

**Transcendental Logic:
Deleuzian concepts of rhizome and memory in Ives' *Concord Sonata***

In the Piano Sonata #2, (Concord, Mass., 1840-1860), Ives' sought to justify his unique compositional structure and mix of musical quotation with new material through the creation of a program, described in detail in the "Essay before a Sonata" and in brief in the score before each movement. However, Ives spent numerous pages of the Essay focused on the difficulties of using this program to explain the multifaceted relationships found in his musical compositions. These difficulties, stated so plainly in the Essay, provided the impetus for a search for other, more effective explanations of the construction of the Concord Sonata, including explanations unavailable to Ives in his lifetime. The descriptions of memory and rhizomic organizational structures found in the work of the philosopher Gilles Deleuze and psychoanalyst Felix Guatterri proved to be both appropriate and applicable to the Concord Sonata. This paper uses existing analyses of Ives' use of quotation, including work done by J. Peter Burkolder, to examine the use of quotation through the window of the philosophical ideas expressed by Deleuze and Guatterri in their text *A Thousand Plateaus* and Deleuze's *Essays: Critical and Clinical*.

Daniel Smith, in his introduction to his translation of Deleuze's *Essays: Critical and Clinical*, explains that in a rhizome, "Concrete space is no longer stable or unstable but 'metastable', presenting 'a plurality of ways of being in the world' that are incompatible yet coexistent."¹ While a program is a limitation, a linear model that by necessity excludes all non-program elements to present a single viewpoint, Ives' work can instead be seen as a map of possibilities and relationships in which incompatible yet co-existent musical pluralities exist as a network of distinctive stylistic musical fragments. Ives' use in the *Concord Sonata* of fragments from musical compositions ranging over hundreds of years and styles ranging from popular to classical also presents an effective case for the success of such a plurality of ways. Deleuze and Guatterri also describe three different ways of organizing memory, or any other regime of signs. Each of these ways leads to a deeper level of abstraction and complexity. Their tri-partite explanation of the role of memory can also be used to explain the effectiveness of Ives' musical quotations in a way the program never could. Ives' musings in the *Essay* describe questions he has already answered by his composition—answers that don't exist in philosophical form for at least another fifty years. Ives has created, in Deleuzian terms, a rhizomic model for musical expression that transforms memory fragments into a realm of infinitely inter-connecting points. As Deleuze and Guatterri seek to explain the beauty of rhizomic structures that combine elements that are "incompatible yet coexistent," Ives' love of transcendentalism allows him to bring music into a place he didn't have the resources to describe in any terms other than the musical. He brought music into the properly transcendental logic of virtual singularities.

¹ Deleuze, Gilles, *Essays critical and clinical*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, xxvii.

Using existing analysis of Ives' work, this paper describes the basic features of analysis, both musical and the verbal descriptions in the *Essay* useful to the theories presented by Deleuze and Guattari, their

Despite the presence of a program, the musical focus of the Concord Sonata is the concept of memory and re-invention of traditional musical sounds in an experimental context rather than a literal program depiction

Ives' struggles in his discussion of program music and aspects of Ives' work in general (use of polytonality, quotation and complex rhythmic juxtapositions) demonstrate his understanding of the release that can be found in the juxtaposition of seemingly contradictory musical harmonic and melodic progressions. As rhizomes have no beginning and end, the final important feature of seeing Ives' composition as a rhizome is that his concept of movement in non-chronological time.

Jane Austen writes, in *Mansfield Park*, "If any one faculty of our nature may be called more wonderful than the rest, I do think it is memory. There seems something more speakingly incomprehensible in the powers, the failures, the inequalities of memory, than in any other of our intelligences."²

That the program was unsatisfactory for Ives was clearly expressed in the Essay, as well as his hopes for music that goes beyond a program, a music that "embraces all that should go with an expression of the composite-spirit. It is the underlying spirit, the direct unrestricted imprint."³ This composite spirit his unrestricted composite is a search answered 70 years later in the form of a rhizome.

² Austen, Jane, *Mansfield Park*, New York: Signet Classics, 1996,

³ *Ibid*, 184.