic framework, which combines cognitive metaphor theory and Peircean semiotics, since I have discussed those earlier (see Ojala 2008, 2009, 2010, 2015, 2020). Next, I will only briefly introduce the semiotic triangle, and the strand of cognitive metaphor theory used here.

## 2 Synopsis of the Framework

Peirce's semiotic triangle models subject's being-in-the-world (Figure 2). As such, it is comparable to other (and later) cyclic, dynamic, and ecological models of mind or cognition. Practical inquiry is the driving force of the operation modeled in the semiotic triangle. Briefly put, the sign consists in how the perceived objects of the world are in relation with the interpretation of the object. Since we cannot perceive everything, Peirce made a distinction between the immediate object (iO), i.e. the object as it is perceived, and the dynamical object (dO), which exists regardless of our perception, and which is the object of action. The semiotic key term interpretant points to how the object of the sign is interpreted, first, as immediate interpretant (iI), second, as dynamical interpretant (dI), and third, as final in-

terpretant (fI). Of the three interpretants, immediate interpretant “consists in the Quality of the Impression that a sign is fit to produce, not to any actual reaction.” (CP 8.315). Dynamical interpretant is “the actual effect of which the Sign, as a Sign, really determines” (CP 4.536), meaning how the interpretation results in action. Final interpretant “is that which would finally be decided to be the true interpretation if consideration of the matter were carried so far that an ultimate opinion were reached” (CP 8.184).

Based on interpretation, we guide our action, which affects the dynamical object, and, consequently, the cycle begins anew. In interpretation, the sign is correlated with what Peirce called “collateral observation”, that is, “previous acquaintance with what the sign denotes” (CP 8.179). As such, collateral observation can also be taken as the sum of the habits of feeling (CP 1.574), habits of action (CP 5.400), and—most general law—the habits of thinking.<sup>2</sup> There is mutual relationship between law-like habits and particular signs and their interpretation in that the habits determine the interpretation, but are also updated by each sign. The dynamic accumulation of habits is also understood as the accumulating experience, later developed by e.g. John Dewey. Furthermore, we do not only rely on our perceptions, but also the “logic” of dynamical objects, meaning that the dynamical objects—actual objects residing in the world—resist our action, mediating hard facts of the world. Pentti Määttänen (2006, 2015) has expanded the notion of hard facts in *soft facts*, socially determined law-like facts that are objective like the hard facts, and mediated by them. For instance, traffic regulations are soft facts we trust in our habits of action, and should we neglect their soft facts, we might soon face the hard facts of dynamical objects in traffic.

[Place Figure 2.]

**Figure 2.** A summary of Peirce’s semiotic triangle, showing the key elements of sign, object of the sign, and interpretant of the sign, the “subprocesses” of perception, interpretation and action; two phaneroscopic categories of objects and three phaneroscopic categories of interpretants; habits as accumulating experience; as well as hard facts mediated by the dynamical objects, and Määttänen’s soft facts mediated by hard facts, all driven by practical inquiry.

For the sake of discussing the performer’s message, the sound, and how it is involved in representation, let us next take a brief look at the cognitive metaphor theory, and, in particular, Peter Gärdenfors’s theory of conceptual representations. In his theory, Gärdenfors has introduced a morphological model of cognition that perhaps best could be roughly summarized through an example, the concept of

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<sup>2</sup> Peirce deals of “habits of thinking” mostly in conjunction of logic and inference, rather than the sign (e.g. CP 7.450–457), but the use of the term in that form seems justified here, since for Peirce, “logic” was, “in its broader sense”, semiotic, or semeiotic (CP 1.444)—and “a synonym for Cognition” (CP 5.605). While at synonyms, it should also be noted, that Peirce also considered “representation” and “sign” as synonyms (CP 8.191), representation being the key matter of Gärdenfors’s theory below.

“apple”. In the pragmatist approach, the concept of apple is based on essentially three aspects: action, perception and interpretation (see also e.g. Määttänen 1993, 2015). Here, the focus is on representation, and in how *conceptual spaces* serve as framework for representations. A *conceptual space* consists in a number of *quality dimensions*, sorted into *domains* (Gärdenfors 2000: 67, 46). For instance, the color of a pale, light yellowish-green apple is represented in the color domain, consisting of three quality dimensions: hue, chromaticness (or saturation), and brightness (see *ibid.*: 9–15), familiar to many from the computer interfaces for selecting a color (note that the interface is designed based on the conceptual space; this is not a computer metaphor of cognition). This instance of color falls into the region of the concept of “apple” in color domain. The color region of “apple” spans from red to yellow and green, but blue would not be acceptable (as unreal), and brown or black would be very questionable (as inedible). A certain degree of brightness and saturation is expected, as well. The same applies to other domains that we have learned to attach to the concept of “apple”: apple’s region in the domain of shape is that of roundish; taste regions extend largely to quality dimensions of sweetness and sourness, but minimally to those of bitterness, saltiness, or umami.

New domains and regions are added as new aspects of the concept are learned. And learning takes place through the interaction with the environment – perception and action, which constantly contribute to the accumulation of experience. Going beyond the basic properties and the basic concept of apple entails not only basic sensorimotor experiences of the apple, but more complex, contextually variable experiences, corresponding to the differentiation of the concept among individuals, social groups and cultures. In the case of “apple”, in addition to the domains of basic level experience described above, we may learn to attach further, more complex domains to it, such as domain of fruit(iness), including regions for seed structure, peel type etc., or nutrition with regions for values of sugar content, vitamins etc. (*ibid.*: 101–105).

To sum, the concept of “apple” as a spatial cognitive model of representation is the conceptual space of “apple”, that consists in the combination of apple’s *properties* which are *regions* in different spatial *domains* of representation, each with its own geometrical or topological or ordering structure. Each particular quality of an apple is represented as a *point* in a *region* of a *domain*.

Gärdenfors (2000: 176) gives a clear-cut spatial definition of metaphor: “*a metaphor expresses an identity in topological or geometrical structure between different domains*”. Moving towards Lakoff and Johnson’s (1999) theory, the main idea in cognitive metaphor theory is that complex experience and thinking is embodied and constructed in virtue of metaphors. Consequently, the principles of spatial relations of basic concepts are functional in constructing so-called higher concepts as well, and provide, if not all, at least a great deal of their means of operation. These spatial relations and their topologies are present in utterings communicating the complex representations, and may be expressed in, for instance, *the container schema*: being inside versus outside; *the source-path-goal schema*: moving from something, through, along and to something; *bodily projections*: being in front of, behind. Even the most complex metaphors are, according to Lakoff and Johnson, founded on the simpler ones. Take LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor as

an example. It uses a more general LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor, which in turn is based on the primary metaphors and basic experiences of, e.g. reaching for and moving towards a desired object, choosing paths, encountering obstacles, and experiencing the presence of others (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 45–73). In other words, the complex representations and relations are constructed from the simpler ones, fundamentally the representations of very simple situations in the actual world, based on metaphors, and basic level representations in conceptual spaces.

Going briefly back to the example of the apple, then, the myths (such as the 11th labor of Hercules at the Garden of Hesperides as token of the myth of forbidden fruit guarded by a snake), fictional stories (such as Schneewittchen, Snow White), or knowledge, events and nonfictional stories of everyday life *are not reduced* to the actual object of apple, but *are grounded in and constructed upon* the experienced features of the actual world, including the object of apple, paths to objects, obstacles on the paths, forces causing the obstacles, forces supporting the overcoming of obstacles, experiences of control and loss of control of self-propelled motion—as basis of the self etc. The grounding is epistemological more than ontological.

As described, a particular representation is a point in the conceptual space, and more or less central or peripheral within each particular region that the concept consists of. *Prototypical* members of categories would be located at the center of the regions. For instance, you might think of the color of apple first and foremost as a particular shade of red, or green. Correspondingly, the membership of the peripheral points of the region may be more ambiguous. However, defining properties as regions does not necessitate the existence of a particular prototype at the center of the region. Each particular representation (say, a newly perceived quality of an apple) brings a new point into the region of the space and a new member into the category. This may affect the balance of the region, alter the category, that is, *move the region boundaries*, and change the center of gravity of the region, that is, *update the prototype* (Gärdenfors 2000: 122–126). This notion resembles that of Peircean legisign, and sinsign as its replica: “Every legisign signifies through an instance of its application which may be termed a Replica of it. [...] The Replica is a Sinsign. Thus, every legisign requires Sinsigns. [...] Nor would the Replica be significant if it were not for the law which renders it so.” (CP 2.246).

Correspondingly, the qualities of sound can be represented as quality dimensions and conceptual spaces. For instance, pitch can be taken as a spatial structure (see e.g. Révész 1946, Shepard 1982, Krumhansl 1990, Tymoczko 2012), as a domain with quality dimensions such as pitch class and register. In fact, the discourse and literature on music and music research is replete with verbal expressions reflecting the spatiality of representation—and our habits of thinking in this respect. Examples directly using the word “space” include but are not limited to: acoustic space, articulation space, compositional space, feature space, instrumental space, notational space, pitch space, sound space sonic space, and spectral space. Many basic terms we use in music we might not even recognize in everyday speech as essentially spatial (e.g. vocal *range*; counterpoint; interval; parallel, oblique and contrary motion; inversion and retrograde; passing tone; or spacing).

Next, for the sake of examining the spatiality of performer's creativity, let us consider the notion of *musical work as prototype* and *performance as its replica*. In what follows, the total of the composer's message and the total of the performer's message (realized as the sound in performance), in all their complexities and time-variant nuances, is, for the most part, imploded into consideration of the messages as single points in conceptual spaces, the point standing for the total sum of the qualities.

### 3 Musical Work as Prototype in Conceptual Space

Let us begin heuristically with the assumption that there is or can be, in our experience, *an ideal performance of a musical work*, in the sense that we might be familiar with, say, a song or an instrumental piece to the point that we are *accustomed to hearing* it in specific ways, or accustomed to *preferring* to hear it in specific ways. In an ideal—or idealized—performance, we would then have developed, or endowed, with *habits* of perceiving (and making perceptual and other judgments), dynamically established in our ever-accumulating experience. When involved in listening or playing, singing such a piece, at each moment, we have expectations concerning the next events, their qualities, and, potentially, the actions involved in producing such features.

When we listen to and experience several instances, that is, several performances of the work, they more or less come close to or deviate from the ideal, from what we expect. They differ from one another in varying degrees and directions, but also resemble one another to the degree, that they form a class, a category, the membership of which is defined by their mutual distances: the further away from the ideal, the less appreciated, less acceptable, even less identifiable the performance is—as a realization of the work. ('Distance' here refers to the general sum of the differences between the performer's messages, i.e., the qualities perceived in each performance of the work, each quality contributing to the interpreted meaning of the sign, that is, to the experience of the musical work.) The distance at which the performance is no longer identified as a performance of that particular piece, could be said to define the category of the piece, the category of that particular musical work (Figure 3).

[Place Figure 3.]

**Figure 3.** A visual representation of the notion of musical work as an idealized performance: a prototype of a category of performances. Each experienced performance more or less differs from other performances, and, through its qualities, contributes to the establishing of the category, and its prototype. The prototype, the grey dot in the middle, is the point where the sum of the distances  $d_n$  of the replicas (the black dots) is the smallest, using some kind of distance function. The category—the musical work—constitutes a legisign, determined by performances, its replicas, sinsigns. Here, the performances labeled actually refer to a selection of performances of the first movement of the Suite, op. 14, by Béla Bartók, but, *nota bene*, the positions in the figure do *not* represent actual differences in the performances (acoustic, perceptual, or experiential), but are fictional and intended to be taken for illustrative purposes only. Note also, that the sum of all the qualities of each performance are here arbitrarily represented as a point in two-dimensional space, for the sake of argument and visualization. The replicas (that is, the points other than the prototype) have a *graded membership* (Gärdenfors 2000: 84) in

the category in that they are more or less identifiable, acceptable, and appreciated replicas of the work, to use those three grades of membership here. The leftmost performance might be one of a novice learning the piece: identifiable, but not (yet) acceptable (based on some criteria of value judgments). Two other performances labeled “N.N.” are at the *borderlines* of appreciation.

In fact, we could argue that *the concept of a particular musical work* (a Peircean legisign) consists in the experienced category of its performances, the instances that are identified as performances of the work, that is, Peircean sinsigns as replicas of the legisign. This brings the subject’s experience of the work in front: each listener, whether a member of the audience, the performer, or even the composer (who might have well imagined the performance and its perceptual qualities), experiences, learns and forms the category of the work. (This would be in concord with the Deweyan notion of art as experience.) Does it suffice to consider identifying the performance? By all means not; there is no reason to settle for only one “set of criteria”. Rather, we could consider the category of the musical work as being defined, not only in terms of identifiability, but as a continuum of (conceptually concentric) realms of identifiability (based on perceptual judgments on features of the particular sound in relation to other replicas or their generalizations), acceptance (based on our tolerance judgements on the possibility that someone might value the experience of the performance), and appreciation (based on our judgment of our own valuing of the performance). Note, that the valuing here, is a vague way making delineations, since the value judgments may be made with a variety of motivations. However, here, the intent is to tie the value judgment to the experienced meaning of the work (and its qualities, its narratives etc.), i.e. to the Deweyan (1980: 35–57) esthetic experience, *an experience*.

So far, this has been a hypothesized, abstract, and static view mostly from a listener’s viewpoint. In the processes behind each performance experienced, the performer has their intentions of building expression and structure in the performance, that is, their interpretation of the work. Due to the human imperfections in “execution”, noise in the communication, and variance in perceiving and interpreting the performance (both within and across subjects), what is heard and experienced is of course not the same as what the performer nor the composer *intended*, one can safely assume—even if the listener *is* the performer or composer. The realized performances by the same performer vary, and so do the intentions of the performer. The composer’s conception of their own work varies, as well. Listener’s habits of perceiving and interpreting change. This is because we change, the world changes, and, therefore, our *meanings* change. At the end of the “chain of communication”, there is always a degree of variance between the *experiences* of the work. In fact, the gist of the notion of the musical work here is just that: an experiential idealization that in itself does not *actually* exist, other than as a nebula of actions manifested from intentions, as the prototype of the category established by the replicas. Yet, in each context of performance, we have our beliefs regarding what the work should sound like, based on what kind of experiences we value, i.e. what makes the work meaningful to us. This holds, in fact, even if we have never heard the particular piece, because the context of performance and “collateral observation”, a.k.a. our accumulated experience and habits, positions the perfor-

mance, and thereby the work within our previous experiences and, consequently, evokes expectations that may or may not become fulfilled. *The work is a legisign.*

The conception of the “musical work” in this respect follows the concept of “concept” in cognitive metaphor theory. Clearly, the work is defined by its *properties*. As a whole, the idealization of the work is similar to idealization in, say, the concept of “bird”. Please, imagine a bird. I cannot say about your mind for sure, but it is likely, that you just imagined a *prototype of a bird*—something that can fly, something with feathers, beaked head, two wings, two legs and a tail, either a small, medium or large in size—for a bird size. Did you by any chance imagine a penguin, an emu, or an ostrich? They do not fly. They are not *prototypical* birds. However, encountering wingless birds *redefines* to us what a the concept of bird is, and extends the *category*, the concept of the bird to include their membership as well, due to their other properties.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, the conception of the work is dynamic: each encounter, particular realization of the particular work, each experienced performance of it functions as a *sinsign*, and contributes to establishing (or updating if “established”) the conception of the work: both the ideal of it—that is, the prototype—and the extents to which the work is identified, accepted, appreciated, and valued as itself. That is, each performance, each experience of the work constitutes an *instance* in the *instance space* (Sloman, Love, and Ahn 1998: 192) of the work: the *regions* that constitute the dynamic *conceptual space* of the work, the *law* that defines it, that is, the *legisign* that is the work. A new point in space, a new experience of it (the *sinsign*) either reinforces the present position of the prototype and the boundaries of the conceptual space (the *legisign*), or moves the prototype in the conceptual space and redefines its boundaries, that is, its subjectively conceived identity as the work, our conception of it, that is, its meaning (Figure 4).

[Place Figure 4.]

**Figure 4.** The legisign is updated by new, significant instance, a new replica, a performance that redefines the category of the musical work, and its realms of identifiability, acceptance, and appreciation. The idealized performance, the notion of the work, that is, the prototype of the category changes, as a new interpretation of the instructions is introduced. This also changes the relative positions of the past performances. Here, one of the older performances labeled N.N. reaches the realm of appreciation, thanks to the advent of the new performance, while at the other end, the appreciation of a few performances decreases.

Three remarks follow. First, the notion of work as described above, is based on the exposure to and experience of varied realizations of performance, expressed and

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<sup>3</sup> According to Sloman, Love, and Ahn (1998: 192) “Concepts and categories are, to a large extent, flip sides of the same coin. Roughly speaking, a concept is an idea that characterizes a set, or category, of objects. We construe the terms “concept” and “category” to refer to two different perspectives that a subject can take on a class of objects [...] Because the [...] views of a class of objects are usually compatible, measures of conceptual and category structure usually coincide.” Gärdenfors (2000: 60) takes “*categorization* to be a rule for classifying objects”. In Peircean phenomenology, or *phaneroscopy*, “categories” are Thirds, laws.

structured by the performer(s), and these realization, or “executions”, *may or may not* be based on the interpretation of instructions by the composer. Here, *the work* does not require the existence of *notation*, but is nevertheless compatible with, e.g., John Dewey’s description of *art as an experience* (see also Goehr 2007: 266–273).

Second, consider a novice’s performance, a performance where the conception of the work is only taking the structure of a well-formed conceptual space, where the construction of the category and the prototype—the legisign—is in progress (or perhaps at times even regress). Learning, in this perspective, is about forming the regions and categories of the work as a conceptual space, not only through spontaneously occurring exposure to and interpretation of the sinsigns of performance (as in informal learning or statistical learning), but also through scaffolded, purposive action towards an ideal, the challenge being how the learner’s constructs such ideals. It is easier to learn if you know what the goal of learning might be. The dynamic nature of the conception of the work entails, that learning the work has a *moving target*: as the ideal, the conception of the work is in flux, each performance by the novice needs to be adjusted in regards to the changing objective.

Third, there seems to be a remarking parallel or a high degree of compatibility between, on the one hand, the semiotic notions of sinsign and legisign and, on the other hand, the particular points in dynamic regions and the prototypes of the conceptual spaces in cognitive metaphor theory. In both, the particular and the general mutually define one another, dynamically. This, in turn, seems to be connected with the two further notions: first, experience being not only a series of subjective instances in the mind, but being accumulative over time, and, consequently, second, taking temporality as an irreversible dimension of timespace.

#### 4 Aspects of Spatiality in Performer’s Creativity

Let us now take a closer look at the performer’s “working space” and the problem of performer’s creativity. Now, delving deeper into this issue is a huge task, so this will still be quite a general abstraction—which may be just a nice way of saying: it’s just some rough ideas. To put it in, again, spatial terms, this is an attempt of surveying the extensive landscape of musical performance, irrespective of particular works, genres, instruments or ensembles, or performers as individuals, for more detailed examinations of the aspects later. Seven aspects to spatiality of semiosis in performance and performer’s creativity follow.

**Time-variance and time-invariance of performance.** Clearly, the sound of a particular performance is time-variant, but so is the musical work, as well, because of the complexity of the conceptual spaces, and the fact that our perceptions, interpretations, and actions concerning the performances are time-variant. As said, we change, the world changes, and, therefore, our *meanings* change. However, performances of some works seems to be less susceptible for changes over time than others. The instructions for the performer may be specified in detail in vary-

ing extents—either explicitly by the composer or by how the interpretation is scaffolded by the performance practice. As a praxis, performance practice is also susceptible to changes, bringing up, e.g., the issues of adherence to historical performance practices (vs. being informed by them). More than that, the possible changes in performance practices (understood here broadly as praxis of performing) are driven by the relationship of the instructions and the extents of changes in the world and us that are relevant for our interpreting the instructions, that is, our accumulating experience, our habits.

**Arsenal of quality dimensions, domains, conceptual spaces, regions.** This aspect concerns the quality dimensions, domains, and regions that might be preset or unavailable for the performer’s control, and thereby excluded from the performer’s realm of creativity. The predetermination may be a result of the selection of instrument or by restricting the features of sound, leaving out, for instance, the extents of the pitch space or other domains. Some conceptual spaces of works afford little if any space for creativity in certain domains that might be available in principle, diminishing the performer’s possible contribution. A straightforward example: the timbre space of a pianist versus that of an organist, let alone that of a singer.

**Separability and integrality of the quality dimensions.** Performer’s creativity may be constrained or empowered by the mutual relations of the quality dimensions. Let me clarify through three questions. Why is it that you can have timbre, dynamics, articulation and duration without pitch let alone harmony, but not vice versa? To what extent can, e.g., a flutist control volume, timbre, and pitch independently? In what domains of sound is it possible to use, e.g., the *source-path-goal schema* of the cognitive metaphor theory, or the basic metaphor MORE IS UP (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 32–34, 51)?<sup>4</sup> It does not seem accidental, that in structuring a phrase, for instance, the dynamics tend to correlate with the pitch contour. While separable in principle, the performer may bind them together to construe higher level meanings, logically connected to the embodied experience of both producing the sound, and, more broadly, of higher or lower levels of activity, tension, energy, and emotion. Although the composer undoubtedly needs to be aware of these constraints and affordances, it is the performer who faces these issues—and the potential problems—in their praxis and poiesis.

**Continuity of the quality dimensions and conceptual spaces.** At a concrete level of poiesis, the hard facts of the dynamical objects may more or less constrain the continuity and structure of the quality dimensions: in many keyboard instruments—as is well known—you only have discrete pitch available, according to the structure (and tuning) of the instrument, without the vibrato, bending, or true glis-

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<sup>4</sup> The source-path-goal schema is spatial-relation concept, based on our basic-level experience, and widely applicable for use in conceptual spaces. It involves a trajectory that moves, a source location, an intended destination, and a route: the actual trajectory as well as position and direction of the trajectory at a given time, and the actual final destination, which may differ from the intended destination. MORE IS UP is a basic metaphor based on basic-level experience of rising and falling “levels of piles and fluids as more is added or subtracted” (Lakoff and Johnson 199: 51).

sando. However, even in other domains the performer may face discrete instructions, although many aspects of articulation, dynamics and tempo are fundamentally continuous albeit categorizable to prototypes and regions. At the more abstract end of interpretation, offering much latitude in performer's creativity, the issue of continuous versus discrete spatiality concerns, for instance, the clarity versus (intended) vagueness of representations and narration, distinctions between different topoi etc. versus purposive ambiguity as narrative means.

**Action versus perception in focus in instructions.** Performing music, especially in a group, is a very complex process involving monitoring of the sound produced and the body, the self, often others as well, managing the continuity of events and adjusting the interpretation (developed through goal-oriented practicing), as well as preparing and executing the motor functions in order to produce the wanted sound. From this perspective, the performer's working space is partly defined by how the instructions and performance practice specify the technical production of the sound. The instructions may emphasize the motor execution or the description of the perceptual qualities of sound, even experiential ones. If former, the description ties the performer to specific action, which may be more or less idiomatic, and depending on the performance context, yield a sound beyond performer's (and composer's) further control. If the latter two, it remains more for the performer to find a technique suitable for producing the intended perception (or experience) of the sound, which may seem to give less leeway for performer's creativity, but may, perhaps paradoxically, also open ways for creative exploration of the technical aspects, including new ways of producing the sound, potentially useful in and affording to other performances.

**Instructions, freedom of expression, and responsibility.** Complementing the previous, more technical aspect, and at the heart of performer's creativity vs. *Werktreue*, is *expression*. In this framework, we could perhaps better call this the *meaning* of the work. Obviously, there is a plethora of ways the composer may or may not specify the intended meanings of their message in the instructions, starting from the title.<sup>5</sup> The conglomeration of the scaffoldings for interpretation in performance practice may perhaps even larger. However, the point here is, that the extents to which the performer may choose to take all those specifications of meaning into account—or not to take them into account—is, finally, a call to be made by the performer in the context of performance. *Ultimately, there is no law that would require the performer to obey the instructions of the composer or the prevailing norms of the practice. The performer is, in principle, free to make own decisions—and to carry the responsibilities involved in those decisions.* The prototype may be an ideal, but the category of the work is a dynamic one, and can be either reinforced or updated by each performance. In terms of valued and acceptable realms within the category of the work, opting to differ from the perceived ideal (individual or joint ideal) contains risks, that may or may not be worthwhile taking, and decisions as per the creative contribution by the performer versus adhering to the ideal of *Werktreue* may be challenging. In Aristotelian terms, we are speaking of *phronesis*, the practical wisdom, or prudence, guiding the *praxis* of

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<sup>5</sup> This also involves the traditional issue of programmatic vs. absolute music.

performance, as opposed to *technē* guiding the *poiesis*. Here, performer's creativity deals with issues deeply rooted in semiosis, such as representations of subject, acts and events of self and others, subject's agency. From the performer's viewpoint, the context of performance always includes themselves as subjects, with their identities more or less exposed, and I believe it cannot be expected that the choices made "purely" in terms of musical expression would not also involve a performer's concern regarding how their own individuality, their persona will be interpreted along the performer's message.

**Micro-, meso-, and meta-levels of performing, and path-dependency.** Finally, and considering also the intertwining of the performer as subject and the performance as a message, what I have maintained above about musical work, seems to be applicable in a different scopes: not only to a particular, more or less well-defined work, but also more broadly to a larger corpus of performances (and works) constituting a style, a genre, a tradition, perhaps even a culture—or, more narrowly, a section, a passage, even a gesture. Regardless of the magnitude, it seems evident that *path-dependency prevails*, meaning each decision leads to a particular set of future options and excludes others, if one is to hold on to the logic of the work and the performance.

## 5 Conclusion

To conclude, performer's creativity is constrained by more or less accurate *instructions* for the task, by the *soft facts* of performance practices, and by the *willingness* of the performer to comply with the established practices and instructions. Performer's decisions position the performance more or less within the realms of what is identifiable, what is acceptable, and what is valued in the work. Pushing the boundaries is a matter of not only creativity but also a matter of responsibility, and, therefore, ethics. Exploring the boundaries and testing how the prototypes in the conceptual spaces of works can be moved might well constitutes a description, if not definition, of *artistic research*. The spatiality of performer's creativity—if understood this way—seems to be at the core of performing and communicating meanings in music. The abstract, general remarks made here need to be taken to a more concrete, realizable level. This seems to require not only a fruitful combination of music analysis (including analysis of the instructions for the abductive inference of possible meanings) and performance data analysis (e.g., data on the sound of recordings or live performances) but, to a great extent, also analysis of the performer (e.g., phenomenological studies of performers, motion capture of performer's movement, biofeedback measurements of performers in action), as well as "collateral observation" of the social, cultural, and historical contexts relevant to performances, and, last but perhaps not least, deeper theoretical understanding of the semiotic and cognitive mechanisms present in each part of the musical communication process. I hope this kind of considerations might be helpful for the systematic developing of research methodology and pedagogy for musical performance, and perhaps other forms of the arts, as well, and, meanwhile, pro-

vide food for thought in more specific and more concrete situations of performing, composing, and listening—experiencing music—and research thereof.

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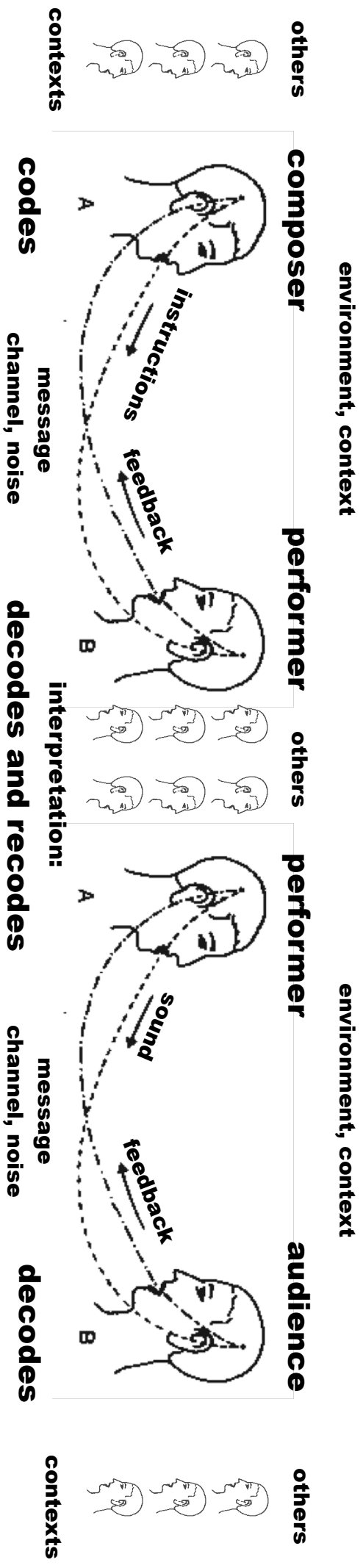
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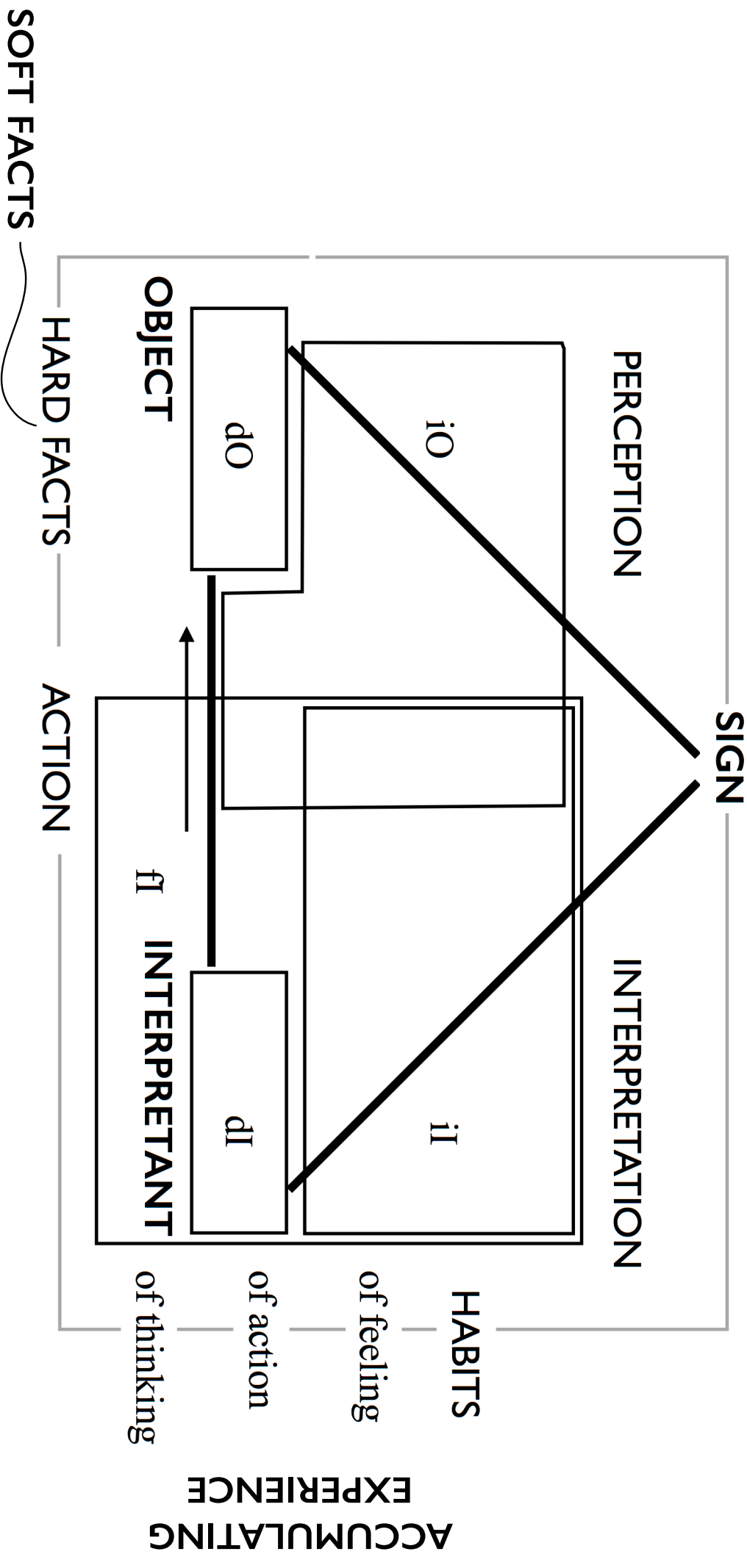
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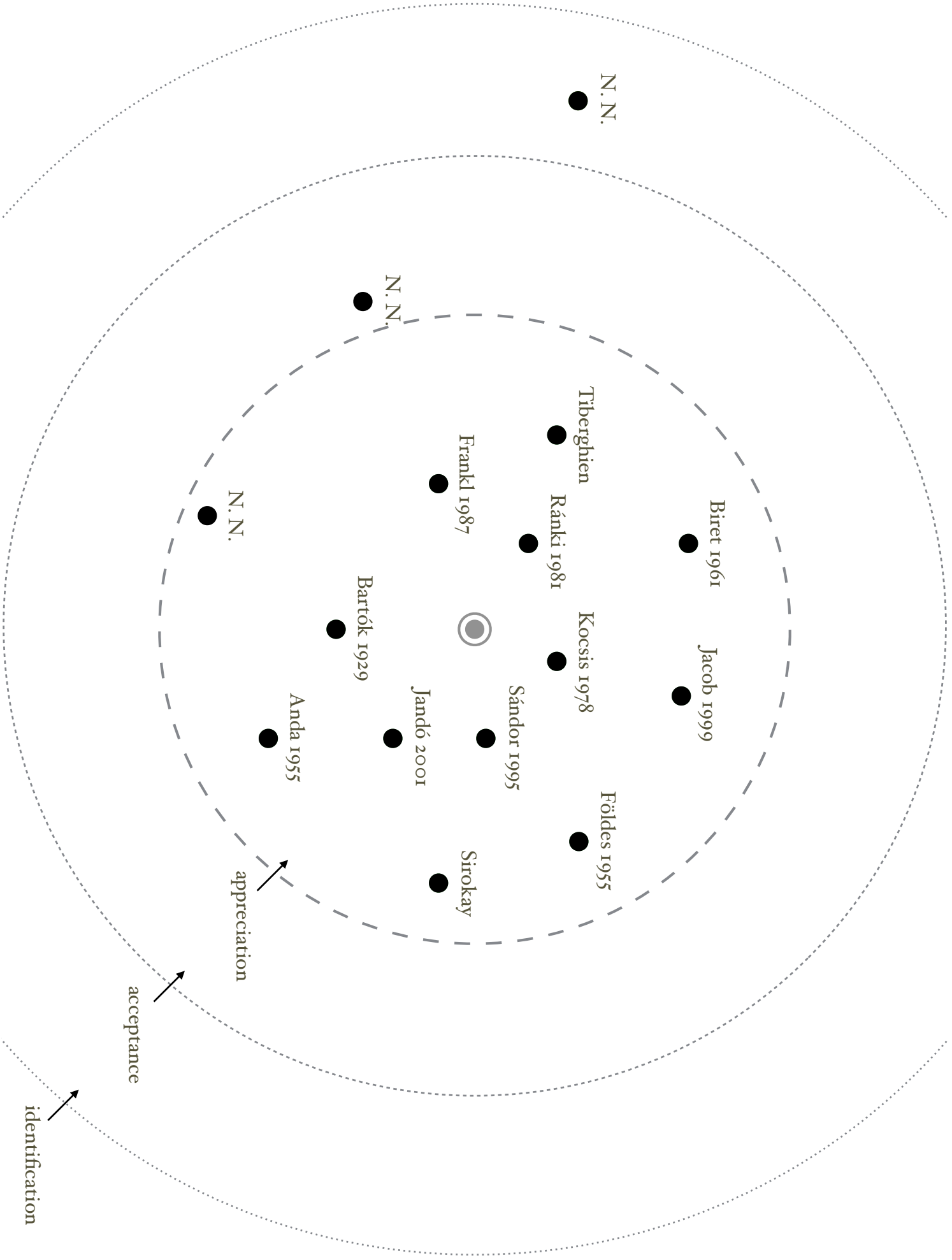
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identification

acceptance

appreciation

