What some of us who have been avid listeners of Stravinsky have always heard as being most significant in his works composed between approximately 1920 and 1955 are not his references to older music but rather the subtlety, ingenuity, and inventiveness of every aspect of composition. The subject is not the compiled Classical material, but what is done to it. (Specifics on this later.) I would not want to give the impression that I believe the Classical allusions vanish with this approach and are not apprehended as such—not only Classical, but Baroque, Renaissance, Romantic, and so on. In the final product their treatment by Stravinsky renders a result that occupies a position as far as possible from pastiche. The originality is palpable in the extreme. As Copland once observed, “...if you don't listen closely, there are times when you might mistake Mozart for Haydn, or Bach for Handel, or even Ravel for Debussy. I cannot ever remember being fooled by the music of Stravinsky.”

It is odd that over the years so many listeners as well as the critics (the listeners coached by the critics?) focused above all on the music’s references to Bach or any other old master as if that were the essential content. They found it altogether unnatural that the extremely avant-garde composer of the orgiastic Le sacre du printemps (Rite of Spring) completed in 1913 could have traveled in so few years to the chaste ambience of, for instance, Apollon musagète (1927), and they made it perfectly clear that they were unwilling to make the trip with him.

It is one of the unfortunate quirks of history that so great a part of Stravinsky’s œuvre should have been saddled with a label like “neoclassicism” that does it so much injustice. Schoenberg seems to have been the victim of a comparable injustice because of the locution “atonality” which he disapproved of, since it suggested “against tone,” though it does not af-
fect, imprison our hearing to the extent that “neoclassicism” does. A name somehow gives a thing legitimacy and, no small factor, it makes it easier to refer to it. The use of slogans to pinpoint the thrust of movements in the arts accelerated during the course of the twentieth century. As Wallace Stevens once put it, modern art “has a reason for everything. Even the lack of a reason becomes a reason. Picasso expresses surprise that people should ask what a picture means and says that pictures are not intended to have meanings. This explains everything.”

It does not look as if things are going to change in the foreseeable future as far as the labels for different trends are concerned, so we have to live with them because calling a movement something else when one designation is so deeply imprinted on the minds of so many people is, it seems to me, cumbersome. The best we can do is apply first aid and try to do some damage control. Meanwhile, if we find we have to have recourse to the term—and I should find it hard to avoid this particular one—my advice would be to use it in the broadest of senses. I recommend special vigilance where one believes one has espied a case of neoclassicism but on closer inspection it turns out to be an excursion to an old style in the spirit of a vacation trip from which one will soon return. I have in mind arrangements, among other things. For example, Busoni’s and Schoenberg’s arrangements of Bach do not make their perpetrators neoclassicists in any sense. Even Stravinsky’s adaptation of Pergolesi in *Pulcinella* is not yet a neoclassic Stravinsky, as I have observed before on more than one occasion. Stravinsky’s treatment of the borrowed Pergolesi tunes is not very different from his treatment of folk tunes in *Petrushka*, though I should be willing to admit that dealing with the Baroque composer’s music may very well have fanned the flames of a desire to use works of the past as raw material instead of folksongs in the future.

Stravinsky in later life confided to Milton Babbitt how he felt about the recriminations leveled against him to the effect that he was unnaturally “returning to” the past (the Schoenberg work Stravinsky refers to is *Three Satires*, Op. 28, dated 1925, for chorus, in which some of Schoenberg’s own words made fun of composers who were aiming at a “return to . . .”).

Stravinsky told me how deeply disappointed and hurt he had been that Schoenberg had chosen (that was precisely his word: “chosen”) to take the slogans of “back to Bach” and “neoclassicism” seriously, so seriously as to respond with an acerbic verbal satire, with music to match. For, to Stravinsky, “back to Bach,” was just that, an alliteratively catchy
slogan which had no pertinence to professional activity or professional discourse. It was there, permitted to be concocted, like “neoclassicism,” to be talked about by those who could not and should not talk about music, who didn’t even bother to hear the music, but who, when they bandied about the catch words, were “talking about Stravinsky.”

To take Stravinsky literally in this reported conversation would oblige one to forswear both the evocation of the concept and the application of the rubric “neoclassicism” to his music and put it to rest as a sort of Madison Avenue slogan that had served its purpose. It must have been out of pique that Stravinsky disowned it in later life, and who can blame him when it distracted people from what is essential in his music? But as I said above, I think it best that we try to live with it. At one point it seems to have served Stravinsky. (See the manifesto re Classicism below.) It can still be useful in dealing with his music if one is circumspect and if one does not lose sight of the fact that Stravinsky does not identify himself with the sources that he draws upon in his music but keeps his distance or, as he sometimes used to say, uses them as the subject of his “criticism.”

In this rare instance of his unburdening himself on the subject as part of a dialogue with Babbitt, however, Stravinsky seemed intent upon obliterating the whole concept from his past, and he was indeed free with facts to help him do so. For the blurred memory of an old man was playing tricks on him if what he remembered was the alliterative slogan hurled at him by the French musical public—a slogan he curiously remembered as being hurled at him by Frenchmen in English! We should be charitable and not take this little slip as something to make us lose sight of the essential burden of his confession which is not at all affected by it: namely, that at the point in his life when he recalled this affair he was thoroughly disabused of the concept neoclassicism and wanted to shift the blame to others for identifying him with it.

What I often find more disturbing than the recriminations leveled at Stravinsky for his backward look, his unnatural “return” to the past, are the frequent allegations that his music is devoid of feeling. These allegations have often materialized as a corollary to complaints about his retrogressive stance but they have then assumed major proportions. One would think that by now the matter was settled and that Stravinsky was no longer regarded as a paradigm of music without feeling. Only a few years ago, however, I came across a review in the New York Times that contained the following observation: “Using a mildly astringent language reminiscent of
Stravinsky but with heart, Mr. Perle presents . . .” (italics mine), and to my surprise I found in conversation with fellow musicians that this view of Stravinsky is not altogether dormant.

Consistent with the Romantic thesis of music as self-expression (what John Dewey called, in its most unfortunate manifestations, a “spewing forth”) is the notion that composers in the music they write must not express any feelings but their own, as if emotions experienced by others cannot burn as intensely in their music as emotions they experience themselves. (If this were true, how would novelists be able to deal properly with characters that are hateful or in any way alien to themselves?) When music or a style is being appropriated, the feelings expressed originally are obviously the feelings of other people, and the argument is that they have somehow been wrung out in the process of being transmitted. In addition to this, mere mention of “Classical” is enough to prepare some of the listening public for basalt frigidity as the polar opposite of the hot intensity of Romanticism.

I wonder if it would not be a good idea to reserve the rubrics Classical and Romantic to apply to the artwork rather than to the artist, who may be different things at different times. I remember how surprised I was at a remark made to me some time in the forties by Paul Hindemith whom we all had pegged as a staunch neoclassicist. I was emerging from the old Metropolitan Opera House on Broadway at Thirty-ninth Street where I had been listening to Siegfried in order to review it for the New York Herald Tribune. (Hindemith remembered me from having met me a few years earlier in Cologne at an International Society for Contemporary Music festival which included my String Quartet among its offerings.) After greetings he told me, “that is an opera I would like to have written myself.” Since this chance encounter I have learned that he adored Wagner and that in the last scene of his opera Mathis der Maler, whether consciously or not, he quoted Tristan.

On the subject of feeling in Stravinsky’s music, no one has been more culpable of contributing to confusion and misunderstanding than he himself by virtue of the notorious, thoroughly indiscreet statement that appeared back in 1935 in his autobiography (Chroniques de ma vie, in the original French)—a statement that would seem to corroborate the public’s assessment of his attitude toward expression in music:

Car je considère la musique, par son essence, impuissante à exprimer quoi que ce soit: un sentiment, une attitude, un état psychologique, un
phénomène de la nature, etc. . . . L’expression n’a jamais été la propriété immanente de la musique. [For I consider music by its essence powerless to express anything whatsoever: a sentiment, an attitude, a psychological state, a phenomenon of nature. . . . Expression has never been an immanent property of music.] [Translation mine]

I was enormously relieved when he explained himself many years later—or as some may prefer to put it, reversed himself—in one of the books of conversation with Robert Craft:

That overpublicized bit about expression (or non-expression) was simply a way of saying that music is suprapersonal and superreal and as such beyond verbal meanings and verbal descriptions. It was aimed against the notion that a piece of music is in reality a transcendental idea “expressed in terms of” music, with the reductio ad absurdum implication that exact sets of correlatives must exist between a composer’s feelings and his notation. It was offhand and annoyingly incomplete, but even the stupidest critics could have seen that it did not deny musical expressivity, but only the validity of a type of verbal statement about musical expressivity. I stand by the remark, incidentally, though today I would put it the other way around: music expresses itself.

Stravinsky was obviously attempting to deal with the tricky phenomenon that music is essentially nonverbal, and he was warning listeners who are rendered uncomfortable by this phenomenon, listeners who will use words nonetheless, that they should beware of reifying them so that they appear to have more import than they can possibly have. The best part of his more recent statement is the warning against “exact correlatives . . . between a composer’s feelings and notation.” The phrase “beyond verbal meanings” has to do with the conviction that the music cannot be “reproduced” in words or even an analytical diagram. (See the quotation from Arnold Isenberg in chapter 14.) But words and diagrams observing proper limits can be enormously helpful. Listeners who regard music as inviolate and ineffable are as commonplace as those who always see pictures and hear stories, and I would not want the reader to think I am endorsing either type. As to the first type their view quite justifies their listening in what Santayana called a “drowsy revery.” They are not interested in taking the music apart for better understanding. They welcome the prospect of merely being lulled by the billows of sound.

Stravinsky’s original statement on the subject of expression had done the damage, and it is doubtful anything he would have said afterward could have been accepted as sufficient reparation. The conclusion that may be drawn from his disclaimer is that composers who may insist they are writ-
ing music that does not express either their own feelings or those of anyone else may yet be writing music that embodies feelings, since these, whether there or not, cannot be fixed or localized verbally. If the words used to characterize a musical emotion are unreliable, the words used to contend that there is no emotion must be equally unreliable. We are indebted to Freud for the awareness of the way in which our unconscious desires, implicit feelings, partly formulated beliefs manifest themselves without our knowing it in the merest action of walking into a room, in the presumably meaningless loops and curves of handwriting, in the apparently awkward movement of the hand (for those who still use old-fashioned nonmechanical pens) that “fortuitously” shatters the inkstand which, though we are not thinking of it at the moment, has displeased us for some time.

Composers may evoke emotions without knowing what they are and without being aware they are doing so. Tones themselves are, to start with, emotionally toned. A high, loud sound has its aura of excitement, however limited or diluted that may be under certain conditions. A high piercing laugh does not represent glee by convention; there is an intrinsic relation, what some psychologists have called a functional relation, between the laugh and the quality of our exultation (a relationship of the kind that an onomatopoeic word has to its object). At the same time, the scream’s meaning is not specific. Indeed, embedded in laughter at a distance it may be mistaken for a sign of distress. A composer’s choice of a high sound to complete a formal pattern involves an accompanying, probably unconscious, approval of the feeling that comes in its wake. It is a feeling, moreover, that is not a mere matter of association like the relation of most words to their object. If the listener can resist assimilating the sound to anything obvious in the outside world, its function and meaning will be precisely what they are by virtue of its place within the music’s structure.

It is true that Stravinsky and his orbit of composers reacted against the role that emotion played in nineteenth-century Romanticism, but to label them neoclassicists on this account is to assume a composer has no other choice but to be either Classic or Romantic. There are, however, certain traits that we associate with the one or the other, and a composer may exhibit them without being altogether either Classical or Romantic. I have already mentioned self-expression as one objective of Romanticism and now I should like to expand that to include expression of any kind when it is an objective that takes priority over form. (The neoclassicist’s preoccupation with form,
by the way, is another reason listeners are likely to assume a delinquency in feeling, as if the one excludes the other.) Quite apart from whether, in the result, there is more form than feeling—if it makes any sense to talk in this fashion—the paradigm of the Romantic composer has him or her, in the process of creation, starting with an emotion and subsequently looking for the notes to express it. (This may not be literally true but it is a good blueprint to keep in mind.) By contrast, the Classicist starts with the tones, and only then the emotion, according to the nature of music, comes in their wake. According to André Gide this would be a likely characterization of the way Chopin worked, so although the standard history books have him down as the paradigmatic Romantic by virtue of the nature of his music and the time in which he lived, the French novelist took him to be a Classicist.  

The reclassification of Chopin as a Classicist would no doubt be considered a means of downgrading him by many observers. The mere effusion of better and more feelings is supposed to be superior to perfection of constructive values. Anyone who took piano lessons in the twenties was not unlikely to have been saddled with the kitschy salon pieces of a British composer named Cyril Scott and perhaps exposed to his theories as well, which included the notion that “Beethoven with his pomp and splendor surpassed the tinkling dulcitude of Mozart.” Tinkling dulcitude, indeed! A few of us are old enough to remember when Mozart was considered lightweight somewhat in the manner that Stravinsky is still considered by some listeners (and critics, as I mentioned) to have written music devoid of feeling.

This notion of the essential Stravinsky has many adherents, and it goes along with a common view of a reduced role of emotion in Classicism. The Romantic composer is credited by some observers with expressing not only more feelings but better ones—the loftiest, the most godlike sentiments: “le sérieux à tout prix” (seriousness at any price) in Darius Milhaud’s choice phrase. Unhampered by the straitjacket of the requirements of form, composers were presumably free to express themselves. Indeed all composers, observed Ferruccio Busoni, “have drawn nearest the true nature of music in preparatory and intermediary passages (preludes and transitions) where they felt at liberty to disregard symmetrical proportions and unconsciously drew free breath.” He went on to asseverate that the rest or fermata “most nearly approaches the essential nature of art.” (Little did he know that someday one John Cage would put into action what were presumably his hyperbolic musings.)

The Romanticists took the high points as a norm, and they could even find them in music of the Classical period—the almost Wagnerian statue
scene in *Don Giovanni* or the aria “Er Sterbe” in *Fidelio*. Naturally, the preoccupation with such moods and the enormous creative gifts lavished on them contributed to surpassing skill in their expression. Music was said not to have feeling when it failed to express heightened emotions: amorous exaltation, intense longing (*Sehnsucht*), profoundest mourning, agitation, ecstasy and such. I suspect we tend to overlook in all of this that “coldness” is also a feeling. We say to someone “your hands feel cold,” but when a piece of music is cold we say it lacks feeling.

Classical composers felt that emotion did not always have to be at great heights or depths to be vivid and meaningful. Moreover they realized the potentiality of form to embody and unify contrasting emotions. The composer’s primary concern was to bring to bear the appropriate technical requirements for their proper expression—not as two different things, for they were aware of them as two aspects of the same thing. This is quite different from assuming the formal aspects are but a bridge to the feelings—a kind of Achilles heel one has to put up with. When the conscious mind is engaged mainly in arranging tones in suitable and striking configurations, the feelings that inform them are likely to spring from deep sources the subtle ramifications of which would be far too elusive to grasp in any other way. Yet, by the notes chosen, even under the strictest formal constraints, these deep, sequestered feelings become somehow accessible. Like the portrait painter who relies too much on his model, the composer in his desire to reproduce emotion faithfully may remain too wedded to a conscious level, leaving little room for chance (what Stravinsky called the *trouvaille*—literally “find” or “discovery”) in handling the musical elements and for adventures into hitherto untapped recesses of the unconscious.

An effort, a struggle to conform to a stringent structural requirement may be apprehended as emotional tension. An excellent example is the dialectic play in Mozart which may have its origin in what may sound like a colorless and mechanical pursuit: the composer’s determination to maintain the hegemony of the tonic against the forces that seek to undermine it. The problem can arise in functional tonality out of the phenomenon that in the major scale the chord on I (the tonic) is to IV (subdominant) as V (dominant) is to I because of the intervallic equivalence of the two tetrachords of the major scale (C to F and G to C). Thus, the tonic has the potentiality to sound like V of IV, thereby losing its priority. One way to avoid this is to use V of II (supertonic) to deny and then replace V of IV, and II itself to deny and replace IV (an expanded version of deceptive cadence). To under-
stand this let us start by rearranging the notes of the major scale. In the conventional do-re-mi, etc., there are two intervals between the scale degrees: semitone and whole-tone. But let us place the notes so the adjacencies are defined by a fixed interval. Now if we consider the fifth and its inversion, the fourth, as the “same” interval for our purpose (each has notes of the same letter names but in a different inversion, and in a useful convention of Princeton terminology they constitute an “interval class”) we find that it is the only interval encompassing all the notes of the scale in an arrangement in which the adjacencies are indeed defined by a fixed interval. Also, by virtue of certain intrinsic natural relations and the dictates of the tonal system, it is an interval class that provides the closest relationship available between any two pitches in functional tonality, which gives the succession of pitches a unique property. If C major is used as an example the series is B-E-A-D-G-C-F, and it should become apparent that if we continue moving in the same direction with the adjacencies always defined by the same interval (fifth-fourth), we find ourselves in different keys, the keys with flats. So F, as the “last note” of the “white-note” scale in this particular formation, is capable of being poised potentially to leave the collection; but D (root of the II chord) is a means of getting back into it because it is in the middle of the collection so ordered rather than at its end.

I shall use portions of the Allegro, following the slow introduction, of Mozart’s “Dissonance” Quartet in C major, K. 465, to illustrate the exploitation of this property of the major scale, but there are many other examples in Classical literature.

As the Allegro begins (Ex. 4a) it is significant that Mozart’s first change of harmony in the second bar over a C pedal is IV. In bar 28 a suggestion of (incomplete) V of IV occurs briefly as a passing-tone event, followed by the remediating V of II to prevent a resolution on IV. Starting in bar 35 for three bars, IV insists on being tonicized, only to be frustrated by the inevitable V of II. Note how V of IV makes two attempts (bars 36–37) to reach its goal before it is turned back. Note also the expressivity that comes in the wake of the reluctant return to C major in bars 38 and 39. Reluctant is also the epithet that can be more generally applied to the sense we get of being repeatedly turned back in the course of the movement from attaining the triumphant F major that seemed on the verge of being tonicized. The crucial element is V of II, and once the reentry is negotiated there is more than one way of proceeding. If you wish to compare the various occurrences, note that the one starting with bar 60, being in the second group, in conformance with the specifications of the sonata allegro formula, will
Ex. 4a. Mozart, “Dissonance” Quartet, K. 465, Allegro (opening of exposition)
naturally have II on A instead of D. The other occurrences are found at bars 87, 159, 168, 179, 207, and 227. At the beginning of the development (Ex. 4b) there is an amplified version (thirteen bars) in which there is intense conflict between V of F and V of VI of F (D or II of C). Observe the dissonant clash of C-sharp from the suggested D (harmonic) minor with C-natural from a potential F major in bars 113–14. The sense of conflict does not really abate with the V on F. That does not occur until bar 119, and in a surprising way. Precisely how would carry us too far from the main thrust of this discussion.

The slow movement, Andante, entering in F major, satisfies all the unfulfilled drives toward the subdominant and accordingly conveys a sense of arrival, of peace (Ex. 5). It has been pointed out to me by a musicologist that there is nothing special about the slow movement of a sonata form of the Classical period being in the subdominant, since it was a convention and therefore one would expect it. I do not claim that Mozart created the structural device of a subdominant second movement as an element of surprise or special satisfaction, but rather, that once the convention was in place he seems to have taken advantage of the arrival of the conventional subdominant as the movement's tonic to make it meaningful by injecting a struggle to get to it. (It is an interesting example of the difference between the approach of the musicologist and that of the composer-theorist.)

When I consider the C-minor fugal exposition that opens the second part of Stravinsky's *Symphonie de psaulmes* (Symphony of Psalms) of 1930 I cannot help thinking that the arrival of C minor, in a very general way, has an impact that is roughly analogous to that of the arrival of F major in the Mozart Andante, as we shall see. It is the kind of analogy I should expect latter-day positivist theorists to regard as otiose. But if we are willing to allow some latitude in our thinking, and are willing to recognize similitude without always insisting on equivalence, we may find that it is Stravinsky's application of a similar structural device in purely modern terms that places him in a certain limited debt to Classical tradition much more meaningfully than his familiar practice of appropriating or alluding to the characteristic configurations of the eighteenth-century Classical composers. But let me have him explain it to you in his own words. The following appeared in a one-time British magazine *The Dominant* in 1927, a translation of a statement published earlier in France under the caption "Avertissement" (Warning):
Ex. 4b. Same, Allegro (opening of development)
There is much talk nowadays of a reversion to Classicism, and works believed to have been composed under the influence of so-called Classical models are labeled neoclassic. . . . I fear that the bulk of the public, and also the critics, are content with recording superficial impressions created by the use of certain materials which were current in so-called Classical music. The use of such devices is insufficient to constitute the real neoclassicism, for Classicism itself was characterized not in the least by its technical processes, which, then as now, were themselves subject to modification from period to period, but rather by its constructive values.32

What Stravinsky appears to have been telling us is that to be a neoclassic composer is not simply to parrot the eighteenth-century Classicists but to apply structural principles in composing—that is, modern structural principles that would serve some of the same purposes as the principles in Classical music. The first of the three parts of Psalms employs strategies in their own way analogous to those in the Mozart quartet in the matter of delayed and frustrated resolutions within a context that may no longer be legitimately defined as functionally tonal. Instead, the pitch relations, the “tonal” areas, are moderated by an infusion of the octatonic scale that Stravinsky favored, especially in his “Russian” works and in only some of the neoclassic ones. The octatonic is a scale in which the adjacencies are defined by two intervals in alternation: whole-tone and semitone. As a consequence, in contrast to the diatonic, which has seven forms (interval orderings) of the scale, there are only two forms: one starting with the whole-tone and the other (relevant here to the first part of the Psalms) starting with the semitone. In chapter 15, which treats the scale more fully,
both forms are discussed. But for our present purpose it is sufficient to consider just one of the two forms, a representation of which is given in Example 6. This scale on E is a referential octatonic scale used as a basis for important tonal relations in Psalms. In semitonal counting (loosely speaking, “going up” the chromatic scale), it may be represented thus: 0–1–3–4–6–7–9–10–12. If we take overlapping three-note groups (conjunct trichords: 0–1–3; 3–4–6; 6–7–9; 9–10–12), we highlight the inherent symmetry. Thus, in each trichord the interval number one accounts for the relation between the first and second member, and the interval number two accounts for the relation between the second and third member: for example, E–F–G; G–A♭–B♭ etc. It will be recalled that the symmetry between the two tetrachords in the major scale was the enabling factor in the fascinating dialectic play of the relations in the Mozart. There we had only two symmetrical elements to contend with. Here we have four and the potential of the symmetry to challenge the tone center is accordingly greater.

If E is the tone center (has pitch priority) the first note of each conjunct trichord is capable of being its clone by virtue of its parallel position. Within the octatonic ordering of the pitch collection in Psalms Stravinsky exploits only two of the four available pitch priorities: E and G, and he is thus closer to Mozart than if he had exploited all four. In the loose analogy with the Mozart I wish to propose, the E stratum (to borrow Edward Cone’s nomenclature) corresponds to Mozart’s tonic and tends to be Phrygian when it is not octatonic, while the G stratum, which is rather unruly, tends, without departing from the octatonic collection, to take the form of the dominant (V) of C. Whenever a resolution to C seems imminent, the E stratum interrupts it, somewhat in the way that the deceptive II in Mozart keeps us from resolving on IV. The irony is that the form of the octatonic scale used here has a C-sharp which is a direct contradiction to the C-natural toward which we are striving. So as long as the present form of octatonic scale is in operation (no “accidentals” or departure from the “key” being employed) there can be no resolution on C. The opening C of the oboe in the fugato of the second section is quite enough for us to experience a sense of a long-awaited resolution, somewhat the way, though more intensely, that we experienced the sensation of the F-major opening
of the Mozart Andante: an arrival, that is to say, yielding at last the goal that had been repeatedly thwarted in the previous Allegro and also something the conditions for which had been proposed again and again without materializing.

The main point is that the thwarted tendency toward C in Stravinsky is achieved by very different means from the thwarted tendency toward F in Mozart, but there is an underlying principle that they share. The main participants in the dialectical play as Stravinsky conceived it are briefly announced at the opening: an E-minor triad, transformed by virtue of spacing and doubling to sound like no E-minor triad ever heard before, suffices to represent the E stratum. (The extraordinary spacing is not merely for color but has the structural function of placing the secondary pitch priority G in relief.) This is followed immediately by octatonic woodwind figurations hovering about a dominant seventh chord on G in first inversion (Ex. 7a). The woodwind passage returns twice more, each time longer than it was before and followed each time by the opening E chord that thwarts it, bringing to my mind the scene in Gluck’s Orfeo where Orpheus pleads with the shades to admit him into the underworld and they respond repeatedly with a peremptory “No.” Finally the E prevails and there is briefly a Phrygian passage that gradually merges into the earlier figuration, ornamenting the G seventh chord. Just before the entrance of the chorus we seem ready for a resolution on C. The chorus, however, enters on E and we find ourselves back in the earlier octatonic zone, the effect of not getting the anticipated C provoking, as I experience it, something like the sensation of losing one’s step (Ex. 7b). A more compelling approach to C occurs over eight bars from rehearsal Nos. 5 to 7. There is an extended dominant of C in the chorus for four bars, followed by the incomplete V7 over a C-pedal in four flutes and an oboe which is quoted in Example 7c, the entire passage providing an occasion for one of Stravinsky’s most striking ironies. Here within easy reach are the conditions for the establishment of the goal of
Ex. 7b. Same, part 1 (from second bar after No. 3)

Ex. 7c. Same, part 1, No. 6
C priority. But we will not achieve it as long as the dominant elements stubbornly persist and clash with C instead of resolving on it. The oboe’s figuration that seems to be heading for a resolution on C dissolves instead into a return to E as at No. 4. This drama is reenacted in another form before No. 12 and in the last four measures, as I noted above, we finally get the unmitigated cadential V\(^7\) (Ex. 8a) that resolves on the C of the fugal exposition (Ex. 8b).

With regard to what his critics and Stravinsky himself have had to say about the absence of feeling in his music, there can be no more eloquent disclaimer than parts 1 and 2 of Psalms. Thus, on some level—it was undoubtedly unconscious—Stravinsky felt there must be an element of affinity between the sense of pleading for C minor and individuals beseeching God to lend them his ear: “Exaudi orationem meam, Domini . . . ” (Hear my prayer, Lord). And also, in part 2, something loosely parallel to the satisfaction of arrival at the thwarted C minor in the words “Expectans expectavi DOMINUM, et intendit mihi . . .” (Waiting for the Lord, he reached out to me). Notions like this sound naive—another reminder of how powerless words are for dealing with music. I beg the reader to take them in the broadest metaphorical sense. I have recourse to them occasionally simply to make a point. They would sound equally naive were we dealing with any of the other arts, even poetry where words are the medium. Wallace Stevens in one of his letters, after explaining some points in his poem “Sunday Morning,” observed, “Now these ideas are not bad in a poem. But they are a frightful bore when converted as above.”\(^14\)

What often leads to the conclusion that emotions are absent where music ideally fulfills its structural essence is the difficulty of localizing them with respect to our normal connotative methods of thought, as I have attempted to do. Yet the emotions are nonetheless specific. If there can be so much ambiguity in poetry, where the verbal symbols so closely represent their objects (think of William Empson’s Seven Types of Ambiguity)\(^15\) we must expect music to allow for still broader interpretation. In much Romantic and Impressionist music there may be less room for disagreement over the emotion embodied in a given musical passage. But in more abstract works the whole unconscious is given free play. If the emotion seems ambiguous, seems to elude us when we try to encapsulate it, it is not because it is in itself ambiguous or elusive. The emotion expressed, as I have said, is perfectly specific. If we lean too heavily on verbal characterization
Ex. 8a. *Psalms*, part 1 concluded (final cadence)

we may make the mistake of concluding that where emotions are least definable they are absent altogether. This is unfortunate since, as it has often been observed, if what a composer has to say could be easily said in words, there would be no point in trying to express it in tones. Emotion in music is least friendly to efforts at localizing and narrowly defining it. If it is argued that there is no basis for claiming the emotions are there, it is equally
true, as I have said, that there is no basis for claiming that they are not
there. They seem most evasive of definition when form and feeling are, as
they should be, most thoroughly identified with each other. Once this iden-
tification is accepted it serves as a protection against the common error of
claiming that intellectual factors merely provide a kind of receptacle into
which the feelings are poured.