

# Music, Posthumanism and Nietzsche

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In this article, I will show that the first order *Empfindung* associated to music is the dissolution of individuality which from a posthumanist<sup>1</sup> perspective brings about the realisation of the embeddedness of human beings in this world. Hence, music can bring about more than pain and pleasure in the recipients. In this context, I will also explain that the *Empfindungen* of a recipient of an artistic piece are the result of the interplay between the first order *Empfindungen* which are dependent upon the type of art one is confronted with and the second order *Empfindungen* which are the result of individual qualities of an artistic piece.

It has already been put forward by philosophers like Plotinus (Sorgner 2010a), Schopenhauer (Sorgner 2011) and Nietzsche (Sorgner 2006) that music is best in bringing about the dissolution of the individual. They are correct concerning this analysis and the phenomenological description of the issue in question, but not concerning their explanation. Firstly, I will describe in detail why Schopenhauer holds that music is the best type of art to bring about the dissolution of individuality in recipients. However, Schopenhauer refers to some realms outside of time and space to explain the *Empfindung* of ecstasy which I regard as implausible from a posthumanist perspective. The posthumanist movement is a strong contemporary movement and one whose premises I share. Secondly, I will explain some fundamental premises of posthumanism, whereby I will also state how Welsch describes the relationship between posthumanism and the arts and in what respect Nietzsche has already put forward a similar concept in his “*Birth of Tragedy*”. Thirdly, I will explain how the dissolution of the individual can be described from a posthumanist perspective.

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<sup>1</sup> Personally, I would prefer to refer to it as metahumanist perspective, because there are specific characteristics of posthumanism which I do not share. However, metahumanism can be seen as a variant or at least an outgrowth of posthumanism (see *The Agonist* Fall 2011 issue).

## 1 Schopenhauer, the dissolution of Individuality and Music

According to Schopenhauer, the *conditio humana* is such that we as individuals are in the process of striving permanently, and striving is connected with pain. Hence, human beings as striving individual are suffering. There are at least two further sources for suffering, namely ones level in the social hierarchy. If someone does not have a solid financial foundation, then the additional suffering is a result of this lack and of the need to strive in order to be able to survive. If someone has got a solid financial foundation, then he has to strive to take care that he remains in this situation. In addition, this person might be suffering out of boredom, because he has got everything he needs and there is no need to struggle for his survival. In any case, the human condition is wretched, and the lives of human beings have to be full of pain, suffering, and dissatisfaction.

What can be done in order to deal with this situation and to live a good life? Schopenhauer's suggestion is that one ought to live ascetically, because in this way one can achieve a long term liberation of the will, quieten ones individual will and reach salvation. If one is not able to or willing to act thus, one can at least quieten ones will for a short period of time by being in a state of aesthetic contemplation or free and will less knowing. (Deu, 1, 246, W1, § 41). This state can be reached by means of various types of art, which can bring about one of two aesthetic states, e.g. experiencing beauty or the sublime. However, not all types of art have the same potential for enabling the recipient of a work of art to reach the state of aesthetic contemplation. Schopenhauer presents a hierarchy of the arts based upon the criterion of the potential to realise the aesthetic state in the art recipients. According to him, music which was composed by a genius affects recipients strongly, fast, necessarily, and infallibly, and thereby it can bring about the quietening of the will for a short time. (Deu, 1, 302-303, W1, § 52) The process of the quietening of the will can also be referred to as a type of ecstasy, salvation, or

dissolution of the ego or of ones individuality. These are several ways of talking about the same experience, and there are many more ways of trying to find words for the same type of experience. Music in general is supposed to be the best type of art for taking recipients into such a state – a state which I refer to as first order *Empfindung*. However, this is not the only *Empfindung* one can have by listening to music.

Depending on the individual piece of music -I try to avoid the concept musical work, as it has many connotations as *terminus technicus* (Goehr 1992)-, recipients can also experience second order *Empfindungen* which are based upon emotions, according to Schopenhauer. Consequently, he holds a theory of affects concerning music like many philosophers of music or musicologists before him in the history of musical aesthetics, e.g. Zarlino or Kircher (Sorgner/Fuerbeth 2003). In contrast to the other thinkers, Schopenhauer does not claim that a musical piece can bring about a specific emotion, but rather that it can bring about an abstract emotion which I would refer to as second order *Empfindung*. Actually, I think that Schopenhauer was a great observer concerning the possible effects music can have upon recipients, even though his explanations for the phenomena are implausible.

What are these abstract emotions which music is supposed to be able to bring about in the recipients? According to Schopenhauer, the central element of music is the melody, as it is supposed to already contain harmony and rhythm. In contrast to Schopenhauer, Plato held that rhythm, melody and harmony are three separate, but all equally fundamental elements of music. (Sier 2010) Besides, Plato's notion of harmony is a completely different from Schopenhauer's. Even if this was not the case, I wish to stress that Schopenhauer holds a very peculiar view concerning music by claiming that the melody is the central element of music. Yet, it is not a prejudice which I will discuss further in this context. The melody is supposed to start from the basic note to which it is also supposed to return at the end of a piece. In

between, rhythm and harmony fell out with one another, and they only come back together at the end of a piece. Depending on the division or separation of harmony and rhythm, various types of abstract emotions can come about. If the piece is composed in a major key, it will transmit a joyful emotion, and if it is written in a minor key, it is supposed to transmit a rather sad emotion, according to Schopenhauer.

Schopenhauer's remarks in the final context clearly seem to me to be implausible. I think that it is not necessary that one has to regard Mozart's famous G minor symphony (KV 183) as one which brings about sadness. A philosopher who tries to establish that there is a necessary connection between a phrase, a work of art or a key and the emotional state within the recipients seems to me to be holding an implausible position. There might be tendencies concerning how a certain piece of art is received at a certain time, but no general and universally valid connection. We are all embedded within our own personal lives with our own intellectual and emotional background and hence have different ways of approaching individual works of art. However, as there is a certain spirit of our time, a certain *Zeitgeist*, a philosopher can describe tendencies of how a work of art can be perceived by many people today. This is also what I am aiming for within this talk, when I describe the reception of musical pieces from a posthumanist standpoint.

What does have some plausibility in Schopenhauer's aesthetics is that he claims that abstract emotions can be experienced by recipients of instrumental music. Even though he does not specify that he is just referring to instrumental music, this can be inferred from what he holds concerning the role of language within his philosophy. In addition, it is not very probable that the same type of emotions are being experienced by all recipients, but given the vast amount of thinkers and scientists who claim that there is a specific connection between music and the emotions which gets further support from my own personal experiences, it seems to me as

plausible to hold that music can bring about emotions. Because it is instrumental music without a literary background which we are talking about here, there does not seem to be a basis for specifying the emotions. This has been realised by Plato already. He employs this insight for rejecting music, which merely stirs up and plays around with ones emotions, as legitimate within his ideal state. However, he was more agreeable towards music with a specific content which corresponds to his ideal of the good and which can be specified by means of words, whereby the music is connected to words and the words are the dominant aspect. *Prima la parola, dopo la musica*. Plato takes a clear stand – so does Schopenhauer but he would turn the phrase around and add that it would be best, if there were no words connected to musical pieces. Only by means of words one can specify the individual emotions which can get stirred up through instrumental music. Consequently, in Schopenhauer's case the emotions have to remain abstract. They have to remain abstract for another reason, too, which is that music is most effective in bringing about the aesthetic state in the recipient whereby they can enter the will itself.

The state of aesthetic contemplation according to Schopenhauer has to get specified in much more detail. So far, we can see that music is the best type of art for helping the recipient to enter the aesthetic state, and that this state is also connected to the short time quietening of the will. The quietening of the will implies that the individual leaves the sensual world and enters the will in itself which lies outside of time and space.

However, how does Schopenhauer specify the state of aesthetic contemplation? What does he mean when he talks about the quietening of the will? I will put forward three interpretations of this state and argue for the final one.

According to Schopenhauer, the quietening of the will is related to the state in which the free will overcomes itself. (Deu, 1, 336, W1, § 54) Volker Gerhardt and Margritta Dobrileit Helmich put forward an interpretation which categorises Schopenhauer as a philosopher who is putting forward an aesthetics of autonomy. Günter Zöllner und Barbara Neymeyr defend an ontological interpretation of the state of aesthetic contemplation. I will show that a metaphysical-ethical reading of the state is the most plausible one.

## 2.1 Aesthetic Contemplation and the Aesthetics of Autonomy

It is central for this interpretation that Schopenhauer claims that the quietening of the will brings about an overcoming of the world and together with that an overcoming of the complete nature of the world (Deu, 1, 275, W1, § 48). Gerhardt reads this type of quietening as a Kantian type of disinterestedness. According to Kant aesthetic contemplation of art implies disinterested pleasure and free play of the faculties. Gerhardt assumes that the notion of the will is always connected to an interest. (Gerhardt 1976, column 492) And Schopenhauer's quietening of the will leads to disinterestedness which is his reason for writing that Schopenhauer's concept of the notion interest in the context of the arts has to be understood as Kant understood the term. A similar reading was proposed by Dobrileit-Helmich who stresses: (My own translation) "that Kant's notion of disinterestedness can get compared to Schopenhauer's ex negativo description of the disinterestedness of willessness". (Dobrileit-Helmich 1983, 127)

I think that it is dubitable that disinterested pleasure and the free self overcoming of the will can get identified, as Kant refers to an intellectual emotion, a free play of the faculties, which in his case is independent of metaphysical and moral knowledge. Schopenhauer's position clearly has both metaphysical as well as ethical implications. It is implausible that

Schopenhauer presents an aesthetics of autonomy, as the successful contemplation of art goes along with knowledge about the world in his case. Hence, it is clear that this interpretation has to be rejected. It cannot be the effect of a work of art understood from the perspective of an aesthetics of autonomy that it transfers knowledge or that it has an ethical effect (e.g. salvation), as both aspects contradict the concept of autonomy. Both aspects, however, can be found in Schopenhauer's philosophy of art. In addition, the contemplating something in Schopenhauer's writings is being described as pure, willless, painless, timeless subject of knowledge (Deu, 1, 210-211, W1, § 34). Pothast realised correctly that Kant's disinterested pleasure "is very different from the extinction of the personal will" in Schopenhauer's philosophy. (Pothast 1982, 95) Kant's disinterested pleasure does not imply that the contemplating person vanishes as individual, but merely that the sensual interest in the object is no longer given.

## 2.2 Aesthetic Contemplation and Ontology

Zoeller clearly summarises the ontological interpretation of the state of contemplation: According to Schopenhauer the quietening of the will implies a "complete quietening of the individual as well as the cosmic will". (Zoeller 2008, 362) His interpretation gets support from a phrase by Schopenhauer quoted some lines earlier which says that the quietening of the will includes the overcoming of the will and the complete nature of the world (Deu, 1, 275, W1, § 48).

Even though Neymeyr initially seems to defend that it is just the individual will which can get overcome during the contemplation of a work of art, she finally stresses the need to go beyond this interpretation as the best art is supposed to reveal human nature which includes the process of self overcoming by means of the big quietening event. (Neymeyr 1996, 413)

Given the statements of these two distinguished Schopenhauer scholars, we can conclude that both took seriously Schopenhauer's remark that both the individual will as well as the nature of the world can get overcome in an ontological sense. According to Schopenhauer the nature of the world is the will itself which is outside of time and space but represents the driving force behind all decisions of individual wills, and thus brings it about that there is change in the world. If the nature of the world overcomes itself from the perspective of an objective observer, then it would follow that that the will itself would no longer bring it about that the individual wills act and realise change in the world. Hence the process of self-overcoming of the will itself would have to lead to a standstill in the apparent world. As this is not the case, Schopenhauer cannot have understood the total overcoming of the nature of the world in an ontological sense.

The possibility of misinterpreting him in this respect is given due to the unclear use the notion "will" in Schopenhauer's writings. He often employs the term without any further qualification. In addition his attempt to infer the will itself from the individual will is one of the most problematic steps within his philosophy which Nietzsche was right to criticise and he was also right to correct this aspect within his own philosophy. Given the deficiencies of the interpretations so far, I suggest the following reading of the concept.

### 2.3 Aesthetic Contemplation, Ethics and Metaphysics

In contrast to the previous interpretation I hold that the quietening of the will implies the dissolution of the individual will, but the will itself overcomes itself only from the perspective of the individual as pure subject but not from the perspective of an objective point of view. What does this mean? According to Schopenhauer each human being possesses an intelligible unchangeable character as a foundation of the individual will. During the state of aesthetic



contemplation the contemplator overcomes the individual will from which follows that the contemplating subject slowly liberates itself from the individual content of his character and thus starts contemplating the world as a pure subject of knowing. This process implies that the pure subject of knowing gets closer to the object of knowing, e.g. the nature of the world. The individual will and the will itself are no longer two separate points within a monistic will ontology but the individual will, i.e. the intelligible character, steadily depersonalises itself, gets nearer the nature of the world and becomes one with the will itself. As the pure subject of knowing contemplates the Platonic forms or in the case of music becomes one with the will itself, Schopenhauer is able to talk about the overcoming of the complete nature of the world, because from the perspective of the pure subject of knowing the will itself overcomes itself. In this case the unity between the pure subject and the will itself is given. This is the state Schopenhauer refers to as the quietening of the will or of the overcoming of the individual will and the will itself.

According to this interpretation, the quietening of the will implies the dissolution of the individual will, whereby the will itself only gets overcome from the perspective of the individual pure subject.

After having shown that it is in particular music which can bring about the dissolution of individuality according to Schopenhauer, I will discuss how this state can be interpreted from a posthumanist perspective. Posthumanism is an important contemporary cultural movement. Before, I can do this, I will have to list some basic elements of posthumanism, and state reasons why I regard it as important.

### 3 Posthumanism

I regard posthumanism as a strong cultural movement occurring currently in enlightened Western countries. It is an outgrowth of postmodernism, because it seems to combine a variety of postmodern perspectivism with a type of naturalism or rather an affirmation of this-worldliness. It definitely includes the rejection of the special status of human beings in the sense that human beings are no longer regarded as being categorically different from other natural beings, but that we differ from them merely by degree. Humanism on the other hand affirms this special status of human beings. Ihab Hassan has recognized this development already in 1977 and described it with the term posthumanism:

„We need to understand that five hundred years of humanism may be coming to an end, as humanism transforms itself into something that we must helplessly call posthumanism“ (Hassan 1977, 843).

According to him, humanism, which he connects with the attribution of a special status to human beings, began during the Renaissance and has ended recently with the dissolution of that special status. A significant step towards the initialisation of this movement was Darwin's realisation that human beings like other natural beings are integrated in the natural process of evolution. When Freud discovered that our consciousness or our Ego is not the master within his own building but that we are significantly governed by our instincts and the Id, was another significant step towards posthumanism. Within the Christian tradition, consciousness has been identified mostly with higher and divine realms which are supposed to represent the real nature of human beings.

posthuman of posthumanism must not be identified with the posthuman of transhumanism, e.g. it does not refer to enhanced and further developed specimen of human beings in the process of evolution. The posthuman in posthumanism represents a new description of what

human beings are. Posthumans are not categorically different from other natural beings, hence, the relevance of Darwin. (Sorgner 2010b)

Sloterdijk is another thinker who realised that humanism has been transcended and that we have entered the posthuman era which he has already made clear in his infamous speech concerning “Rules for the Human-Zoo”. In contrast to Hassan, he holds that humanism has been dominant in Europe since Stoicism had dominated the Western cultures whereby he also connects humanism with the view that human beings have a special status. Yet, he stresses the link between the special status and reason and having language, too. (Sloterdijk 2001, 304).

However, posthumanism cannot be reduced to a change which has taken place concerning solely one element. Badmington correctly points out in his essay collection with the title “posthumanism”: „What the contributors seem to recognise as they map posthumanism is that the crisis in humanism is happening everywhere“ (Badmington 2000, 9) In particular there seem to be four realms in which seem to be of particular relevance concerning the current state of the development – however, I am also certain that many others fields could be referred to: 1. Relationship between Human Beings and animals; 2. Relationship between Human beings and other human beings; 3. The Integration of Human Beings in Nature in the contemporary arts; 4. The dissolution of the Relationship between nature and culture or hence between mind and body. In addition, one could further refer to the dissolution of the subject – object relationship or the integration of human beings in the natural world, as it is being done by thinkers like Thompson, Rosch or Varela who develop a concept of “The Embodied Mind” (Varela/Thompson/Rosch 1991) and attempt to give an explanation of how mental qualities can come into existence. Thereby, the relationship between both human beings and organic beings gets blurred, as I mentioned already, but also the relationship between human beings and inorganic things. This becomes particularly clear given the successful research which has been done concerning cyborgs. One example is the paralysed man who is able to use his

computer, television set and a robot just by using his thoughts, as it was shown in 2006. (Hochberg 2006, 164–171). This person does not actually have to move his total body to fulfil these acts, but he employs his embodied mind and his capacity to think in order to move the cursor of his computer. Such examples provide reasons for holding that human beings are not substantially different from other beings, but merely differ in degree. Hence it is not an immaterial spirit which makes the body move so that one can turn off ones TV, but it is the embodied mind which can directly interact with the computer. Let me briefly summarise the other four categories which I enumerated:

The altered relationship of human beings and animals is of central relevance to posthumanism. The most famous living bioethicist Peter Singer clearly attacks the special status of human beings as I understand the concept which becomes clear given his concept of speciecism which he presents in his monograph on “Animal Liberation” (Singer 2002, 18). He attacks the attitude of human beings to discriminate against animals just because they do not belong to the human species whereby he analyses parallels with the behaviours of sexists and racists. As an alternative he presents a utilitarian ethics which is based upon a theory of preferences in his work “Practical Ethics” (Singer 2011), Given his criticism it becomes clear that he regards it as inappropriate, to evaluate human beings in a radically different way than other living beings, instead he holds that all living beings ought to be evaluated according the same criteria.

A biological comparison between apes and human beings also provides reasons that there is no categorical difference between these groups but just a minimal gradual difference. Concerning political decisions, the altered attitude concerning other creatures becomes clear given the recent alteration of the law in Switzerland wherein the concept of the dignity of all creatures gets significant recognition which was decided in a people’s vote of 1992 (Baranzke

2002, 24). The rejection of the special status of human beings also becomes clear given the altered legal decisions in several western countries, e.g. concerning legal decisions regarding the question how to treat embryos. At the 5<sup>th</sup> of February 2007 the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) has agreed to allow the creation of human-animal-hybrids for research purposes. This organisation is responsible for legal decisions concerning medical regulations at the beginning of life in Great Britain. In addition, in May 2008 the British parliament allowed that embryos can get created using the genetic make-up of human beings, and the cells of animals. These embryos have to get destroyed, however, after two weeks. It is also forbidden to implant these embryos into a womb.

Concerning the altered relationship among human beings, the relevance of the transhumanist attitude has to be referred to, about which I will not be talking in any further detail now. The same applies to the dissolution of the distinction between the mind and the body or nature and culture which however becomes particularly clear given the recent discoveries in the field of epigenetics.

### 3.1 Posthumanism, Art and Nietzsche

The dissolution of the special status of human beings also becomes obvious in contemporary works of art. Wolfgang Iser, a leading contemporary philosopher of art, also pointed this out. Even though I think that he is right concerning some basic principles, I think that his insight is of particular relevance concerning music.

According to Iser, the transhuman perspective, which is his way of referring to the integration of human beings into nature, is a widespread phenomenon in contemporary works of art. The transhuman perspective has nothing to do with transhumanism or the concept of the transhuman in transhumanism. Yet, there is a strong link between Eastern thinking and

this perspective, according to him, and he does not regard it as a coincidence that artists like Cage, Feldmann, Walter de Maria who present the transhuman perspective in their works, regard themselves as particularly related to Eastern thinking. In the Eastern tradition human beings are not seen in opposition to the world but as participants in this one world which possesses a bigger than human measurement. Hence, it is supposed to be more common for this tradition to have a transhuman perspective than it is for the Western tradition, according to Welsch. (Welsch 2004, 110). He also reveals the importance of the dissolution of the special status of human beings, as there could not be a close connection between human beings and nature, if human beings were radically separated from this world. In his article “Beyond Aesthetization”, he reveals how the transhuman perspective can be perceived within their works of arts. When we listen to the music of John Cage and Morton Feldman, then he describes the experiences connected to this perspective as follows (my own translation): “We experience ourselves as drawn into this one world and regard ourselves as welcome in it, which is not being made according to the measure of human beings.” (Welsch 2004, 108).

In this article he refers to further examples. His list however could get expanded further: One could include Philip Glass, Michael Nyman, Peter Michael Hamel, but also Robert Musil due to his work “Men without Qualities”.

It was Nietzsche who already described the possibility that human beings are not in opposition to this world but are regarded as participants in this one world within his early work “Birth of Tragedy” and connects this transhuman perspective, as Welsch calls it, to Dionysian art which gets created by Dionysian artists. In contrast to Welsch, he does not regard all the arts as equally able of expressing this perspective, but makes clear that it is music in particular which represents best the Dionysian perspective. I agree with Nietzsche in this respect.

The Dionysian artist, primarily the composer of musical tragedies, has access to and becomes one with the original unity and hence reality. Nietzsche identifies the one with the original will, which is a force responsible for the occurrence of all changes which also participates in the nature of all existing things. The artist becomes one with the original unity which is the dynamical, the not-being-one-with-itself, the self-contradictory, the leading driving force, and the self-overcoming force. The original unity is the nature of all things which consists in one type of substance, namely the original will as the permanently effective reason for change. To become one with the original unity means to become one with one's own nature by limiting the external sensual experiences one has. Together with one's sense perceptions, our own self-understanding as a subject vanishes which is the reason for Nietzsche to describe the Dionysian state as a "breaking together of the individual and his becoming one with one's original being" (KSA, GT, 1, chap. 8.). The Dionysian artist uses this state to bring about Dionysian works of art and in particular he produces an image of the original unity as music (KSA, GT, 1, chap. 5.).

By being one with the original unity the composer of musical tragedies becomes more than full and overflows whereby he produces his works. There are many analogies between this process and the process of the creation of the world by means of emanation, according to Plotinus. Of course, in the case of Plotinus, the one is separate from the apparent world whereas in Nietzsche the original unity is part of all appearances. However, it seems as if Nietzsche turns Plotinus' description of the acts of creation up side down or alters it from an other-worldly to a this-worldly description of the act of creation. What used to be done by the one or God, is now being done by philosophers and artists. Given this description of the act of creation, the distinction between a classical and a romantic work of art which is important in his later works becomes clearer. A classical work of art comes about by artists who are so overfull that they simply have to overflow, whereas a romantic work of art has its origin in the

lack or deficiency concerning a trait within the artist who was responsible for the creation of the work.

What is important here, however, is the connection between this-worldliness, music, and the dissolution of the individual which Nietzsche stresses in the Birth of Tragedy. His position corresponds with the first order *Empfindung* of music, if it is interpreted from a posthumanist perspective.

#### 4 Music, Ecstasy and the Dissolution of Individuality in Posthumanism

Let me clarify my understanding of *Empfindungen* a bit further. First order *Empfindungen* are related to type-experiences, but not to token-experiences which again are connected to second order experiences. In our case, the type in question is music. Music might not be the only artistic genre which can bring about this type of *Empfindung*, namely the dissolution of individuality.

Type-experiences are experiences you have whenever you get in contact with a specific type of an artistic discipline or genre which of course is always connected to an individual manifestation. Token-experiences are experiences you have solely whenever you get in contact with a specific individual work of any artistic discipline. Hence, any perception of an individual work of art includes both type- as well as token-experiences.

A building made out of marble like the Archaic temple of Hera in Paestum celebrates the unchanging reality of the Goddess Hera. On the one hand, you have the first order type *Empfindung* of Architecture as formed unchanging space which in this case gets further support, as the temple was build out of marble and has been standing there for about 2540 years. So the first order *Empfindung* would be that of being confronted with an enormous form of structured space which makes you feel small and insignificant. I tend to describe this



Empfindung as one of the mathematical sublime. On the other hand, it also represents Hera the goddess of marriage and a secure home. Let us say, you hate marriage, as all the women you were involved with betrayed you, and you do not regard marriage as a worthwhile institution. Hence, your second order token Empfindung which you might only have after you have reflected upon the content of the temple might be one of disgust. In that case, you clearly would have mixed Empfindungen, you feel insignificant and small whereby the object you experience as sublime is also one you are disgusted by. Thereby your Empfindungen might even get altered and they might bring about the state of aggression concerning your being confronted with this temple.

Empfindungen are neither pure perceptions nor emotions. They are related to you perceiving the object which brings about a corresponding emotional state. However, the emotional state is hardly ever connected to one single emotion, but is usually mixed. The state you are in gets altered again by thinking about the object or by listening to the intuitions which come up in the process of getting confronted with the artistic object. An Empfindung is the result of an interplay of various means of getting access to, judging and reacting to an artistic object. Kant is right, in a way, that the aesthetic state is the result of the interplay between the various faculties. Even though I doubt that there is the faculty of reason which has a categorically separate ontological status. Consequently, I would put it slightly differently by stressing that the interplay of perceptions, intuitions, intellect, and feelings brings about a certain Empfindung. Yet, there is always an overlapping, and an interplay of various mixed Empfindungen which might even bring about other such states.

The contemplation of a work of art includes an interaction between ones own momentary state and that of the object, which always has an affect upon the recipient. First order Empfindungen are related to the reaction to a type of art. Second order Empfindungen depend

solely upon the qualities of an individual work with which the recipient is confronted. Whenever a recipient contemplates a work of art, a process begins which also includes an interaction between first and second order *Empfindungen*.

In the historical section, I showed that according to Schopenhauer music can best bring about the dissolution of the subject or of individuality. I agree with this point of view, and I think that he has given an appropriate phenomenological description of the state which one can enter. However, his explanations of this state seem implausible. According to Schopenhauer, one can liberate oneself from the sensual world and enter the will in itself. I cannot make sense of this explanation. However, I can relate to many premises of posthumanism, e.g. that human beings are not categorically separate from the natural world but are part of it, and differ merely by degree from animals and other natural beings. From a posthumanist perspective the first order *Empfindung* of the dissolution of individuality does not lead us to another realm outside of time and space, but shows us that we are embedded in this world, and that we lead a this-worldly existence.

Before we listen to a specific piece of music we as posthumanists hold that human beings came about by means of natural processes and that the world is best described by a version of naturalism. When we actually listen to a piece of music, this attitude gets further support. The first order *Empfindung* of the dissolution of individuality is particularly strong when we sit behind a conductor in a concert hall, and face a big orchestra. Once they start playing we are embedded in a wall of sound. The music makes our bodies shiver, and moves the various ends of our nerves. It is not the case that we perceive music solely by means of our ears. In particular in such a situation the reception of music is connected with an experience which involves all of our body, and we realise that we belong to this world, that we are closely connected to all things around us by means of the sounds of music. These are the phenomena

which I am referring to when I talk about the *Empfindung* of the dissolution of individuality. By interpreting this phenomenon it supports my pre-understanding that I belong to this world, that there is only this one world and that I am embedded in it with all aspects of my existence. Of course, this type of experience can be stronger or weaker depending on the individual work which gets performed, but music is probably the best type of art which can bring about this first order *Empfindung*. Maybe, dance can have a similar effect. On the other hand, it might also be the case that the necessity to perceive dance by means of our eyes and our ears weakens the impact of music.

Here, I merely wished to state some reasons in favour of the theory that music is the best (but definitely not the only) type of art which brings about the dissolution of individuality, and that this phenomenon which has already been described by philosopher's like Schopenhauer and Plotinus, from a posthumanist perspective would be understood as a realisation of the belonging to this world, and would enable the recipient of music to experience the embeddedness in this world. Nietzsche's interpretation of music actually bears many similarities to the reading I put forward here which I explained elsewhere in more detail (Sorgner 2006).

## 5 Conclusion

According to philosophers like Plotinus, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche music can best bring about the dissolution of the individual or ecstasy in recipients which I regard as a plausible estimation. What I tried to show was that their phenomenological descriptions are appropriate and correct. However, the explanations given by Plotinus and Schopenhauer refer to entities, e.g. the will itself or the one, whose existence seems rather implausible from my perspective which I classify as a posthumanist one. The experience of the dissolution of ecstasy, which is the first order *Empfindung* related to music, would get interpreted as the realisation of the

intimate connection between human beings and the rest of the world, and the embeddedness of human beings in the world from a posthumanist perspective. Hence, I can also infer that given that this is an appropriate description of the state of contemplation, it represents a reason for holding that music can bring about more than pain and pleasure in the recipients. In this case it also manages to bring about the realisation in the recipient that he as a complete being belongs to this one world, and is not categorically distant from it. Nietzsche's philosophy of music in contrast to that of the other philosophers mentioned seems to me to affirm the same type of position.

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#### Siglen der einzelnen Werke

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(KSA 1, 753-792);
- PW Ueber das Pathos der Wahrheit (KSA 1, 755-760);
- GZA Gedanken über die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten  
(KSA 1, 761-763);
- GS Der griechische Staat (KSA 1, 764-777);
- VSPC Das Verhältnis der Schopenhauerschen Philosophie zu  
einer deutschen Cultur (KSA 1, 778-782);
- HW Homer's Wettkampf (KSA 1, 783-792);
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- EH Ecce homo (KSA 6, 255-374);
- FW Die fröhliche Wissenschaft (KSA 3, 343-651);
- GD Götzen-Dämmerung (KSA 6, 55-161);

- GG Die Geburt des tragischen Gedankens (KSA 1, 579-599);
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- GMD Das griechische Musikdrama (KSA 1, 515-532);
- GT Die Geburt der Tragödie (KSA 1, 9-156);
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- IM Idyllen aus Messina (KSA 3, 333-342);
- JGB Jenseits von Gut und Böse (KSA 5, 9-243);
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- NF Nachgelassene Fragmente (KSA 7-13)
- MD Mahnruf an die Deutschen (KSA 1, 891-897);
- NH Ein Neujahrswort an den Herausgeber der Wochenschrift Im neuen Reich (KSA 1, 793-797);
- NW Nietzsche contra Wagner (KSA 6, 413-445);
- PHG Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen (KSA 1, 799-872);
- SE Schopenhauer als Erzieher (Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen 3) (KSA 1, 334-427);
- SGT Sokrates und die griechische Tragödie (KSA 1, 601-640);
- ST Sokrates und die Tragödie (KSA 1, 533-549);
- VM Vermischte Meinungen und Sprüche (KSA 2, 379-



534);

WA Der Fall Wagner (KSA 6, 9-53);

WB Richard Wagner in Bayreuth (Unzeitgemäße  
Betrachtungen 4) (KSA 1, 429-510);

WL Über Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne  
(KSA 1, 873-890);

WS Der Wanderer und sein Schatten (KSA 2, 535-704);

WzM Wille zur Macht (tlw. in: KSA, NF, 7-13);

Falls nicht in der KSA vorhanden, werden die  
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