

On the Phenomenology of Music and Word in *The Birth of Tragedy*

or

Nietzsche and Beethoven

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...that which we call “invention” (in metrics, for example) is always a self-imposed fetter of this kind. “Dancing in chains,” to make things difficult for oneself but then cover it over with the illusion of ease and facility — that is the artifice they want to demonstrate for us

— Nietzsche, *The Wanderer and his Shadow*

Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy* should be read as a phenomenological undertaking including his ‘reduction’ of traditional scholarly assumptions and theories regarding the history of the tragic work of art as well as the history and function of the tragic chorus as a musically poetic performance that can only be understood, so Nietzsche was at some pains to argue, in the full context — political and social and religious — of the life-world of Greek antiquity. Without such an encompassing focus it is difficult to understand Nietzsche’s counter-arguments regarding Aristotle’s theory of tragedy as also concerning Schlegel on the chorus as well as the critical “working” of the work of tragic art in the political/a-political¹ and socio-cultural context involving the entirety of the Athenian demos. And there is still more.

Nietzsche’s phenomenological philology drove his discoveries regarding the stress ictus (or absence thereof)² in his studies of the prosody of ancient Greek, including his studies of rhythm and meter, using as was commonly conventional, specifically musical notation for the sake of the same. This was no mere metaphor and the conclusion of his *The Birth of Tragedy*, as we shall see, invokes the theoretical notion of musical dissonance with explicit reference to Beethoven. I further contend that it matters here that

Nietzsche himself studied musical composition technique (on his own) and that he played the piano so well that he impressed everyone who heard him, not excluding Wagner.³

I am using the word phenomenology not just because Nietzsche, in addition to speaking of phenomenalism and phenomenality, used the term phenomenology as such in his late notes, as he does in connection with consciousness and the body⁴ — Nietzsche thus speaks of an “inner and outer phenomenology,” and all research, not only of the so-called “digital” kind, that is based on word frequency analysis is and can only be wrongheaded when it comes to Nietzsche⁵ — but and much rather because it describes his method.⁶ Thus Nietzsche seeks to turn in the case of his science of philology to “language use,” as he says, i.e., to the texts themselves which is his case to the words themselves, qua written and as spoken or sung. Inasmuch as Greek is also one of the first truly phonetic alphabets, and this is its revolutionary character, this also means that from the beginning Nietzsche seeks to return to the sounds themselves.

Hence when speaking of phenomenology here it is important to note that phenomenology is not a method somehow been patented by Husserl although he takes it the furthest and all phenomenological contributions today and to be sure are shaped by his work. Nietzsche’s phenomenology cannot and does not stand in this lineage but both Husserl and Nietzsche shared the same 19th century confluence, including scientific antecedents and historically philosophical background.⁷ Thus and in addition to his first book, Nietzsche’s genetic reflections in his *Untimely Meditations* (on religion, history, education, culture and politics, and including, his own contemporary musical cultural world) and *Human, All too Human*, are similarly phenomenological in scope and approach, in addition to his critical reflections on logic, perception, and indeed science in *The Gay Science* and *Beyond Good and Evil* and his later work, just to the extent that Nietzsche may justifiably claim that he is the “first” to raise the question of science as such — and here we should think of Heidegger as well as Husserl — of science as “question-worthy.”⁸

But key to this question, and key to Nietzsche’s interpretive phenomenological approach, is his formation as a classical philologist. Indeed, even contemporary trends in Nietzsche scholarship which seem to have moved on from source scholarship to an attention to so-called “Nietzsche philology” (which tends only to mean an established

way of parsing Nietzsche, that is: according to editorial fiat) routinely overlooks Nietzsche's classical discoveries.⁹ Part of the problem here has been the sheer difficulty of his studies of poetic metrics and rhythm and part of the problem are the further challenges of the reflexive radicality of Nietzsche's critical orientation which last is evident already in his inaugural lecture on the Homer question.¹⁰ Yet there is no doubt that the most fundamental problem is that "reading" Nietzsche is less and less part of the formation of the average classicist, while, and at the same, a classical formation in Greek (and Latin) tends not to be part of the formation of the average Nietzsche scholar, where in Anglophone scholarship we may add a lack of familiarity with Nietzsche's own German to the list of missing qualities.¹¹

The lack of background — corresponding to what Nietzsche described as a "lack of philology"¹² and which he bemoaned as leading to a confusion of *explication* and *text explicated* (this is the well-known *explanans* and *explanandum*) which he took precisely to his epistemological analysis of aesthetic or sense causality, which he discusses in his notes as the "phenomenalism" of the inner world (a published version of this appears in *Twilight of the Idols*), contending that it is this lack that leads to any number of internal and external illusions¹³ — remains problematic for both classical philologists and Nietzsche scholars, including those of both literary and philosophical formations.¹⁴

Thus it is telling that in the context of the need to distinguish between mystery religions and the classical ideal of the Olympian gods, Francis MacDonald Cornford (1874-1943) already in 1912 was able to characterize Nietzsche's first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, as "a work of profound imaginative insight, which left the scholarship of a generation toiling in the rear."¹⁵ To this day, those many scholars who do quote Cornford disattend to the significance of Cornford's context, even in those cases where it is mentioned (and usually it is not). The reason is more complicated than Nietzsche alone and scholars (as in the case of Jay Kennedy's failure to cite Ernst McClain and John Brenner and others in the case of Plato and music and number)¹⁶ continue to have marked anxieties when it comes to coming to terms with the mystery religions themselves, as some of the very different debates around the Derveni and other papyri makes plain.¹⁷ Cornford's early insight was thus both accurate and rare. At the time, few scholars appreciated what Nietzsche had achieved then and the reason for my contextualizing

reference here to ancient music, mathematics, and ancient mystery cults is that even fewer classicists in our own day would understand what Cornford had had in mind in his original text.¹⁸ For Cornford's point was made in the hermeneutic and historical context of the need to distinguish between ancient mystery religions and those religions today, including what we take to be esoteric religions, as we might attempt to update Cornford's own distinction, *ceteris paribus*, and in the context of philosophy as a 'way of life' as Pierre Hadot has characterized it and in a literary context that requires a reference to Pierre Courcelle who deployed what Nietzsche called philology. It makes things more complicated and not less obscure to note that philosophy as a way of life included or better said was all about a meditation on death as Hadot emphasized via Montaigne (and not less via Lucian)¹⁹ — and hence the mystery and more conventional notion of the Olympian gods, where it matters for us that Nietzsche mentions Montaigne, Lucian and both Titans and Olympians in addition to invoking the mystery cults as such which is indeed the more esoteric point of Nietzsche's conclusion to *The Birth of Tragedy*.

As I argue elsewhere,²⁰ Nietzsche's most routinely "scientific" or scholarly discovery concerned the prosody or musical intonation of ancient Greek and it was this discovery that served as the basis for his emphasis on the importance of "music" in *The Birth of Tragedy*. But and not unlike the parenthetical and contextualizing point added above with respect to stichometry and contemporary scholarship's habit of silencing alternate voices (that is to say its ignorance of or its inadvertence to, no matter whether calculated or accidental) and the bulk of past scholarship, by pointing out that this was Nietzsche's discovery I am hardly claiming that everyone acknowledges this today. To the contrary, Nietzsche's discoveries are not refused (much less refuted) than they are (have been and continue to be) 'silenced' in this traditional fashion. Nietzsche is rarely mentioned in classics scholarship and when he is he tends to be relegated to cliché. This denigration within the guild began with his first book and it has continued. Nicole Loraux would be one of the rare classicists whose work engages Nietzsche at all on the topic of tragedy (others include Marcel Detienne, Hugh Lloyd Jones, Jean-Pierre Vernant, etc.) — while most other studies mention him in passing or not at all. In the relevant case here of rhythm and metrics and prosody, Nietzsche's discoveries are simply appropriated, often even without reference or citation.²¹ Nor, on another point, is it the case that Nietzsche's

then-contemporaries ‘heard’ what Nietzsche said either in his inaugural lecture with all of its relevance for the parallels between the stylistic methods of philological discovery and those of natural scientific discovery²² or else in his first book — no more indeed than today, especially perhaps in the case of his colleagues, that is in the case of today’s classics scholars. Thus we find his Zarathustra seemingly compelled to cry out in frustration: “They do not understand me; I am not the mouth for these ears. Must one smash their ears before they learn to listen with their eyes?”²³

In Nietzsche’s own times, and with reference to his first book, I have argued that Nietzsche found it necessary to reprise its claims in his later *The Gay Science*. There he repeats his initial critique of Aristotle’s telic theory of tragic catharsis, clarifying that what was at stake in antiquity was never an “attempt to overwhelm the spectator with emotion.” (GS, §80)²⁴ Much rather, Nietzsche argued, the Athenians

went to the theater *in order to hear beautiful speeches*. And beautiful speeches were what concerned Sophocles: pardon this heresy! (GS, §80)

The problem with heretical arguments contra standing authorities is that those who hear such challenges fall right back to conventional idolatries. In this case, that is the ongoing valorization of Aristotle, a whiggish-inspired or presentist return to the authority of the the author of the *Poetics* that need not be made on the basis of argument as it is grounded in conventional teaching. And so it continues.

By contrast, Nietzsche sought to articulate the achievement of Greek poetics contra Aristotle but no less contra the modern ideal of “freedom” of expression and this is the point of the text already quoted as epigraph above:

With every Greek artist, poet and writer one has to ask what is the new constraint he has imposed upon himself and through which he charms his contemporaries (so that he finds imitators)? For that which we call “invention” (in metrics, for example) is always a self-imposed fetter of this kind. “Dancing in chains,” to make things difficult for oneself yet then to spread over it the illusion of ease and facility — that is the artifice they want to demonstrate for us. (*The Wanderer and his Shadow*, §140)²⁵

This point is and should be striking. Constraints? Metrics? Chains? How so? The answer of course has everything to with antiquity *and* its distance from our own sensibilities, a point of alien difference to us — this is the real heart of what he called the pathos of distance — that Nietzsche never tired of emphasizing.

But and in addition, and this really makes it hard for many of us to read him, Nietzsche nearly always *mixes* his concerns. Hence he uses the metaphor of musical dissonance to speak of the themes of tragedy as so many variants on “that which is ugly and disharmonic” as “part of an artistic game” in order to claim that both “music and tragic myth ... transfigure a region in whose joyous chords dissonance as well as the terrible image of the world fade away charmingly.” (BT §24), We shall come back to this point in the concluding section on the formative or creative problem of what Nietzsche calle the “becoming-human of dissonance.”

In this complex constellation, *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music* outlines a phenomenological hermeneutics of Greek tragedy as music, heard through Hölderlin’s beautifully provocative reflections in his little distich, *Sophokles* — “Viele versuchten umsonst das Freudigste freudig zu sagen / Hier spricht endlich es mir, hier in der Trauer sich aus.” — and understanding the tragic art form as a sounding expression of “the spirit of music.” As Nietzsche articulates this spirit he emphasizes Beethoven’s music at the start²⁶ and his closing image is that of a musical play with the “thorn of displeasure” [*Stachel der Unlust*], a composer’s conventionality Nietzsche deploys to illuminate the ancient art of “transfiguring illusion” [*Verklärungsschein*]. (BT §24)

Music and Phenomenology: On Nietzsche’s Hermeneutico-Phenomenological Investigations

What is intriguing, if to date unexplored, is that phenomenology is thoroughly if virtually *unconsciously* steeped in music.²⁷ Thus Husserl draws for his famous analysis of intentional consciousness of what is to come and what has been (*protention* and *retention*) on the consciousness of the past and future contours of a song in the midst of singing it: this is Augustine’s classic image in his reflections on time in Book XI of his *Confessions*, as we also know that music is the art of time.²⁸ In this same locus, Augustine offers the kind of illustrations, from measure and quantity of the sound or the note that we also see in Nietzsche’s early studies of “Greek Rhythm” as well as his “Rhythmic Investigations,” and perhaps especially, certainly most strikingly, his “On the Theory of Quantitative Rhythm.”²⁹

Fig. 1A
Liège,
Musicae,

Jacques de
Speculum
1330.

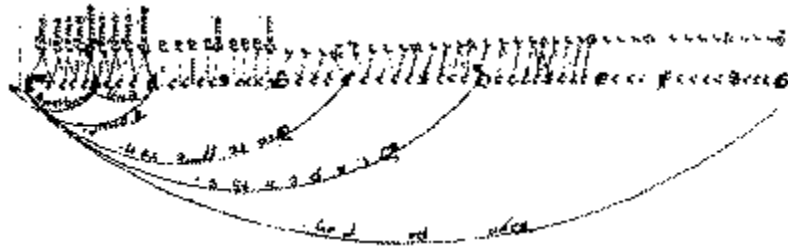
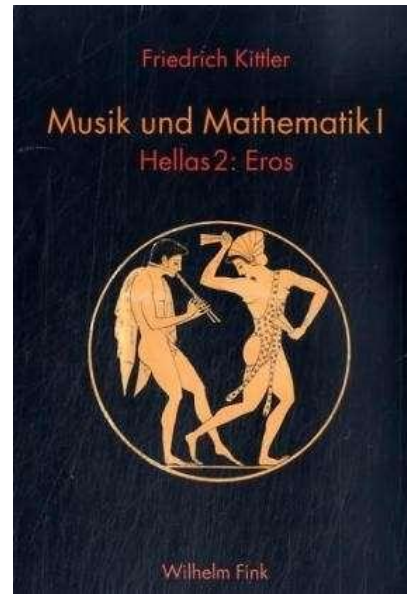
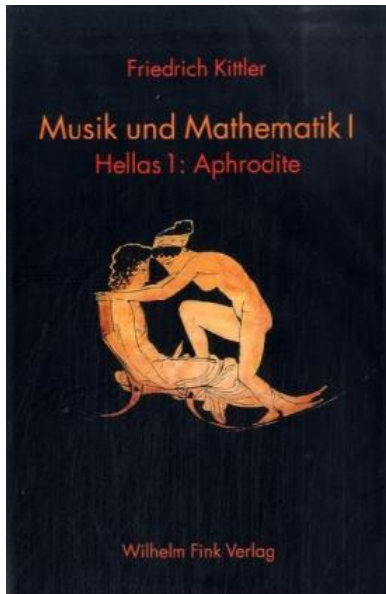


Fig. 1B. Jacques de Liège, *Speculum Musicae*, 1330.

It is the spirit of this same *ens numeratum*, with all its complexities for the tradition of rhythmic notion,³⁷ that also inspires Nietzsche's articulation of quantitative rhythm and more recently, if very distinctly otherwise engaged, Friedrich Kittler's more Helmholtzian studies of music and mathematics.³⁸ Today's media theorists in the efforts to get to a point they recognize — as Nietzsche would say: in their enthusiasm for what they “already” know — emphasize Kittler's initial reference to McLuhan's exultant advertisement of his own discovery (or rediscovery of media beyond Harold Innis, beyond Havelock's rearticulation of the role of oral and text culture in the discoveries of Milman Parry and Albert Lord) and the more sophisticated among them turn to Sloterdijk and others to highlight the relevance Kittler's closing reference to Turing's legacy.



Figs. 2A and 2B. Kittler, *Music and Mathematics, Hellas I: Aphrodite and 2: Eros*

This eagerness oversprings, as eagerness does, the heart of Kittler's reference: "In the Ephesian Ionic, the dark syllables – short or long, high or low – merge into a harmony all on their own. Heraclitus spoke in hexameters: ἀφ' οὐρα ἀφανὴς φανερῆς κρῶσων. In the Greek alphabet our senses were present..."³⁹

Nietzsche's literally *phenomenological*, which is in this context also to say *hermeneutico-phenomenological* investigations critically drive his explorations of the musical character of ancient Greek,⁴⁰ an exploration concerned with the relations between lyric poetry and ancient musical dance and musical tragic drama, but ultimately and above all, an exploration into the very literal music of the tragic poem itself, which precisely *phenomenological* hermeneutic depends upon Nietzsche's discovery of the musical resonances of ancient Greek.⁴¹ And it is important to note here that where Heidegger offers us a *hermeneutic* phenomenology, as already emphasized, Nietzsche likewise elaborates his own scientific field of classical philology precisely phenomenologically, an adumbration which perforce includes monumental (archaeological) and literary history, language use and style, and all the methodology that we regard today, after Dilthey and especially after Heidegger and Gadamer, as hermeneutics.

For Nietzsche, a hermeneutic — or what he called an interpretive, in particular: a *perspectively* interpretive — phenomenology corresponded in the case of the scholar to the *artistic* role of the science of philology corresponds to neither that of the poetic artist or musical composer but rather the philologist is, qua interpreter, a performer. In this sense, the classical scholar of classics undertakes or consummates a kind of making present or realization [*Vergegenwärtigung*] of the sort one can perform by articulating ancient Greek within the constraints, in Nietzsche's case, in the consideration and fully rigorous, that is to say the "chains" of rhythm and time — out of the spirit of music.

If the philologist cannot hope, as Nietzsche here argues, to match antiquity with the genius of the poet/composer, what the classical philologist can do is to aspire to call upon the ingeniousness of performance or *practice*, attending thereby to the effects of his own practices, without sparing self-criticism thereby. By recalling the music of the tragic art form, Nietzsche was thus able to explain how the tragic poet plays with the "thorn of suffering," as Beethoven plays with dissonance in his setting and indeed in his transfiguration of Schiller's words as tones in the Ninth Symphony, as we shall see that Nietzsche argues.

As already noted, the essential metaphor as Nietzsche deploys it in this classical context was a very musically technical one.⁴² Musical dissonance, so Nietzsche would argue, was the operative metrical key to ancient tragedy just to the extent that sound was the heart of the ancient art form, where the goal was not to elicit, contra Aristotle as Nietzsche also argued, pity and fear but and precisely for the sake of beauty: "speaking well," as we cited this above.

Intoning the tragic poems one, as it were, *plays* — this is Nietzsche's tragic *Vergegenwärtigung* — the past. Hence Nietzsche as early as his inaugural lecture in Basel suggested that the philologist disposes over a very scientific "art" as he spoke of it there, as we also know that he conjoins art and science in his first book and throughout his writings. The classicist, for Nietzsche, is virtuoso, as it were, able to sight read or sing the "music" of antiquity to life and thus "for the first time to let it sound again."⁴³ At this juncture, Nietzsche thereby offers a first articulation of the musical dynamic and radical insights⁴⁴ of his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*.

Nietzsche's resolution of the question of tragedy in his first book was declaredly, literally musical (BT §22), taken with phenomenological reference to philological practice as referring, as it were, to the words themselves, to spoken Greek as it was sung — it was Nietzsche's insight that it could only be sung or musically declaimed as he writes — on the tragic stage of antiquity, but not less with reference to the paradoxical question that for Nietzsche illuminates the problem of both pleasure *and* pain in ancient Greek tragedy. It is this paradoxical question that takes us to dissonance, a paradoxical echo that begins already with the first lines of *The Birth of Tragedy*, where he speaks of the duplicity of the Apollonian and the Dionysian — and most discussions attend to this dyad — which he expresses in terms not only the antagonistic duality of the sexes and the species resolution of the same but also in terms I have been calling phenomenological. This is no mere metaphor as we recall that Nietzsche declares

we shall have won much for the science of aesthetics once we perceive not merely with logical insight [*logische Einsicht*], but with the immediate certainty of intuition [*Anschauung*] that the continuous development of art is bound up with the Apollonian and Dionysian duality: just as procreation depends on the duality of the sexes, involving perpetual strife with only periodically intervening reconciliations. (BT §iii)

Indeed, in this later-written attempt at a self-criticism, Nietzsche emphasizes, that for classical philologists concerned with his theme “nearly everything yet remains to be discovered.” (Ibid.)

Nietzsche's concluding reflections on “What I Owe the Ancients” in his *Ecce Homo* echo his allusion to the phenomenon of “musical dissonance” (BT §24), also recall his description of the “becoming-human” (BT §25) of such dissonance in his conclusion to his first book. The musical “dissonance” of which Nietzsche speaks must be heard in each case, especially as it appears at the conclusion to *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music* (and the full title matters as we see in this context), qua compositional notion in the 19th century context of what Nietzsche called harmony and thus in terms of the play dissonance, which is historically underway to what later after Stravinsky and Schoenberg comes to be called the “emancipation of dissonance.”⁴⁵

Aspects of Nietzsche's musical explication of the tragic as such a “becoming-human of dissonance” may also be heard in the “damaged” resonances of Adorno's reflection as

indeed in Günther Anders' phenomenology⁴⁶ of music in the modern era of not only mechanical reproduction, as Anders' cousin, Walter Benjamin argued with respect to photography and film but also, as Robert Hulot-Kentor is careful to emphasize, technological and today indeed explicitly digital reproduction.⁴⁷ This point requires attention to Heidegger as well as Adorno's insights into the today technological conditions of musical reproduction, not merely qua recording but also performance. And to this extent I have sought elsewhere to consider the role of performance, as Adorno also emphasizes this, articulated in Leonard Cohen's 'broken Hallelujah.'

Drawing on 19th century musical theory to make his own case but also contemporary work in psychoacoustics, David Allison has shown us that Nietzsche drew upon the then-current resources of cognitive science and musical theory, using the findings of psychology to make his case with regard to the phenomenon of Greek music, in word and culture, emphasizing that Nietzsche draws upon his own experience of the Dionysian as an experience of "a dizzying state of transfiguring ecstasy."⁴⁸

As Allison notes, Nietzsche reflects upon his own experience not of music as inchoate or as beyond word but rather in the individually dynamic *experience* of musical dissonance, which same experience, as Allison cites Nietzsche's reflections at the end of his *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music* (and here we see how much we need Nietzsche's initial, first full title, a title he himself would change directly in response to the book's lack of initial readers) as it is music as Nietzsche understood it here that gives us "an idea of what is meant by the justification of the world as an aesthetic phenomenon."⁴⁹ Inasmuch as Nietzsche also specifically invokes the "joyous sensation of dissonance in music" (BT §24) he refers to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Allison reminds us that this is not only a musicological conception — as I have already noted is also on offer in Beethoven's own writings as Nietzsche would have taken his theory of harmony or notes on composition to be Beethoven's⁵⁰ — which writings on composition were influential for both Nietzsche as for Wagner, but and again we need to reflect that Nietzsche also represented his own discovery of the pitch ictus using musical notation as well as references to musical works and illustrations drawing upon musical practices. Indeed, when Nietzsche emphasizes in his notes the incomparable difficulty of imagining the experience of ancient tragedy from the modern viewpoint, by way of a very

phenomenological reflection of the need to consider and bracket the assumptions that go with our understanding of musical works of art in order to conceive the performance of ancient Greek tragedy, in bright daylight, one tragic work of art after another, but above all and precisely where everyone listening would be expected to catch the least false note — and only Father Owen Lee comes close to following Nietzsche's recommendations, without emphasizing these as such, in his valuable *Athena Sings*.⁵¹ Thus in *The Birth of Tragedy* and related lectures, Nietzsche sought to explore the physical and psychological experience: "the 'phenomenon'" as Allison emphasizes it, "of 'musical dissonance,' is the Dionysian state of ecstasy."⁵² For Allison — and as one might argue, for Bataille as well — what is at stake entail or implies a phenomenology of musical experience:

In addressing exactly what the object of music is (i.e., the theoretical model of its subject matter), Nietzsche realizes that its object (*Gegenstand*) is given to us as the content (*Inhalt*) of our own intensely undergone aesthetic experience, our ecstatic states of dispossession. This musically charged state of ecstatic disposition is precisely what he terms "the Dionysian state," and such a state is effectively the entire *field* of experience, shorn of simple subject-object relations.⁵³

Allison connects this focus with Nietzsche's further explorations of the "Dionysian" in terms of "the most natural and extreme states of intoxication and frenzy,"⁵⁴ and emphasizes that modern studies of musical cognition support the phenomenological insights of Nietzsche's "focus on dissonance as 'the primordial phenomenon of Dionysian Art.'"⁵⁵

Music and the "Becoming-Human" of Dissonance in *The Birth of Tragedy*

Nietzsche refers to Beethoven through *The Birth of Tragedy*, at the start but and especially at the end when he refers to a dissonance rendered human, as Beethoven also is associated even in his day with such a humanization, as this "secular humanism" despite its contemporary currency must be set in historical context as the musicologist Ruth A. Solie illustrates.⁵⁶ Tacking between the complex history of mythologizing (and often concomitant demythologizing) has more than its share of pitfalls, but Solie cites Dannreuther's reflection (and there are echoes of this in Adorno, that set Beethoven as the "first to become conscious of the struggles and aims of mankind en masse, and he is

the first musician, if not the first poet, who consciously offers himself as the singer of humanity.”⁵⁷ Like the Wagnerian, Franz Brendel writing in 1854, and F. Laurenein in 1861 and very specifically with respect to the *Missa Solemnis* and God becoming man [*Menschwerdung*], Fritz Volbach makes a similar claim regarding Beethoven in 1905, both using the same terminology Nietzsche uses, as Nietzsche himself also uses Wagner’s favorite term, as Brendel glosses this as the “becoming-human of music,”⁵⁸ setting dissonance in the place of music, as Wagner also varies the notion of a *deus ex* with the ‘becoming-human of mechanism.’ Point for point, Nietzsche engages Wagner and as Solie already suggests, and as my reading here confirms, there would be fairly early in Nietzsche’s works a turn contra Wagner.

In his conclusion to *The Wanderer and his Shadow* Nietzsche tells us that

Beethoven’s music frequently appears as a profoundly felt *reflection* upon the unanticipated re-hearing of a long forgotten piece, an innocence in tones [,*Unschuld in Tönen*‘]: it is music *about* music [*Musik über Musik*]. In the songs of beggars and children in the alleyways, by the monotone modes of wandering Italians, at dances in the village tavern or during the nights of Carnival — there he uncovers his “melodies”: he gathers them together like a bee, in that he grasps here now and there now a sound, a sheer interval. For him, these are transfigured *recollections* of a “better world” not unlike what Plato thought of his Ideas. (HH, *The Wanderer and his Shadow*, §152)

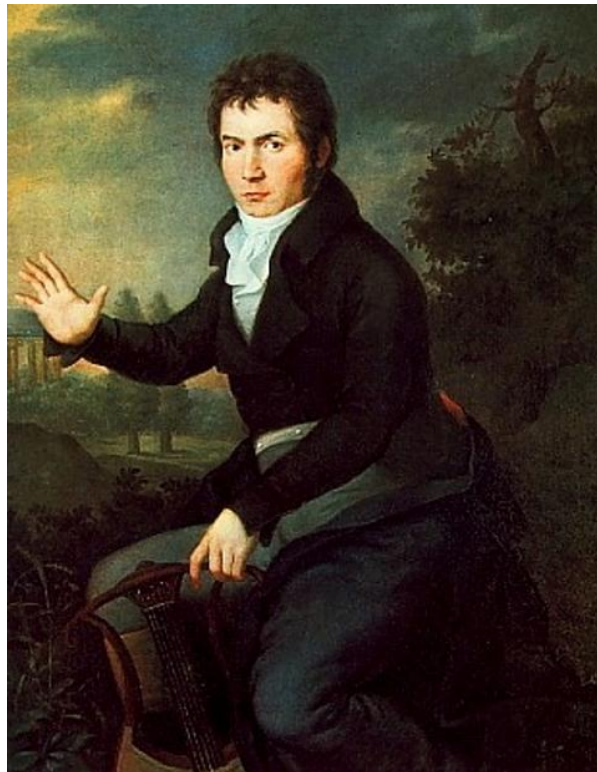
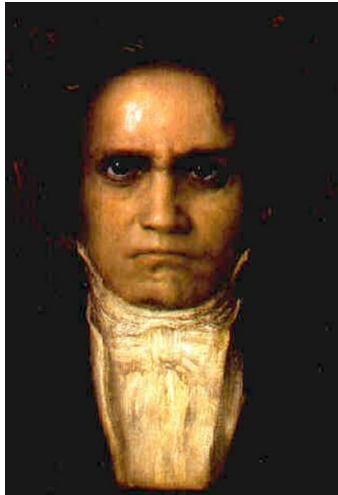


Fig. 3. *Ludwig van Beethoven*Fig. 4. Franz von Stuck, *Ludwig van Beethoven*

On any account, then, especially Nietzsche's (but not less Wagner's own as well as Adorno), Beethoven would be a composer's composer. Where Mozart "looks at life," by significant contrast, as Nietzsche presents this (and Nietzsche's teacher Otto Jahn's book on Mozart would have been an inspiration here, as Jahn documents Beethoven's encounter with Mozart via variation or improvisation on a theme: the musician's test for a musician).⁵⁹

This is a complex constellation but it is even more difficult to unpack just because scholars who know these things have already told that nearly everything having to do with Nietzsche and music is decided, packed up, a done deal. We already "know" that rather than Beethoven, Hadyn, Mozart or Bach, Nietzsche *really* loved Bizet⁶⁰ or else Rossini, and so we are also told, being Wagnerian, Nietzsche could not but remain one until the end.⁶¹ The last point is only made more poignant as we know that when Nietzsche is retrieved after his collapse in Turin he was said to be reading the proofs for *Nietzsche Contra Wagner*.

As in the great Monty Python sketch of philosophical allegiances and fealties, we know that favoring one musician is often expressed in terms of references and

competitive favoring of the one over and above or contra another, which is why the football team metaphor remains appealing for philosophy. Whose team are you on? one seems to ask the philosopher who replies, in language vaguely like a hook-up, which indeed it is, that one “does” Merleau-Ponty or Bergson, or Heidegger (so speaketh the continentals), that one does metaphysics, philosophy of mind, consequentialism, speculative realism (so sayeth analytic style and other mainstream or popular philosophers). Thus the mainstream Nietzscheans vote for Wagner and self-styled outsiders make pitches for the other names Nietzsche also mentioned (Rossini, Bizet). A very few have articulated this favoring in terms of Nietzsche’s own music or the Greeks, and I propose this less-travelled by approach, not least given the staring obviousness of the subtitle to his *Birth of Tragedy: Out of the Spirit of Music* and in the case of Nietzsche’s own music, that would be his own compositions and that too ought to be considered, as has not yet been done as it would need to be in the very specific terms of his understanding of the Greeks and it is in this same classical spirit that I read his insistence we count his Zarathustra as a music, quite specifically: as a symphony.

I have found it necessary to write a fairly complicated book in order to begin to approach this question as a question and that book *The Hallelujah Effect* could also have been called, had I wanted a gnomic rather than a popular title, *Why Beethoven?* And so I ask why Nietzsche writes the kind and range of things he writes — and he actually has a lot to say — about Beethoven? It turns out that Nietzsche’s relation to Beethoven is neither obvious (or predictable, given scholarly presumptions about Nietzsche (cue Wagner on Beethoven) nor is it in fact routinely adverted to in the literature (this was the point of noting that we usually talk about other composers when it comes to Nietzsche).

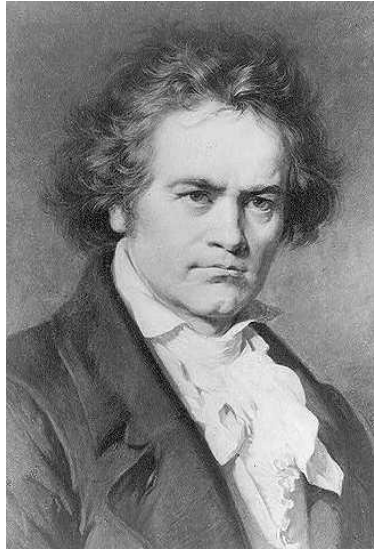


Fig. 5. Ludwig van Beethoven, 1890

Why the discussion of Beethoven's tones and of his compositional methodology at the outset as well as at the end of *The Birth of Tragedy* and again in *Human, All too Human*, and in *The Gay Science* and in Nietzsche's notes? For in addition to Nietzsche's specific invocation of Beethoven in 1872 at the beginning of his first book on tragedy as well as at the end when he speaks of the musical schematics of harmony and dissonance, especially in terms of the "becoming-human-of-dissonance," we hear a similar echo at the close of the second edition of his *The Gay Science*, published with a new fifth section in 1887.⁶²

"We can no longer stand it," they shout at me; "away, away with this raven black music! ... [not the] voices from the grave and the marmot whistles as you have employed so far to regale us in your wilderness, Mr. Hermit and Musician of the Future! No Not such tones! Let us strike up more agreeable, more joyous tones. (GS §383)

Note that I am not here suggesting that no one has ever noticed or written about the significance of such references — and in addition to his teacher Carl Dahlhaus, the musicologist Stephen Hinton has also pointed to Nietzsche's emphasis, if indeed in order to point out the difficulty of parsing Beethoven himself in Hinton's genial essay, "Not Which Tones? The Crux of Beethoven's Ninth."⁶³ As Hinton points out, the problem here is a wholly musical, but that is also to say wholly hermeneutic, in Ian Bent's language, or performative one, and thus it matters to the current discussion.⁶⁴ For Hinton, when it

comes to “the beginning of the baritone recitative ‘O Freunde, nicht diese Töne!’”⁶⁵ everything turns on how the singer sings the word *Töne*. The singer can sing “the pitches literally, as notated,” or else, to continue Hinton’s contrast, the singer can “add an unnotated but implied appoggiatura on the first syllable.”⁶⁶ The alternate option is there as Hinton observes just because it is indicated in the score itself: “in the versions of the recitative presented earlier in the movement by the lower strings, the appoggiatura is written out.”⁶⁷ Hinton emphasizes Beethoven’s irony but he is also interested in what our interpretations tell us about ourselves, and how we hear such possibilities, whether in the case of scholars but and more importantly in the case of composers such as Wagner and of course in the case of performance practice. Thus Hinton cites Nietzsche, duly described along with the whole of substance of *The Birth of Tragedy* as being “otherwise pro-Wagnerian,” as calling attention to these very words — and, as we might say, to the tonality of *Töne* — in Nietzsche’s “On Music and Word.”⁶⁸ Thus Hinton observes that Nietzsche “is the only commentator to have picked up on the ironic significance of Beethoven’s reference to tones, as opposed to words which Wagner found so critical.”⁶⁹

To explore the range of these connections, the penultimate section of this essay reprises Nietzsche’s own research reflections on the relation between music and word, lyric poetry, ancient Greek music, and tragedy.

The Words and Music of Ancient Greek

“The theater of Dionysus is not in the Agora.”

— Nicole Loraux, *The Mourning Voice*⁷⁰

Nietzsche’s first book, *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music* continues to be misconstrued — when it is considered or construed at all — to the extent that Nietzsche scholars are inclined to suppose it singularly irrelevant to Nietzsche’s overall philosophical project. Thus most Nietzsche scholars are sure that Nietzsche drops the theme and moves on to become a moral or political or cultural theorist. For their own part, classicists suppose the book irrelevant with respect to its topic concerning the theme of ancient tragedy and of ancient music.⁷¹

Yet Nietzsche’s first book remains central to his thinking and what is more he never abandons the book’s thesis, particularly with respect to the role of music in his thinking.⁷²

Prior to and along with the publication of his first book, Nietzsche's philological and phenomenological investigations of the spirit of music in antiquity can be seen in his lectures on Greek metric and rhythm offered during the winter semester 1870-1871, at the University of Basel, and including in addition an extended lecture entitled *Rhythmic Investigations*, a lecture entitled *On the Theory of Quantitative Rhythm*.⁷³ At the of 1871, he would conclude his *The Birth of Tragedy*, and his Basel lectures including those on rhythm and meter are introduced with the title: *Towards a History of Greek Tragedy*, and indeed begins with Nietzsche's famous refutation of Aristotle as the generic notion of tragic fault or flaw.⁷⁴ begin with the is some began with his explorations of the *musical* character of the Greek language as spoken/sung, beginning with his reflections on Greek music drama and dance and focusing on rhythm and metric phrasing, which he explores in terms of his study of *arsis* and *thesis*.⁷⁵

Here to illustrate this, I cite a text illustration as it appears in a footnote to an essay of mine incorporating the diagram that appears in both the Musarion edition and the de Gruyter editions of Nietzsche's essay on quantitative rhythm:


¹² So hören wir Nietzsche am Anfang seiner Vorlesung von 1878/79 die Formeln ausrufen: „Wir lesen mit den Augen“, als Kontrast zu der akustischen Richtungsbezogenheit der antiken griechischen Poesie (Griechische Lyriker, KGW II/2, S. 375). Früher spricht Nietzsche von einer wichtigen Praxis (nach Horaz) von Hand und Fuß, „womit man die Taktabschnitte bezeichnet: percussiones „Taktschläge“. Zwei Arten des Taktirens: für das Auge mit der Hand, für das Ohr mit hörbarem Aufschlag von Hand Finger oder Fuß. [...] Das Bezeichnen mit dem Fuße stammt aus der Orchestik: im schweren Takttheil setzte der Tänzer den Fuß nieder“ (Griechische Rhythmik, KGW II/3, S. 102). In diesem Sinne ist der Rhythmus „hier das aus einer Reihe von Takten bestehende Ganze.“ (Ebd., S. 103). Senkung und Hebung sind für die Augen dargestellt in „ποὺς, θέσεις, ἄρσεις. Aus der Orchestik stammend: beim Gehen u. Tanzen zuerst den Fuß in die Höhe, dann nieder , es sind zwei Linien“ (ebd., S. 270).

Fig. 6. Footnote 12 in Babich, “Wort und Musik in der Antiken Tragödie”⁷⁶

This — and this is the heart of what should be count as media “archaeology” as Kittler and others have written about it⁷⁷ along with Ong and Illich among others like the more well known McLuhan and Innis — should be contrasted with Nietzsche's own, handwritten notes:

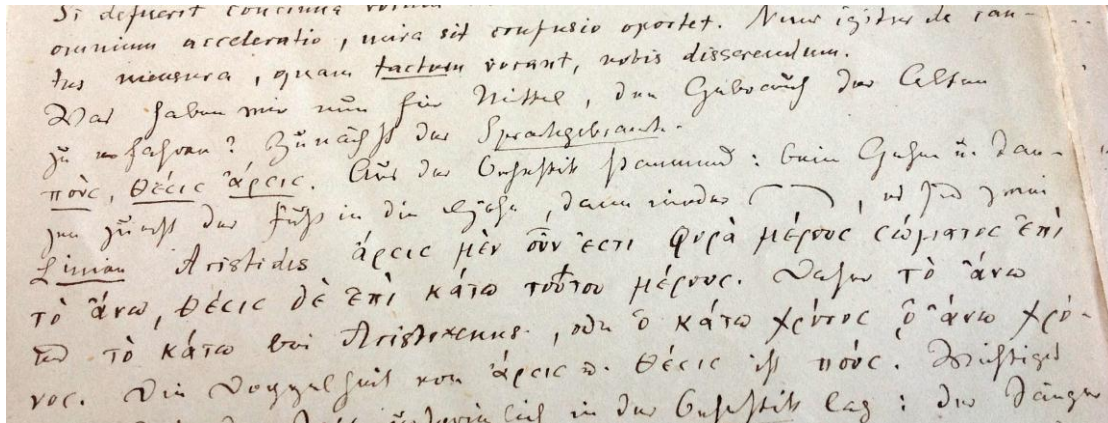


Fig. 7. Nietzsche, *Zur Theorie der quantierenden Rythmik*

Contrast, and this is where, the media archaeology comes in as well as the transformation of words, and thinking, with the same text as printed in the *Nietzsche Werke*:

Was haben wir nun für Mittel, den Gebrauch der Alten zu erfahren? Zunächst der Sprachgebrauch.


ποὺς, θέσις, ἄρσις. Aus der Orchestik stammend: beim Gehen u. Tanzen zuerst den Fuß in die Höhe, dann nieder , es sind zwei Linien Aristides ἄρσις μὲν οὖν ἐστὶ φορὰ μέρους σώματος ἐπὶ τὸ ἄνω, θέσις δὲ ἐπὶ κάτω τούτου μέρους. Daher τὸ ἄνω und τὸ κάτω bei Aristoxenus, oder ὁ κάτω χρόνος, ὁ ἄνω χρόνος. Die Doppelheit von ἄρσις u.

Fig. 8. Arsis / Thesis Illustration in Nietzsche, *Zur Theorie der quantitierenden Rythmik*.¹

It is significant to note Nietzsche's point here as he emphasizes it with his own graphic illustrations and as he repeats these throughout his lecture and not less because Nietzsche himself repeats this very point at length in his early philological reflections and returns to it again and again, especially in his correspondence with Carl Fuchs, a correspondence concerning music and Riemann (and also, because Nietzsche like most of us always did more than one thing at a time, getting some attention, in this case and quite literally, securing possible gigs, for his friend, the composer Heinrich Köselitz, Peter Gast, as Nietzsche called him with a very patent allusion to Mozart).⁷⁸

¹ Nietzsche, KGW II/3, p. 270.

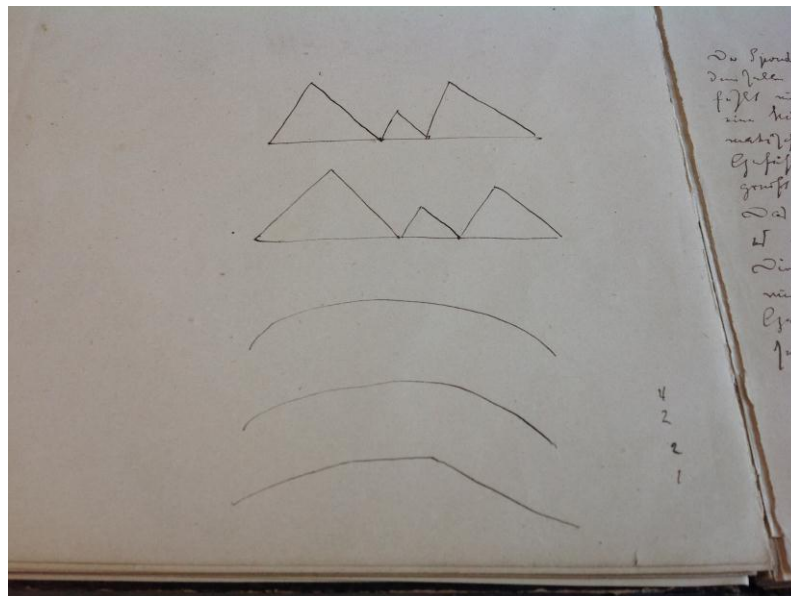


Fig. 9. Nietzsche, *Zur Theorie der quantierenden Rythmik* — Cf. KGW II/3, p. 278.

Nietzsche's philological instructions in these lecture notes begin by reminding his students that we today are inclined to "read with the eyes."⁷⁹ In contrast with this — and we recall that Nietzsche sought to teach us to see with our ears — Nietzsche refers to a praxis or performative technique (dating back to Horace as he tells us) using the hand and the foot, "with which one indicates the tact interval: *percussiones*,"⁸⁰ in other words keeping or "striking time." As Nietzsche explains — and it is to his purpose here to be didactic — there are two distinct styles or "arts" of keeping time: one for visual indication, "for the eye using the hand," and the other "for the ear with an audible tap of the hand, finger or foot."⁸¹

Keeping time with one's feet derives from ancient Greek musical dancing practice (or *Orchestik* as Nietzsche writes, and as Loraux too has emphasized in her own complicated discussion of dance).⁸² This mode of keeping time is suitable for dramatization, as a literal coordination: "in the weightier intervals, the dancer brings his foot down."⁸³ Here, what we call rhythm is "a whole drawn from a series of tacts."⁸⁴ "Raising up and setting down are presented for the eye," and Nietzsche continues to explain that "this is in poetry, in *pous*, *thesis*, *arsis*." As illustrated by the dance, this is for the eye, as it is also

for the ear, this is the *Orchestik*, all “while walking and dancing, the foot at first elevated, than lowered.”⁸⁵

Thus the question here is to distinguish a kind of tact that has nothing to do with stress as we know it (this is related to the medieval *recto tono* which is importantly unstressed and which has everything to do as Ivan Illich reminds us of its function in monastic life practice),⁸⁶ and we note that we usually signal the unstressed by contrast. At issue is the sound of Greek and for Nietzsche this is music.

According to the entry in Liddell and Scott, ἀρσις, *arsis* is the “lifting, removal, raising of foot in beating of time,” and Nietzsche’s point is that this is, as in music, unaccented, by contrast with the stressed meaning that this has in Latin poetry and poetry as we know it, this is, in other words, the stress ictus that Nietzsche emphasizes (“no ictus!” he cries) as absent from the Greek.

Of course as a technical term *thesis* is used in Greek poetry as it is also used musically to signify down beat notes, and James Morgan Thurmond in his book on piano technique, emphasizes this old (obviously old) technique of note grouping, phrasing, pointing out that by avoiding the tendency to *stress* the downbeat one can improve one’s playing.⁸⁷



Fig. 10. Arsis/Thesis: A = Arsis, T = Thesis⁸⁸

Nietzsche’s exploration of *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music* remains elusive given the differences between our own understanding of rhythm and meter and ancient Greek poetic measure but what is clear is that in addition to the *intonation* of Greek, it is also all about a very different *Gesamtkunstwerk* than Wagner had in mind, a term which is associated with Wagner alone and which sensibility some scholars suppose Nietzsche drew from Wagner to begin with. But for Nietzsche what is involved in the tragic musical work of art in addition to the collectivity of the culture as a whole, that is the community on every level, is tragedy work of inevitably music art, inevitable because it was composed in Greek together with dance, drama, and walking — which as Adorno,

utterly offensive to our normative exigence, reminds us in his 1936 reflections on *Jazz* is linguistically

directly related to coitus: the walking rhythm resembles the sexual, and if the new dances have demystified the erotic magic of the old ones they have ... replaced it with the drastic insinuation of the sexual act.⁸⁹

Bracketing (as if that were possible!) our contemporary and traditional antipathy to Adorno's criticism of jazz, it can be noted that the same sexual allusion is also the point of *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*, born that is to say, as Nietzsche emphasizes that the tragic artwork has its origination, its birth out of the folk dance that is the dithyramb and that originally for reasons of fertility, in the spring festivals — and thereby the connection with Dionysus and not less with Apollo.⁹⁰ Overall Nietzsche's reflections on the birth of tragedy draw out the *literal* musicality of the ancient Greek tragic poem as such, a phenomenological philology that was in turn was dependent upon Nietzsche's discovery of the musical resonances of ancient Greek.

Nietzsche argued that the artistic role of his own science, namely of classical philology as science, corresponded neither to that of the artist nor that of the composer but and much rather to the performer, the scholar's work would amount to a virtual making present, a *Vergegenwärtigung* of the kind one can perform by articulating, that is speaking/singing "sight-reading" ancient Greek within the constraints, that is also to say, musically, in the "chains" of rhythm and time.

Nietzsche alludes to Beethoven's music as artist but and this is significant not less theoretically by way of Beethoven's early 19th century *Harmonienlehre* of dissonance and consonance,⁹¹ and Nietzsche also explicitly alludes as we note below, to Beethoven's own "notebooks." Beethoven's reflections on dissonance are of interest to Nietzsche's own writings on dissonance but also on harmony and not less on the differences between Greek musical forms and lyric convention and thus for Nietzsche, the *relationship* between music and words.⁹² What is intriguing and here we see the point Nietzsche sought to emphasize with the Greeks is that the same Beethoven who composes music about music also, and this is the key, treats words in terms of their musical values, that is very specifically *as tones*.

We began by noting the contrast Nietzsche himself makes between Beethoven, who listens to music everywhere, in the street in the market at the fest, and Mozart, who looks at life, especially at its richest, especially in the south. And we also noted that it is often said that Nietzsche favors Bizet over Wagner, just as he tells us that he does, that Mozart is praised above Beethoven.

But the points Nietzsche makes here are complicated ones, further compounded by his observation that Beethoven is an artist of composition or selection. And in a passage entitled *Belief in Inspiration*, Nietzsche writes

Artists have an interest in having others believe in sudden ideas, so-called inspirations; as if the idea of a work of art, of poetry, the fundamental thought of a philosophy shines down like a merciful light from heaven. In truth, the good artist's or thinker's imagination is continually producing things good, mediocre, and bad, but his power of judgment, highly sharpened and practiced, rejects, selects, joins together; thus we now see from Beethoven's notebooks that he gradually assembled the most glorious melodies and, to a degree, selected them out of disparate beginnings. The artist who separates less rigorously, liking to rely on his imitative memory, can in some circumstances become a great improviser; but artistic improvisation stands low in relation to artistic thoughts earnestly and laboriously chosen. All great men were great workers, untiring not only in invention but also in rejecting, sifting, reforming, arranging. (HH I,155)

Such arranging was part of the way Beethoven worked, and it is a point that aligns Beethoven — as Wagner likewise contends — with Haydn.

And Beethoven was one of the first masters of working with, or as Nietzsche says, playing with dissonance.⁹³ Dissonance, fundamentally an unresolved chord, is always on the way to resolution, and this is a matter of time, and the longer this takes, the more pain. E.T.A. Hoffmann had already noted the dissonance and the tensions of Beethoven's Fifth and contemporary authors also noted the same in the case of the Ninth and sets Wagner's characterization of Beethoven's "*Schreckensfanfare*" in relief.⁹⁴ Dissonances are always and only heard as such relative to a particular or given context. The point, as Beethoven stresses this in his own theory of composition, concerns the manner of that resolution.

Beethoven's protracted "play," to use Nietzsche's language here, with dissonance, with "the thorn of the unpleasing" [*Stachel des Unlusts*] offers for Nietzsche an explication of the working of the tragic work of art, elaborated throughout the fourth

choral movement of the Ninth Symphony. This same fourth movement is Nietzsche's reference point in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Nietzsche also emphasized the wondrous meaning [*wunderbaren Bedeutung*] of a musical dissonance (*Birth of Tragedy*, §25) as preternaturally modern or ahead of its time,⁹⁵ as we conventionally suppose modern music to be dissonant, atonal. What is certain is that in this way, Nietzsche himself poses the question, and arguably this is the question of the 19th century and indeed it is Schopenhauer's solution or resolution to Kant's metaphysical prohibition of any kind of access to the heart or as Hegel would say to the "inside" of things, one may also as Nietzsche himself speaks of Goethe's "mothers" of being, via music. In addition there is also the musical context of the role of dissonance in composition, the same point Beethoven emphasized and the point of the same compositional structure on which von Bülow (perhaps harshly but certainly not unfairly and just as certainly appreciated as a kindness by Nietzsche for his own part) undertook to instruct Nietzsche.

Thus Nietzsche himself refers to dissonance as a musical convention and in his own context, Nietzsche's discussion is to be heard in terms of what interested Nietzsche throughout his life, namely the relationship between music and word, particularly in ancient Greek but also, and this is the point with reference to Beethoven (and Schiller but only incidentally, in German). For Nietzsche argued that the relationship between music and word is not dependent upon the technique of a separate musical notation in the case of antiquity: written Greek for Nietzsche is very literally its own notation. Thus the addition of musical notation (like the later addition of vowels to modern Hebrew as Ivan Illich is fond of emphasizing in a different context) is a much later supplement, needed only after the death (or suicide) of tragedy as Nietzsche details. (BT §11)

We note that Nietzsche emphasized a similar precision at the heart of poetry in a religious if demystifying context in his own writings: thus he reminds us in *The Gay Science* and elsewhere and including his first book, that rhythm and rhyme are used to influence the deity. Although it is Schopenhauer who has more to say about the aesthetics of music, metaphysically speaking, it is Nietzsche who is most commonly associated with music among philosophers, apart from Adorno.⁹⁶ In addition to his longing to be a composer (and was roughly chided for this ambition), Nietzsche also

lived his music. And as noted to begin with Nietzsche played at a virtuoso level of ability — impressing even Wagner who quipped that a professor had no right to play that way.

But I have been arguing that what is most crucial is that Nietzsche made the theme of “music and words” his own in his own profession of classical philology, beginning with his writings on rhythm and meter in ancient Greek poetry and as he also wrote fairly extensively on ancient Greek musical drama, speaking again and again of the relation between music and drama in antiquity, thematizing the relation of opera and ancient tragedy, and above all and most importantly, on *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*, here and as I have been doing throughout, to give his first work its initial subtitle.

Nietzsche would reissue *The Birth of Tragedy* with a new subtitle *Hellenism and Pessimism* just because he was sensitive (as authors are) to the book’s lack of reception and to is yet more limited when it came to the question of comprehension among those of his contemporaries who *did* read it. I have argued that it is for this reason that Nietzsche both composed his intriguing “Attempt at a Self-Criticism” when he reissued his first book and designed the first four books of *The Gay Science* along with its companion piece, the work Nietzsche was inspired to call “his own” symphony, the first three (and the only published books of) *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

Writing nothing more plain in this respect than the declaration that the “great dithyramb is the ancient symphony” (KSA 7, 9 [57], 296), Nietzsche argued that we fail to understand the Greeks just because we do not raise the question of the origination of tragedy as it should be posed on the basis of or out of the spirit of music. It is this same question that he later underscores in his self-critique which was of course and also a critique of the book’s first readers, particularly those readers who did more than fail to read it but made of it instead the object of a calumniating misprision.⁹⁷ Nietzsche thus denigrates those who represent Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides as literary authors, as literary and cultural theorists do to the present day, for the simple reason that we only know such musical poets through their texts, texts we can no longer sight-read. Nietzsche’s point here is that it makes no difference in this sense when it comes to the medium of the text, whether one happens to be trained as a classical philologist or not.

That is, it doesn’t matter, in effect then, whether one reads Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides in the original Greek or in translation, because in either case one assumes one

is reading words not music, one presumes that these are just texts, so many books, filled with words (as Friedrich Kittler once said of own work). For Nietzsche however it makes a difference to talk of these poets as those who sing, even beginning with Homer. Thus Nietzsche does not only say that he wants “to talk about these men not as librettists but as composers of opera” but contends, still more critically, that “our operas are mere caricatures in comparison to ancient musical drama.” (KSA 7, 1 [1], 137) Indeed Nietzsche’s reference to opera as caricature by no means excludes Wagner:

Opera came into being without any foundation in the senses, in accordance with an abstract theory and the conscious intention to achieve the effects of the ancient drama by these means. It is therefore an artificial homunculus, indeed the malicious goblin of our musical development. Here we have a warning example of the damage the direct aping of antiquity can do. (Ibid.)

By contrast Nietzsche argues,

Among the Greeks, the beginnings of [music] drama go back to the unfathomable expressions of folk impulses: in the orgiastic celebrations of Dionysus people were driven outside themselves — ἔκστασις — to such an extent that they acted and felt like transfigured and bewitched beings. (Ibid., cf. 2 [25])⁹⁸

Comparing the musical art form of antiquity, given its folk origins, with the ecstatic Dionysian dynamics of European modalities of folk intoxications and frenzies (Nietzsche mentions here as he does elsewhere the St John’s (think of the midsummer leaps over bonfires of the southern French in their festival ceremonies) and St. Vitus’ dancers, to emphasize that the “ancient musical drama blossomed out of such an epidemic” (ibid.) and to regret that the same turns out to be foreign from the then (or contemporary we might add) cultural institution of the modern arts.

For Nietzsche what is essential to note is the original identity between music and drama. Thus he reflects that “Absolute music and everyday drama” correspond at the original level to “the two parts of musical drama torn apart.” (KSA 7, 1 [27], 17)

And this, in the germ, is the heart of the argument of the *Birth of Tragedy* as it is an account less of the origination of the tragic art from than its dissolution in decay and its death. To underscore this, Nietzsche notes that what begins “as a preliminary stage of absolute music” only works as such because it is “one form within the whole process” (ibid.), everything, everyone is involved. Importantly then, “The Greek artist addresses

his work not to the individual” and this also means not to the popular taste, not to the masses, but and much rather to “the state and the education of the state, in its turn, was nothing but the education of all to enjoy the work of art.” (KSA 7, 1 [121], 168-169) Thus Nietzsche observes, making a point Thrasyboulos Georgiades would later reprise (and as I emphasize elsewhere),⁹⁹ “today the musical drama of antiquity has only a pale analogue in the union of the arts within the rite of the Catholic church.” (KSA 7, 3 1, 57) But if one calls such a drama “a great work of music” it is at the same time utterly crucial to underline as Nietzsche painstakingly does underscore that “the music was never enjoyed as something absolute but always in connection with divine service, architecture, sculpture, and poetry. In short it was occasional music and the connecting dialogue served only to create occasions for the musical pieces each of which retained its distinctly occasional character.” (ibid.)

Thus although we may be tempted to imagine that the Greeks attended their tragic festivals as we might attend our summer music festivals or else perhaps on the model of medieval festivals, like the German mystery or morality plays, as Nietzsche compares the two, the comparison cannot hold as Nietzsche himself outlines for us: where the latter is in the German folk fest,

more worldly, despite their subject matter. People came and went, there was no question of a beginning and an end, nobody wanted and nobody offered a whole. Conversely, when the Greeks watched they did so in a religious frame of mind: it was high mass, with the glorification of the god at the end which had to be waited for. (Ibid., 58)¹⁰⁰

And to the extent that the poet universalizes, the poet also takes a step towards absolute music. But what is different here is that it remains tied to a certain incontrovertible real (“the state in which a human being *sings* was taken as a yardstick” (KSA 7, 1 [49], 24). But what had been up until Euripides kept strictly side by side, “so that the world of the eye disappeared when that of the ear began and vice versa” the outcome, via “the introduction of dialectics, the tone of the law court,” effectively “dismembered ancient musical drama” with the result that “*absolute music* and *family drama* came into being.” (Ibid.) Hence it is assumed that there are certain musical conditions on the one hand

If we wish to understand what Nietzsche means by the becoming-human of dissonance we may not dispense with his initial account of *The Birth of Tragedy* as such, as the child, as he tells us that tragedy is the offspring of a certain homosexual union, between Apollo and Dionysus, a child that is he says, and as I note elsewhere and as noted above a point also emphasized in Nicole Loraux, “at once” both Antigone *and* Cassandra.

Where Oedipus, so Nietzsche tells us, has quite mythically the extraordinary and veritably *heroic*, nearly quasi-divine character he has (certainly Oedipus pits himself alone against the deities, against destiny, against *moira*), as only the genius born of incest can, tragedy too gains from its hybrid birth. Thus Nietzsche argues that we may understand in tragedy the very “language of dissonance — “as we hear it from “the parents,” that is Apollo and Dionysus, “echoing in the children...” (KSA 1, 379).

From Dionysus and Apollo to Nietzsche and Beethoven

Those who do write on Nietzsche and tragedy as on Nietzsche and antiquity as indeed on Nietzsche and music tend to privilege Dionysus, even (and by negation), where they emphasize the ancient dictum, “nothing to do with Dionysos.” And many would hold that they are thereby drawing out Nietzsche’s own preferences. But we have seen that this can simplify and thus mistake Nietzsche’s point regarding the challenge for modern readers and interpreters: we find ourselves (recall Nietzsche’s fondness for Hölderlin), in an utterly foreign land vis-à-vis the Greeks. In this way the difficulty is not that of understanding Dionysus, which, as Nietzsche also tells us, is not too difficult in any case.



Fig. 11. Nicholas Poussin, *Midas and Bacchus*, 1629-30

Nietzsche argues instead and quite traditionally — and it is this emphasis to which Loraux also calls attention, pointing as she does to the precise significance, as I also have noted this, that Nietzsche speaks not of originations nor indeed and even of development or genesis but rather and very specifically of “birth”¹⁰¹ — that tragedy is born from the seventh century τραγικοί χοροί, the goat choruses and older traditions. Thus speaking of the oldest song festivals, “with the potent coming of spring that penetrates all nature,” (BT §1), Nietzsche emphasizes that “under the charm of the Dionysian” there is not only a communal connection, reaffirming “the union between human being and human being,” but a re-union with nature as well. And we can recall both Hölderlin and Schiller and Goethe when Nietzsche writes “Freely the earth proffers her gifts, and peacefully the beasts of prey of the rocks and the desert approach.”



Fig. 12. Poussin, *Bacchanale Before Pan*

The “Arcadian” image in question is one of the most celebrated, with all its overtones of union in difference, in depictions of art. But in addition to its manifestations in Schiller, this is also the central theme of Hölderlin’s poetry and thus Poussin paints Bacchus and Dionysus and Pan and Midas, where what is crucial is the calm of the animals in the case of Midas, and Nietzsche found a common theme for discussion when he visited Tribschen for Wagner displayed a Genelli painting of the same kind of oneness and communion.¹⁰²



Fig. 13. Buonaventura Genelli (1798–1868), *Bacchus unter den Musen*. 1868.



Fig. 14. Buonaventura Genelli (1798-1868), *Bacchus unter den Musen*. 1868.
Dresden: Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Kupferstich-Kabinett C 1908-189
Photo: Roland Handrick, April 1962. Dresden: SLUB / Deutsche Fotothek.

For Nietzsche, especially as he will go on to emphasize the central importance in these collective festivals of “extravagant sexual licentiousness, whose waves overwhelmed all family life and its venerable traditions” indeed and not less as Nietzsche adds, “even that horrible mixture of sensuality and cruelty which has always seemed to me to be the real ‘witches brew’” (BT §2), before continuing to allude — in a move that would not surprise Ernest McClain, given his own more esoteric researches — “the Dionysian origies of the Greeks, as compared with the Babylonian Sacaea with their reversion of man to the tier and the ape, of the significance of festivals of world redemption and days of transfiguration.” (Ibid.)¹⁰³



Fig. 15. Dionysiac procession. British Museum. about 100 CE. Rome, Roman Empire.
Photo by Yair Haklai, 2009.

Nietzsche continues this classically dark reference with his central claim beginning from such festivals of world redemption, declaring that it “is with them that nature for the first time attains her artistic jubilee; it is with them that the destruction of the *principium individuationis* for the first time becomes an artistic phenomenon,” (ibid.) the ultimate illustration he offers now is Beethoven’s compositional version of Schiller’s ‘Ode to Joy,’ a musical transposition that, for as Nietzsche earlier declared first and truly brought out what the poet only dimly guessed.

Schiller’s *Hymn to Joy* first attains in this way its deeper, genuinely artistic background. We see how the poet attempts to explicate the Germanic depths of this profoundly Dionysian excitement: which he however, as a modern human being, can only stammer with great difficulty. If Beethoven now presents before us the true Schillerian depths, what we thus have is the infinitely higher and more perfect.¹⁰⁴

The contrast here with Schopenhauer brings to aesthetics what Nietzsche would already find in an ethical mode in Anaximander in his *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*. And indeed he goes on to replicate this contrast between aesthetics or feeling or pathos and ethos in his own words, once again with reference to Beethoven:

“Beethoven was the first to allow music to speak a new language, the formerly forbidden language of passion. . . : It almost seemed, therefore, as if Beethoven had set himself the contradictory task of allowing pathos to be expressed with the means of ethos”¹⁰⁵

Here which we may profitably read with reference to Schopenhauer but also in general with reference to the advantages of mediocrity and the negative pressures on:

. . . unusual people, driving them deep into themselves such that their recovery emerges each time as a volcanic eruption. But there is occasionally a demi-god, who can bear to live under such terrible conditions, to live in victory, and if you wish to hear his lonely songs, you will be listening to Beethoven’s music.¹⁰⁶

Nietzsche makes his sharpest criticism of Wagner on behalf of and indeed by way of Beethoven:

Wagner characterizes as the mistake in the artistic genre of opera, that a means of expression, the music, as an end, the purpose of the expression was made into a means.

Thus music counted for him as a means of expression — very characteristic of the actor. Now one was asked in a symphony: if the music is a means of

expression here, what is the purpose? It cannot lie in the music: what is essentially a means of expression, now has to have something that it must express. For Wagner, this is the drama. Without this, music alone is for him an absurdity: it raises the question “why all this noise?” Therefore, he regarded Beethoven’s 9th Symphony as Beethoven’s the actual deed, because here by the inclusion of the word Beethoven gave the music its meaning, as means of expression. Means and ends — music and drama — older teaching”¹⁰⁷

Given these previous reflections and the context provided as they offer us a vision of what can otherwise seem to be an impossible fantasy of such a union of all with all, we now return to the first section of Nietzsche’s first book:

Transform Beethoven’s song of joy into a painting; let your imagination conceive the multitudes bowing to the dust, awestruck — then you will approach the Dionysian. Now the slave is a free human being; now all the rigid, hostile, barriers that necessity, caprice, or “crude convention” [*freche Mode*] have fixed between human and human are shattered. Now, with the gospel of universal harmony, each one feels himself not only united, reconciled, and joined with his neighbor but as one with him... (BT §1)

The association with Wagner is both inevitable and unmistakable, for it is just the rendering of “*freche Mode*,” i.e., just these words, the words themselves, that Wagner emphasizes in his own writing on Beethoven.¹⁰⁸

My point here — and note again that I only seek to expand the common focus as this has been dedicated to (and thus limited to) Wagner —emphasizes that what Nietzsche at the end of the *Birth of Tragedy* expresses as the “becoming-human of dissonance” (BT §24) is anticipated in the first section of the text with a clear reference to Beethoven as it concludes by citing Schiller’s poem in a Plotinian modality, in this moment of utter transfiguration:

The noblest clay, the costliest marble, the human being, is here kneaded and hewn, and to the sounds of the chisel strokes of the Dionysian world artist rings out the cry of the Eleusinian mysteries, “Do you prostrate yourselves, millions? Do you sense your maker, world?” (BT §1)

For Nietzsche what goes missing for us today is the music and the achievement he thinks he has uncovered in the ancient tragic musical artwork is accordingly what he names the “Dionysian content of music” (BT §6), all for sake of getting “some notion of the way in which the strophic folk song originates, and the whole linguistic activity is excited by this new principle of the imitation of music.” (Ibid.)¹⁰⁹ What is missing are

not the notes, as these were exactly *late additions* — this was an oral tradition in every respect — but the practice: the culture.

As Nietzsche emphasizes, what is “hard for us to understand is the Apollinian...” (Ibid.) Key for the musical emphasis Nietzsche underscores is that it “is the *suffering* that resounds, as opposed to the acting of the epic: the ‘picture’ of Apollonian culture is presented by the human via enchantment.” (Ibid.) For Nietzsche what “we call ‘tragic’ is precisely the Apollonian clarification [*Verdeutlichung*] of the Dionysian.” (KSA 7, 7, [128]) This sheerly musical, even composer’s focus continues as Nietzsche later reflects on “dissonance and consonance in music — we could say that a chord *suffers* through a false note.” (KSA 7 [165]) The key again is dissonance: “The *pain*, the *contradiction* is the *true being* [*wahrhafte Sein*]. The *pleasure*, the *harmony* is the illusion.” (KSA 7 [165], 203).

Thus the tragic artwork illustrates or adumbrates for those who participated in this cult. For the work of this musical *techné* was a cultic one, distant as far as can be envisioned from, the notion of *l’art pour l’art* which same cultural preoccupation (with the artist, the genius, the actor, today we can add the pop-star, certainly, given the role of teleprompters and marketing strategies, the political candidate) Nietzsche never tired of regarding as utter decadence, the tragic work of art dramatized nothing other than the “earthly resolution of tragic dissonance.” (BT §17) This is point is both important and difficult: for by arguing on behalf of a musical resolution Nietzsche is precisely not arguing on behalf of such an “earthly” resolution, nor indeed or for that matter (and whatever that might mean) a heavenly one.

Thus Nietzsche who always writes, as Heidegger writes (but also as Kant and Schopenhauer and Hume had written) against the Roman conventional simplicity of any *adequatio intellectus et rei*, challenges the Grecophiles of his age who praised the notion of an ideal “harmony,” that is to say, without recognizing the compulsion that stood behind this harmonic drive for the ancients, without acknowledging the indispensability of what “a background illumination of terror” (KSA 7, 7 [90] 159).

Nietzsche’s main question when it came to his first book as he writes with regard to the “birth” of the tragic art form bearing as it does on the meaning of and the role of the lyric poet, on the meaning of and the role of the chorus, on the relation between Apollo

and Dionysus and the very broad question he named “the science of aesthetics” (BT §1), concerned tragedy per se. In the same very musical fashion, Nietzsche raises the question of harmony as such: “*Wodurch entsteht ein schöner Akkord?*” (KSA 7, 7 [46], 149)

Here we note his aesthetic observation that there is, at least in nature, and here Nietzsche quite conventionally follows Kant,

No such thing as natural beauty, there is much rather the disturbingly ugly and a point of indifference. Think about the reality of dissonance as opposed to the ideality of consonance. (KSA 7, 7 [116], 164)

“Beauty,” Nietzsche argues, “has no share whatever in the domain of music,” a point he can make purely formally and in terms of his discovery of the musical character of the articulation of ancient Greek: “Rhythm and harmony are the main parts, the melody is only an abbreviation of the harmony.” (KSA 7, 3 [54]) and this is the coincidence of pathos and music, like the dissonant chord in music, “it is pain that is productive” that is it is pain, “which as a related counter-color engenders the beautiful,” always “from an indifferent point.” (Ibid.)

Hence for Nietzsche “The direction of art is thus towards overcoming dissonance. The drive internal to the world of the beautiful is born of an indifferent point.” (Ibid.) In this musical fashion, referring to an indifferent point, i.e., one that can, like science, like art “go either way,” as Nietzsche says, Nietzsche can identify “dissonance” and trace it as it is drawn into the work of art. And as Schoenberg for his own part will later speak of it,¹¹⁰ for Nietzsche “the gradual enjoyment of the minor tone and dissonance means the representation of madness, beyond representation on the grounds that a painless contemplation of things is brought forth” (KSA 7, 7 [117] 166)

“Music” as Nietzsche also argues, following the same Schopenhauer everyone follows, from Wagner to Adorno, is what “demonstrates to us that the entire world, in its multiplicity, is no longer felt as *dissonance*.”¹¹¹ But to illustrate this Nietzsche’s example is less Wagner than Beethoven. If in his unpublished notes Nietzsche focuses on the issue of individuation, reflecting that individuation is the “*result* of suffering, not its cause,”¹¹² he makes a similar claim in his published *The Birth of Tragedy*, focusing as he does on Beethoven’s choral ode in the Ninth.

As Nietzsche goes on to reflect, with this specific example in mind, “After these premises, imagine what an unnatural, indeed impossible enterprise it must be to compose music *for* a poem.”¹¹³ And we recall, and this is the point of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, that Wagner wrote his own lyrics. By contrast, Beethoven’s achievement was the musician’s achievement of setting — that is transposing — Schiller’s poem in his Ninth Symphony. Thus Beethoven’s achievement for the Nietzsche who wrote “Music and Word,” no accident as we see, was that he was able to use Schiller’s words *as music*.

The challenge of such a project is considerable from the modern point of view, “like that of a son trying to beget his father”¹¹⁴ but exactly such a genesis will be a personal project for Nietzsche in his own later writings (and not less of course his own compositions as scholars have begun to notice).¹¹⁵ Here however what is crucial is that Nietzsche’s example, a not incidentally Kantian counter-example (i.e., that whatever is actual is coincidentally also possible) corresponds to the actuality of Beethoven, whereby Beethoven’s images “are no more than sheerly allegorical representations.”¹¹⁶

What opera wants, as Nietzsche suggests here at this early stage, may be compared to the Münchhausenesque image of a “ridiculous man who tries to lift himself into the air by his own arms” (ibid.) — if opera ambitions to “press music into the service of a number of images as concepts, using it as a means to an end” (ibid.) — then for Nietzsche this can only be a similarly Münchhausenesque project. “Music” Nietzsche writes, can never become a means to an end.” (Ibid.) Thus and “at its best” and perhaps at times, one can be forgiven for supposing, in spite of itself opera “is indeed good music and only music.” (Ibid.) At the very least as we now see, and as Wagnerians will not be surprised to discover, Nietzsche here expresses a certain ambivalence toward opera — just as Wagner himself distinguished his own work from others but also arguably and even at this point *contra* Wagner.

Nietzsche observes in a note on the relation between language and music and “mime and music” (KSA 7 12 [1]) that there is more going on in that intrinsically impossible undertaking as he writes when “a musician composes a song based on a poem” (ibid.) and that “more” or what some literary commentators once called a supplement corresponds to a specifically *musical* impulse, to be heard in Nietzsche’s case in a Greek sense, *mousiké*, and one that thus “chooses the text of that song as an expression of itself.” (Ibid.)

Nietzsche thus argues that “Beethoven’s last quartets, for example, entirely put to shame any intuitive perception and indeed the whole realm of empirical reality.”¹¹⁷ The heart of the argument as Nietzsche develops it is all about what Beethoven actually achieves, writing as Nietzsche does in his best courtly mode

We hope it will not be taken amiss if ... we include in our reflections the tremendous and inexplicably magical last movement of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony ... That Schiller’s poem ‘To Joy’ is totally incongruent with this music’s dithyrambic jubilation over the redemption of the world and is drowned like pale moonlight by that ocean of flames — who would want to rob me of this most certain feeling?” (Ibid.)¹¹⁸

If part of what Nietzsche says here sounds a little like feminist musicologists and poets like Adrienne Rich’s insightful writing on Beethoven, and if another part of what Nietzsche says, not all that remarkably, also echoes Adorno’s beer hall reflections on Schiller,¹¹⁹ Nietzsche’s argument emphasizes less the ecstatico-erotic violence of “this music’s dithyrambic jubilation” or indeed the *synaesthesia* of light and sound — “like pale moonlight”, “oceans of flame” (KSA 7, 12 [1])¹²⁰ — than the claim, echoing the spirit of his first book, that among the instruments Beethoven deploys for his 9th symphony he uses the human voice as musical instrument among all the others.

Hence, as Nietzsche reflects,

the only reason why this feeling does not cry out when we listen to that music is that we are totally incapacitated by the music to take in either image or word *and no longer hear Schiller’s poem at all?* (Ibid.)

With this claim, Nietzsche recollects the substance of his earlier theoretical, classicists reflections on the relation between music and word, and that is here, the pitch or in this case the tone — as

Beethoven himself says to us as he introduces the chorale through a recitative ‘O friends, not these tones! Let us raise our voices in more pleasing and more joyful sounds! (ibid.)

For Nietzsche the tones are what counts as “More pleasing and more joyful!” (Ibid.) Thus to the point is that what is needed is another instrument, another *sound*, another tone. In this sense, we may add here and despite his genial independence, that is his exceptional genius as such, Beethoven never outgrew this one lesson from Haydn. Thus Beethoven — whom we have already cited as one who *listened* to music in all its forms,

writing “music about music,” as Nietzsche puts it — already had at his disposal what was required when what was called for was the

innocent air of the folk song. The sublime master, in his longing for the most soulful collective sonority of his orchestra, reached not for the word but for the ‘more pleasing’ sound, not for the concept but for the most intimately joyful tone.” (Ibid.)

In this way, Nietzsche is able to argue that it is Beethoven who brings us *closer* to an understanding of the ancient tragic musical work of art. Hence, for Nietzsche:

What we observed in the last movement of the Ninth, that is, on the highest peaks of modern musical development — that the verbal content is drowned unheard in the universal ocean of sound — is nothing unique or strange. But the universal and eternally valid norm of the vocal music of all ages, which alone corresponds to the origin of lyrical song. Neither the man in a state of Dionysian arousal nor the orgiastic crowd require a listener to whom they have something to communicate. (Ibid.)

There is in this important sense no audience *per se* in this Greek antiquity. The same Nietzsche who writes “there is no outside” when he speaks of the will that finds its immediate expression in Schopenhauer (and thus no mediation, no distinction from any representative art “before” as Nietzsche highlights this contrast “witnesses”), means this very literally. There is no spectator in the case of Greek art, as one can also argue that Greeks even lacked a word for art *per se*.¹²¹ This reflects Nietzsche’s important distinction between what he calls a “masculine” aesthetics and a feminine aesthetics (unfortunate as this terminology may be, as only the former is a creator’s or subject’s aesthetics where the latter is an aesthetics, as it were, before witnesses. It is thus as I have argued no accident that Nietzsche examines the problem of the artist, and we have already seen that this is Nietzsche’s word for Wagner, in terms of the histrionic, namely in terms of the problem of the actor, the woman, the Jew.¹²²

For Nietzsche, regarded from the perspective of the creative artist, “art” has an ineliminably melancholy aspect, as we recall from Matthew Arnold’s *Dover Beach*, as Arnold reflects on the musical pathos of the Aegean, as he supposes that “Sophocles heard it long ago” and as Nietzsche writes in *Human, All-too-Human* in the section entitled *The Souls of Artists and Writers*,

Art makes the thinker’s heart heavy — How strong the metaphysical need is and how hard nature makes it to bid it a final farewell, can be seen from the fact that

even when the free spirit has divested itself of everything metaphysical the highest effects of art can easily set the metaphysical strings, which have long been silent or indeed snapped apart, vibrating in sympathy; so it can happen, for example, that a passage in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony will make him feel he is hovering above the earth in a dome of stars with the dream of *immortality* in his heart; all the stars seem to glitter around him and the earth seems to sink farther and farther away.¹²³

For Nietzsche, and this is perhaps why his elitism remains insuperable, as it is ineliminably Greek, "the ecstatic servant of Dionysus is ... understood only by his own kind." (Ibid.) Hence and as Heidegger writes of the lark, as Angelus Silesius, the Cherubic Wanderer gives us the rose to which Nietzsche also refers, the "lyric poet" here "sings 'as the bird sings,' alone, out of an innermost need and would fall silent if the listener confronts him with any demands...." (Ibid.)

The danger here is the one Nietzsche had identified in his first book as the "spirit of science," as this is the force of his argument against the Euripides fatal impulse and achievement which Nietzsche characterizes as articulating a "*Socratic aesthetics*," as expressed in the formula, "Everything must be understandable in order to be beautiful." (BT §12) This can seem a mere metaphor, but in this context Nietzsche takes some pains to make it clear that he means it literally and later in his first book, he offers the following analogy:

To the listener who desires to hear the word clearly under the singing, corresponds the singer who speaks more than sings and intensifies the expressions of pathos in this half-singing. By this intensification of pathos he renders the words easier to understand and overpowers that part of the music which remains. Yet the real danger that threatens here is that at any inopportune moment the major emphasis may be given to the music, such that the pathos in the speech and clarity of the words necessarily vanish immediately. (BT §19)

Herewith we also find an different understanding of Nietzsche's reflections on Aristotle in *The Birth of Tragedy* as indeed his reflections on the "role" of the chorus, and it is necessary to add that we also gain for the first time a new perspective on Nietzsche's citations from Schiller in Beethoven's transcription: *Seid umschlungen*, he writes, *erkennst du deinen Schöpfer, Welt?*, but above all Nietzsche also foregrounds the significance of an entire community in harmony, as a harmony in every conventional sense. *Diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt!* in Beethoven's phrasing of Schiller's line also

appears for Nietzsche as a gloss for “Empedokles: ‘Liebe und Kuss den ganzen Welt.’”¹²⁴ Now we understand the famous tale of Schumann simply repeating a piece he had played once by playing it yet again in response to a request to explain its meaning, in the — eternally charming — tale of musical ineffability.

At issue for Nietzsche is not ineffability, at this distinction is at the heart of his dispute with Wagner and with Wagner’s famous judgment concerning what Beethoven could or could not articulate or communicate. As Nietzsche argues in *The Birth of Tragedy*:

No one should ask himself whether, with the poems of the great ancient lyric poets in hand, these poets could have had any idea of making their images and thoughts clearer to the listening crowd around them: and one should answer this serious question with Pindar and the Aeschylean choral songs in mind. These boldest and darkest knots of thought, this swirl of images tempestuously born and reborn, this oracular tone of the whole, which we are so often unable to penetrate, even with the most concentrated attention and without being distracted by music and dance — should this whole world of miracles have been as transparent as glass to the Greek mass, an interpretation of music in fact by way of images and concepts? And with such mysteries of thought as are found in Pindar, would this wondrous poet have wanted to make music, so powerfully clear in itself, yet clearer? (Ibid.)

Nietzsche invites us thereby to reflect on the performative or lived or felt experience of music. It turns out not to be a matter of the listener’s/spectator’s understanding just to the extent that it is not about the listener at all.

At issue is neither a matter of communication on the performer’s side nor understanding on the side of the audience and Nietzsche’s example here, for the vision he gives us of ancient Greece, of the lyric poet singing his hymn, shows us, also not unlike the high mass of his earlier reference, that what is at stake is nothing other than “the people singing the folk song, for themselves,” and here we can and should think of Beethoven’s 9th and its “Chorale” as Nietzsche does, “out of an inner urge, without caring whether the words are intelligible to anyone who does not join in the singing.” (Ibid., Spring 1871)

In this way, Nietzsche’s argument is that and like the ancient Greek experience of the lyric poet, of tragic musical drama, we ourselves have our own experience (and Nietzsche’s reference includes a classical reference to Handel’s *Hallelujah* chorus):

We think of our experience with music of the higher artistic kind: how much would we understand of the text of a mass by Palestrina, of a cantata by Bach, of

an oratorio by Handel, if we ourselves did not sing them? Only for those who join in the singing, is there a lyric, is there vocal music ... (Ibid.)

The (polemical) point for Nietzsche is that singing such a song, the music the singer sings is different from the music the listener hears who is by contrast offered the prospect of nothing less than “absolute music.”¹²⁵

The Becoming-Human of Dissonance

Du, Nachbar Gott, wenn ich dich manches Mal
in langer Nacht mit hartem Klopfen störe
— Rilke

If Benjamin, in his early study on language, suggests that in painting and sculpture the mute language of things is translated into a higher but related language, it might be supposed of music that it saves the name as pure sound, but at the risk of separating it from things.

— Adorno

What Nietzsche calls the “becoming-human” of dissonance in Nietzsche is approached in other terms in Adorno’s unfinished *Beethoven*. It is important to say that this study is unfinished, and not only because Adorno stresses the difficulty of endings in Beethoven, but also because Adorno’s reflections there complicate an analysis of the ‘development’ of Beethoven’s works, early, middle and late in simple chronological terms. Thus Adorno highlights an extreme sundering: “between polyphony and monody...a dissociation of the middle ...the withering of harmony.”¹²⁶ This “waning of the belief in harmony”¹²⁷ is given a Hegelian reading, inscribed in a musical, social dialectic that is specific to Adorno, “presenting the totality of the alienated world.”¹²⁸ Adorno’s point in saying this takes him to God and the human (it is not an accident that a key and beautifully titled chapter, “Late Work without Late Style,” is dedicated to the *Missa Solemnis*) where Adorno also notes the relation of “humanization and stylization” reflecting that the sacred recedes “in favor of the human,”¹²⁹ and observing that and although the mass was at best “performed only twice” in Beethoven’s own lifetime, Beethoven himself claimed that he regarded it as his “*l’oeuvre le plus accompli*” — his most successful work.”¹³⁰ Adorno’s reflections turn to the composer’s epigraph set over “the ‘Kyrie’”: ‘From the heart — and may it reach the heart.’¹³¹ Adorno’s reading can help to illuminate Nietzsche’s beautiful

formulation of “the genius of the heart” (BGE §295) as I read the complex social and critical context of Nietzsche’s extended description of this genius as it also outlines the conclusion of his *Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* as he called his *Beyond Good and Evil*, which I elsewhere describe musically as “the bravest democratic fugue yet heard,”¹³² as a “fanfare for the common man,” admit both disquiet and courage.¹³³

In the current essay, we were able to note Hölderlin’s *Sophocles*, as Nietzsche in his first book emphasizes that the heart of tragedy is “joy,” a very explicitly Beethovenian song of triumphant ““Joy,”” (BT §1) highlighting the word itself [»Freude«], articulating this same joy, this same pleasure and delight as affirmation, as a yes-saying contra the tradition and “beyond fear and pity, *to be oneself* the eternal joy of becoming [*ewige Lust des Werdens*] — that joy also includes even joy in destruction.” (TI, *What I Owe the Ancients*, §5).¹³⁴ In Hölderlin’s formulation this is *das freudigste, freudig zu sagen* [the most joyful, joyously to say]¹³⁵ which formulation echoes in Nietzsche’s notes regarding the challenge as the theme of his first book as the “transposition [*Übergang*] of the spirit of music in poetry, i.e., tragedy, the tragic.”¹³⁶ It is in this context that I read Nietzsche’s illustration of what he called “the music” of the tragic art form in terms of a play between both divinities, Dionysus as much as Apollo, both justifying “existence itself” (BT §25) in that play, conceived musically as “playing” with dissonance, playing with the “thorn” of suffering.¹³⁷

Playing extends, protracts pain and for Nietzsche this is for the sake of desire: in order to be able to bear existence *as it is* which can only be done by way of a beautiful illusion, so inspired that one wants to go on to the next moment, choosing life. Dissonance, the subject together with consonance, of a book dedicated to tracing its historically distinct meanings,¹³⁸ is listed (and this matters as noted throughout in Nietzsche’s context) in the 1822 Ersch-Gruber Encyclopedia — today one recognizes this as the Brockhaus —, under the rubric of “binding.”¹³⁹ This may help in understanding dissonance both in terms of the musical preparation or context needed in order to hear it as such (not all dissonances sound or tone as such) and in such a context, and this is where binding comes in, that requiring resolution. It is thus no accident that the same language bears on Nietzsche’s description of the wedding between Apollo and Dionysus, with tragedy as offspring.

Today the terminology of the “emancipation of dissonance” is usually attributed to Arnold Schoenberg’s most famous invocation of it.¹⁴⁰ Yet it is not by accident that Nietzsche invokes “the wondrous significance of *musical dissonance*” (BT §24) towards the conclusion of his book. Indeed, the *Birth of Tragedy* is prefaced with a visual metaphor for a patently titanic “emancipation” — referring both thematically and objectively both to Beethoven and to Goethe — in the woodcut illustrating the liberation of Prometheus which Nietzsche himself commissioned to set as the frontispiece for his first book. The liberation of the titanic is thus the liberation of a certain, humanly creative dissonance. The reference is to Beethoven’s *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus*, Op. 43, which is routinely described in terms of such dissonance, and Nietzsche alludes to Aeschylus’s Prometheus as molding the human being as expressed in Goethe’s *Prometheus*: “Here sit I, fashioning humanity in my own image.” (BT §9)¹⁴¹ The passage is crucial for Nietzsche who also uses it to distinguish between active and passive transgression (Greek and Judeo-Christian) as well active (or masculine) and passive (or feminine) creativity. And to be sure, the “titanic figures” of Prometheus and Oedipus are characterized as “masks” of the primordial tragic hero, Dionysus.



Fig. 14. Woodcut, Fontispiece to Nietzsche’s 1872 *Geburt der Tragödie*.

Despite these and the many other complexities traced above, Nietzsche continues to be read as if the project of his book had little to do with the tragic musical work of antiquity but only sought to articulate a cultural revival such that Wagner might thrive.¹⁴² The

result of this interpretation sets Nietzsche not only as a deficient philologist but a none-too-distinctive Wagnerian. If Nietzsche would go on for the rest of his life to contest both judgments, his protests are still not heard.¹⁴³

I have argued that Nietzsche's understanding of dissonance was drawn from contemporary musical accounts, including Beethoven as exemplar of the same, a focus Wagner also repeated for his own part in his own celebration of Beethoven.¹⁴⁴ I have emphasized that Nietzsche's resolution of the question of tragedy was as explicitly or plainly musical as implied by his initial subtitle¹⁴⁵ and that as author of 'Music and Word,' what was always at stake for Nietzsche was the sound, the "music," of the words themselves, that is Greek as intoned, as spoken, as sung.¹⁴⁶

By referring to the paradoxical question that illuminates the problem of pleasure and pain in the ancient Greek tragedy play, Nietzsche invoked the phenomenon of "musical dissonance,"¹⁴⁷ to explain tragedy, as he argued that if we could "imagine" as he expressed it the "becoming human"¹⁴⁸ of that same dissonance, we would begin to approach ancient tragedy. The same tentative point resonates musically by underscoring the relevance of Nietzsche's inquiry into what he titles in his notes the "Origin and Goal of Tragedy."¹⁴⁹ To explore what might in this sense be called Nietzsche's *Harmonienlehre* would need a hermeneutic of influence and reference.¹⁵⁰ Here, it may be enough to recall that *any* reference to dissonance is also part of a discourse of tonality and one that inevitably includes references to consonance, and some are fond of taking this to be Apollo, where, like chaos, dissonance refers to Dionysus.

What is certain as we learn from Nietzsche's conjugal yoke between the two gods — and this also behind Loraux's attention, as already cited, to Nietzsche's focus on tragedy's *birth* as such rather than its *development* or its *genealogy* — is that consonance and dissonance refer to harmony. The harmonious question of the human being who has turned out well, as Nietzsche likes to put it, also involves raising the question of the artist as indeed of the actor and the poet. This performative question also raises the question of the dynamic actuality of the singer, of the dance, and thereby of the working power of the work of art composer, as this was for Nietzsche the very political question of musical culture.

In this final section, it may be necessary to underscore that I have not sought to claim that Nietzsche was not influenced either by Wagner's music or his writings. Indeed and *because* there are no shortage of these, this discussion has not been about Wagner. Instead, I have sought to read Nietzsche's first book as a contribution to his own discipline and indeed a decisive contribution, precisely on topic. For the sake of an understanding of the "birth" of ancient Greek tragedy out of the spirit of the music of ancient Greek, meaning here both the language itself and culture, I have been arguing that Nietzsche was influenced by musicians in addition to Wagner, most notably Beethoven that this influence is illustrated from the start, and that Nietzsche's own active interest in musical composition must be taken into account, especially with regard to his writings on ancient Greek metric and rhythm. And where Nietzsche himself played and improvised, where he himself sought to compose, I have also sought to suggest, especially as this text foregrounds the compositional role of dissonance, that we take account of what Nietzsche could only have supposed to have been Beethoven's own writings on the art of composition and harmony.

Additionally, although I have not explored this above, I would also suggest in theoretical sense and concerning what Nietzsche calls "the science of aesthetics" (BT §1) in the very first line of his book, that a very different Wagner plays a critical role. This 'other' Wagner is Johann Jakob Wagner, author of a book on music and aesthetics.¹⁵¹ This text, once again, along with Nietzsche's reading of Beethoven and along his philological background and along with his broader epistemological and scientific interests together with his friendship and intellectual engagement with Richard Wagner, along with a good deal in addition, informs Nietzsche's own project his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*. The same connection to Johann Jakob Wagner, also echoes in Nietzsche's notes from this period where he writes "The fact that nature linked the origin of tragedy to those two fundamental drives, the Apollinian and the Dionysian, may be considered as much an abyss of reason as that same nature's device of attaching procreation to the duplicity of the sexes, which always appeared astonishing to the great Kant." (KSA 7, 7 [123]) In Nietzsche's Greek and music aesthetical context, this point goes beyond, if also includes, the simple expression of a certain nineteenth century sexism.

It in this same musical context that Nietzsche's resolution of the question of tragedy as musical (BT §22) refers to the sound, the music of Greek as it was spoken/sung,¹⁵² referring to the paradoxical question that illuminates the problem of pleasure *and* pain in the ancient Greek tragedy play, speaking of the very phenomenon of "musical dissonance," (BT §24) and Nietzsche's description of the "becoming human" (BT §25) of dissonance.

Thus I noted above that the same point takes us to the "problem of the artist" as Nietzsche posed this problem in terms of his concern for what he also called the "genius of the heart," that quality, whatever it would take, that would be able to break everything as Nietzsche says, "self-satisfied" about us.

It is the rule of greed and selfish desire, the spirit not of music and also not of science but and rather of capitalism¹⁵³ — and this is where we are in dire need of Adorno — that reduces everything to the level of the chargeable. This new cupidity, as industrial and corporate as it is, is also deeply, intimately personal for us today, which is what is meant by co-option, that is it is the mechanism or motor of modern culture, as the founders of the Frankfurt School knew very well, including Adorno and Horkheimer and Marcuse but also Anders too. For by "falling in love with ourselves" as we constantly do, beginning with nothing less imposing than a mirror or display window on the street and certainly enshrined in the integral reality of the screen, not television alone but just the Minitel many of us never knew, and just a cell-phone, just a computer, indeed it turns out, and twitter uses to best effect, that you do not need an image for mirror fantasy to work as it does. Slavoj Žižek — himself well aware of the captivation of the imaginary, warned the participants of Occupy Wall Street, the made for Twitter and YouTube spectacle that had as little impact as it has indeed turned out to have had "not to fall in love with yourself."¹⁵⁴

But fall in love we did, commentators and academics, participants and observers alike. And at the same time we also saw the banal side of the real, police violence — and there was more of this than could ever have been photographed or "caught" (the word is revealing) on video — and this love, self-love, waxed and waned with attention and inattention (it is growing again after Hurricane Sandy, because both the protest and its ultimate withering dissipation were adumbrated via the media, mainstream in its variety

of forms these days, a media which did not cover it whenever it did not opt to do so (and at the outset this was *always* and at the various “ends” of the protest this was a consummate blackout) or else, the non-mainstream media, by the abundance of tweets and although pundits like to note this less, facebook posts on the movement which peaked and fell.

As all of us know by way of the utterly intimate immediacy of digital media, beeping seemingly urgent notifications of updates on our phones and laptops and so on, Twitter and Facebook are so many ways of playing along, less a means of self-promotion, although it mightily seems so, than they are in truth so many ways of feeding advertising to oneself via links and banner ads, and indeed to others (whether called friends or not). Thus social media, among all the things we think we use it for, is effectively so very many ways of creating content (programming) to serve as the vehicles for such advertisements (the constant companion and indeed the reason for programming be it on radio or tv or cable and now the self-generated modulation of the same, for which generation of internet programs (we are the program, we are also the programmers and the programmed),¹⁵⁵ we (the content creators) “pay” in one way or another (for if you pay for internet access, wireless access, phone and otherwise, you pay for the privilege of so doing and then there is the matter of your time, of which it turns out, in practice, judging from tweets and posts, we have a very good bit of it on our hands.

Günther Anders, a somewhat disadvantaged junior colleague of Adorno likewise, if this has hardly been noticed (this is the disadvantage) emphasized this coopting/coopted dimension as part of the social military and political investment in and deployment/development of radio and television broadcasting. Above I have noted that we can add the internet and whoever we wish to pretend “invented” it, including social networking along with music videos and all commercial enterprises as all of these are *for the sake of* commercial enterprises, including consumer-driven or -fabricated projects, or, as YouTube says to all and sundry, “Broadcast yourself.”¹⁵⁶

Beyond “falling in love” with ourselves (we started there), we have become consummate masters at what Adorno called “self-satisfaction,” an absorption with ourselves that continues to captivate us — even as our world goes to hell around us, human, animals, plant life of all kinds, all of it destroyed at a pace like no other (though

those who bother to think about this, consider it salient to compare the current destruction to past ice-ages and possible asteroid collisions).¹⁵⁷ In a digital, networked, connected age we are all our space, sovereign in our own kingdoms, failed students of every kind of noble philosophy, fiddling all the while our own skin burns under radiation we ignore (how can it hurt us? we think of the capacitative touch screens on our phones, our ipads, our computers if Windows 8 has its way — and it will) all the while the earth itself burns and the air attenuates with contaminants and the oceans sour.

It is this, our transmodern condition — distracted, entertained, primed, entrained as we are that Nietzsche argued against, well in advance of our most modern techniques for attaining the same transmodern condition. This same transmodern condition was already securely established in the 19th century and it was in just this context Nietzsche sought to argue that might still be broken, might still be opened or held available to another aspect, another possibility. It is for this reason that I repeatedly cite Nietzsche's language of the "genius of the heart" and seek to unpack his account of how this "tempter god," might yet expose us to feeling as to compassion and perhaps even to what Heidegger strangely, dissonantly, called "thinking."

Writing of his challenge to us, asking us to imagine "the becoming-human-of dissonance," Nietzsche also asks us to remember that such dissonance simply says the human — says it again — "and what else is the human?" (BT §25) The mode in question, deeply Hölderlinian as it is, makes a musical compact signed with pain. Here the Dionysian reality of dissonance is in tension with the Apollonian ideality or illusion of consonance. The musical indifference of a still point, from which everything in music advances (or does not), the equanimity in the face of either pleasure or pain that is also an allusion to Schopenhauer, illuminates Beethoven for Adorno who for his own part notes Mozartian indifference in this context while, as I read it, highlighting for us Nietzsche's point regarding music and speech. Thus Adorno argues that Beethoven

forces music to speak, not merely through expression (which is no less present in Bach) but by bringing music closer to speech through its own disposition. Therein lies his power — that music is able to speak, without word, image, or content — and also his negativity, in that his power does music violence ... — Music is able to speak through both its remoteness and its closeness to language.

—¹⁵⁸

Here Adorno underlines the newest of new music (for Adorno then and we could say, still for us today), “That Beethoven never goes out of date is connected, perhaps, to the fact that reality has not yet caught up with his music.”

For Adorno what sounds in Beethoven is a ““real humanism””,¹⁵⁹ as Adorno sets this in “humanism” in scare quotes, and I think we can read this as Nietzsche’s *human*, *all too human* and yet and still *musical* dissonance. This dissonance takes us to everything magical about us — that is music — and everything wretched and base about us and about what we do. It is no accident that Adorno also writes about the transfiguration of music in the age of mechanical, technological, today we add digital reproduction. And it also just as deliberate that Adorno’s uncanny quote, “Animals play for the idealist system virtually the same role as the Jews for fascism,”¹⁶⁰ it is “humanity” that appears in the same locus where Adorno adverts to Beethoven’s “lack of feeling for animals,” drawing in the same locus a parallel with Kant and indeed to the dirty bargain that is the bargain of the enlightenment’s claim to ethical dignity by the expedient of handing it off to humans *alone* and at the exclusion of all and of whatever others, changing from time to time in human history but always excluding animals and always excluding nature (a paradise for us, that worldly world to which we are sent when we are expelled from whatever original garden would not have us), as theorists, especially critical, especially social but also media theorists annihilate the very idea. This too Derrida would have learnt from Adorno:

A capacity for moral self-determination is ascribed to human beings as an absolute advantage – as a moral profit – while being covertly used to legitimize *dominance* – dominance over nature ...Ethical dignity in Kant is a demarcation of differences. It is directed against animals. Implicitly it excludes man from nature, so that its humanity threatens incessantly to revert to the inhuman. It leaves no room for pity. Nothing is more abhorrent to the Kantian than a reminder of man’s resemblance to animals.¹⁶¹

For Nietzsche, pointing to the encounter with the inviolable, with the limit, with the abyss, it is not only ethics but science itself, in the insights of both Kant and Schopenhauer, that suffers shipwreck and disaster (BT §15). Such tragic knowledge, such insight into the tragic condition, Nietzsche argues requires, just and in order to be borne at all, art itself “as protection and remedy.” (Ibid., cf. BT §25)

I leave the last word to Adorno on this same note between finitude and transfiguration:

“A work of art is great when it registers a failed attempt to reconcile objective antinomies. That is its truth and that is its ‘success’, to have come up against its own limit.”¹⁶²

Endnotes

- ¹ This is a well-discussed theme, complicated by the insistence of Pickard-Cambridge, amplified by Albert Henrichs and Goldhill, et al., that sunders tragedy from Dionysus per se, and by implication, from the tradition of folk and goat song Nietzsche explores (this has the advantages of the “nice” details as to whether the satyrs are goats or equine, as Burkert among others debate) but here I also echo the salient arguments offered by Nicole Loraux, *The Mourning Voice The Mourning Voice: An Essay on Greek Tragedy*, Elizabeth Trapnell Rawlings, trans. (Ithaca: Cornell, 2002).
- ² I discuss this in the text above and see, for more detail, Friederike Felicitas Günther’s monograph, *Rhythmus beim frühen Nietzsche* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008) as well as Christian Benne’s lovely contribution, “Good cop, bad cop: Von der Wissenschaft des Rhythmus zum Rhythmus der Wissenschaft,” in Günter Abel and Helmut Heit, eds., *Nietzsches Wissenschaftsphilosophie. Hintergründe, Wirkungen und Aktualität* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), pp. 189-212.
- ³ Curt Paul Janz, *Friedrich Nietzsche Biographie* (Munich: Hanser, 1993) is valuable here.
- ⁴ Nietzsche thus speaks with respect to both consciousness and method, of an “inner and outer phenomenology,” KSA 12, p. 294 and, in advance of Thomas Mann, of a “phenomenology of consumption” in the case of Spinoza. See KSA 13, p. 504.
- ⁵ For just one example, Nietzsche mentions the pathos of distance not more than twice or so, but this frequency does not bear on its significance as a concept for his reflections on morality. As Nietzsche himself reflects on the role of scholarly research techniques: “Nie kann die philologische Interpretation eines Schriftstellers das Ziel sein, sondern immer nur Mittel. Es gilt nach allen Seiten hin Material zu häufen. Es ist aber nicht wahr, dass man einen Schriftsteller besser versteht, wenn man sich so im Detail mit ihm einlasst.” *Gedanken zur Einleitung Zu „Homer und die classische Philologie“*, Nr. 13, Musarion Ausgabe, Vol. II, p. 28.
- ⁶ I discuss this in several places, see in particular Babich, “[Nietzsches hermeneutische, phänomenologische Wissenschaftsphilosophie: Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen zu Altphilologie und Physiologie](#)” in: Günter Abel and Helmut Heit, eds., *Nietzsches Wissenschaftsphilosophie*, pp. 291-311 as well as Babich, “Nietzsche’s Performative Phenomenology: Philology and Music” in: Élodie Boubil and Christine Daigle, eds., *Nietzsche and Phenomenology: Power, Life, Subjectivity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, forthcoming 2013). In addition to the other contributions in Boubil and Daigle’s collection, see the important pioneering work of Rudolf Boehme, original published in French, “Deux points de vue: Husserl et Nietzsche,” *Archivio di Filosofia*, 3 (1962): 167–81 and reprinted as “Husserl und Nietzsche” in his *Vom Gesichtspunkt der Phänomenologie* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1968), pp. 217-237. The outstandingly rigorous phenomenological scholar, Robert Sokolowski offers an invaluable account in connection with classical Husserlian but also Heideggerian phenomenology in his “Review of Boehm, *Vom Gesichtspunkt der Phänomenologie*.” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 32, no. 1 (1971): 135–39. Note too that Alphonso Lingis’ valuable analysis of phenomenology in his *Deathbound Subjectivity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989) is informed by both Nietzsche and Heidegger and a Heideggerian emphasis is arguably the most productive when it comes to Nietzsche, just because Heidegger foregrounds the hermeneutic dimension in phenomenology although I believe that Merleau-Ponty also offers considerable resources for further

reflection on phenomenology and aesthetics, where, for Nietzsche, the two terms, as Heidegger also shows, converge. See further Lars Petter Storm Torjussen, "Is Nietzsche a Phenomenologist?—Towards a Nietzschean Phenomenology of the Body," *Analecta Husserliana*, CIII, (2009): 179-189. Tracy Colony, "Heidegger's Early Nietzsche Lecture Courses and the Question of Resistance," *Studia Phenomenologica*, 1/2 (2004): 151-172 as well as Colony's "Twilight of the *Eidos*: The Question of Form in Heidegger's Reading of Nietzsche's Thought upon Art," *Analecta Husserliana*, 83/IV (2004): 441-450.

- ⁷ See for a discussion of this background context, including both Husserl and Nietzsche, in the period running from 1880 and 1890 through 1930 and 1940, Babich, "[Early Continental Philosophy of Science](#)" in: Keith Ansell-Pearson and Alan Schrift, eds., *The New Century Volume Three: Bergsonism, Phenomenology and Responses to Modern Science: History of Continental Philosophy* (Chesham: Acumen, 2010), pp. 263-286.
- ⁸ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, §ii.
- ⁹ Part of this is the problem of peer review which is inherently circular and inherently conservative and which, when the reviewers are younger (as is increasingly the case) rather than older (as they once were), only functions as Oscar Wilde once put it "to straw the wheat and save the chaff." At the same time, and because of funding cuts, peer review is in dispute as part of the ongoing debate on open access.
- ¹⁰ I offer an overview of this, with further references in Babich, "On Nietzsche's Judgment of Style and Hume's Quixotic Taste: On the Science of Aesthetics and 'Playing' the Satyr," *The Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 43.2 (2012): 240-259.
- ¹¹ See for a discussion, the contributions to Tilman Borsche, Federico Gerratana, and Aldo Venturelli, eds., *'Centaurien-Geburten'. Wissenschaft, Kunst, und Philosophie beim jungen Nietzsche* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994) and more recently and for a broader overview, Christian Benne, *Nietzsche und die historisch-kritischen Philologie* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005).
- ¹² „Der Mangel an Philologie: man verwechselt beständig die Erklärung mit dem Text — und was für eine „Erklärung“! KSA 13, 15 [82], 456.
- ¹³ „Das nenne ich den Mangel an Philologie: einen Text als Text ablesen können, ohne eine Interpretation dazwischen zu mengen, ist die späteste Form der „inneren Erfahrung“, — vielleicht eine kaum mögliche ...“ KSA 13, 15 [90], 460.
- ¹⁴ I leave it as obvious here that in the case of Nietzsche a formation in analytic philosophy amounts to no formation at all, though I can make an exception for both Danto and Nehamas considering readings like those of Brian Leiter and Schacht. See Babich, "[An Impoverishment of Philosophy](#)" in: Dennis Erwin and Matt Story, eds., *Purlieu: Philosophy and the University* (2011): 37-71 as well as Babich, "[On the Analytic-Continental Divide in Philosophy: Nietzsche's Lying Truth, Heidegger's Speaking Language, and Philosophy](#)" in: C. G. Prado, ed., *A House Divided: Comparing Analytic and Continental Philosophy* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus/Humanity Books. 2003), pp. 63-103, especially the second half.
- ¹⁵ Francis MacDonald Cornford, *From Religion to Philosophy: A Study in the Origins of Western Speculation* (New York/London: Longmans, Green, and Co./Edward Arnold, 1912), p. 111, footnote 1.
- ¹⁶ See here Ernest G. McClain's *The Pythagorean Plato: Prelude to the Song Itself* (York Beach, ME: Nicolas Hays, 1978) as well as his earlier study, *The Myth of Invariance: The Origin of the Gods, Mathematics and Music from the Rg Veda to Plato* (York Beach, ME: Nicolas Hays, 1976). McClain, a mathematically brilliant musical mind has explored this connection over many years with reference to the bible as well as Greek, Babylonian, and Indian traditions. For a recent see his "[A Priestly View of Bible Arithmetic: Deity's Regulative Aesthetic Activity Within Davidic Musicology](#)," in: Babette Babich, ed., *Hermeneutic Philosophy of Science. Van Gogh's Eyes. and God: Essays in Honor of Patrick A. Heelan. S.J.* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), pp. 429-443. See too John

Bremer's book, *Plato's Polity* (Houston: Institute of Philosophy, 1984) and his "Some Arithmetical Patterns in Plato's Republic," *Hermanathena*, 169 (Winter 2000): 69-97 as well as his more recent "[Plato, Pythagoras, and Stichometry](#)," *Stichting Pythagoras. Pythagoras Foundation Newsletter*. No.15. December 2010. In this context, see too Árpád Szabó, *The Beginnings of Greek Mathematics* (Reidel: Dordrecht and Boston, 1978) as well as, albeit with a contrary emphasis, Robert Brumbaugh, *Plato's Mathematical Imagination* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1954). There are also contributions to this in German and French and so on. But the most recent discussion, which ignores nearly all of this is Jay B. Kennedy's "Plato's Forms, Pythagorean Mathematics, and Stichometry," *Apeiron*, Vol. 43, No. 1. (2010): 1-31. For a musicological reply, see John McCay and Alexander Rehding, "The Structure of Plato's Dialogues and Greek Music Theory: A Response to J. B. Kennedy," *Apeiron*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (2011): 359-375. This mainstream criticism takes issue with Kennedy's method of what Nietzsche would call his "lack of philology." Kennedy's philological methodology is done via computer analysis and this may explain, as it permits a decided lack of reading, the reason for his inattention to the scholarship in English, let alone in German, French, and Italian. Thus while Kennedy is eager, as he says, to have scholars read and engage his own publications, for his own part he does not himself read or engage the texts of others who have published on the same themes over many years. Kennedy says that this is because, to quote a recent conversation where Kennedy repeats points he had also made in print and in personal email communication, he "just cannot understand" these other texts or the points they are making. In another context I have argued that saying that one cannot understand someone and using that as a strategy to exclude their work even from mention let alone from discussion is a very well-established technique in analytic philosophy and other academic fields. Unfortunately Kennedy also misses a good deal with this assumption and I would argue, despite the trouble it takes to understand certain writers, that Kennedy might well look to Nietzsche for Nietzsche's own argument on music and word also contends, and in a nutshell, that the text was the music. For those who are interested in understanding, and especially for those interested in applying a formally mathematical analysis of the structure of the dialogues themselves, McClain's studies cited above offer such an application of Stesichorus' own analyses. This tradition, as Nietzsche also argues, may be applied to other texts, like the Bible, like the Babylonian epic of creation, but also lyric poetry, as Nietzsche argues in Greek and, see too and especially if one wishes an acrostic connection, as Walter Schmid has also argued in Latin. See for this account Schmid's theory of Sallustian prose rhythm, Walter Schmid, *Frühschriften Sallusts im Horizont des Gesamtwerks* (Neustadt/Aisch: P. Ch. W. Schmidt, 1993). For an overview, see Gregor Damschen, „Das lateinische Akrostichon. Neue Funde bei Ovid sowie Vergil, Grattius, Manilius und Silius Italicus,“ in: *Philologus*, 148 (2004): 88-115. Kennedy, cited above, offers a recent contribution to this discussion from the side not of numerological musicology or studies of the bible, but philosophy of the digital kind, with all the empirical strengths of the same.

- ¹⁷ This would be true even if the scholarly tension associated with Peter Kingsley's original work on Empedocles and his later more tendentious work did not also work to illustrate the same point. For this last, compare Peter Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic: Empedocles and Pythagorean Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995) and, for example, his *Reality* (Inverness, CA: Golden Sufi center, 2003). For a discussion of the range of interpretive accounts from esoteric ritual to cosmology, see Maria Serena Funghi, "The Derveni Papyrus," in *Studies on the Derveni Papyrus*, ed. André Laks and Glenn Most (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 25-38 in addition to Charles Kahn, "Was Euthyphro the Author of the Derveni Papyrus," *Studies on the Derveni Papyrus*, 55-64, David Syder, "Heraclitus in the Derveni Papyrus," *Studies on the Derveni Papyrus*, 129-49, and Walter Burkert, "Star Wars or One Stable World: A Problem of Pre-Socratic Cosmogony (*PDerv* Col XXV)," *Studies on the Derveni Papyrus*, 167-74. Richard Janko attests to the recalcitrance of scholarly habits of inclusion (and exclusion) when he notes the silencing of alternate readings in the production of the definitive transcription of the Derveni papyrus: "By using a simple but bizarre expedient, P. and T. have contrived not to acknowledge that scholars other than themselves have toiled to reconstruct this text. They include no apparatus criticus!" Janko concludes that the authors "have chosen to benefit neither from the scholarship of the past decade nor from recent advances in reconstructing and reading

- carbonized papyri” [Janko, review of *The Derveni Papyrus*](#), edited by Theokritos Kouremenos, George M. Parássoglou, and Kyriakos Tsantsanoglou — in the *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, October 29, 2006.
- ¹⁸ The majority of scholars who cite this seem to misunderstand both Cornford’s project and Nietzsche’s.
- ¹⁹ According to Hadot, classical philology suffers on the one hand from a positive draught of information, in that we are lacking most material while, conversely, “...mines of information, such as the works of Philo of Alexandria, Galen, Athenaeus, and Lucian or the commentaries on Plato and Aristotle written at the end of antiquity, have never been systematically made use of.” Hadot, “[Forms of Life and Forms of Discourse in Ancient Philosophy](#),” *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Spring, 1990): 483-505, here p. 489. This also appears as the first chapter in Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*. The decided disadvantage of “fashions” or accepted trends of mention in scholarship, i.e., those we prefer to cite and those we prefer not to, is the death of scholarship.
- ²⁰ See Babich, “*The Science of Words or Philology: Music in The Birth of Tragedy and The Alchemy of Love in The Gay Science*,” in: Tiziana Andina, ed., *Revista di estetica. n.s. 28, XLV* (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 2005), pp. 47-78.
- ²¹ Thus James W. Halporn prefaces his translation of Nietzsche’s “On the Theory of Quantitative Rhythm,” *Arion*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Summer, 1967): 233-243, with a reference to “Paul Maas, *Greek Metre* (Oxford 1962) 3f: ‘Scarcely any facet of the culture of the ancient world is so alien to us as its quantitative metric. We lack here the most important prerequisite of all historical study; for we can never attain that kind of ‘empathy’ by which all other manifestations of the art, literature, science, philosophy, religion, and social life of the ancients are brought so near to us that they become an essential part of our own culture. This is so because from the first century A.D. onwards the purely quantitative rhythm gradually declined, so that it has now vanished not only from the literature, but from the speech of Europe. Our feeling for rhythm is altogether dominated by the dynamic rhythm of our own language and metric. This ‘dynamism’ colors also the otherwise quantitative rhythm of our music; and music has a more powerful effect on our emotions than any other form of art. We have no means of reading, reciting, or hearing Greek poetry as it actually sounded. It may be possible for us to form a mental notion of it; but such a notion is too shadowy to serve as a basis for the scientific investigation of the subject.’” Much of this is repeated in today’s discussions of rhythm and lyric and even ancient Greek music, often without referring to Nietzsche as Maas does in fact.
- ²² As Nietzsche observed in his notes there seems to be rather “more likelihood that a bad book will be preserved than a good one” (KSA 7, 9 [203], p. 481). I discuss Nietzsche’s inaugural lecture in the first few sections of Babich, “[Towards a Critical Philosophy of Science: Continental Beginnings and Bugbears, Whigs and Waterbears](#),” *International Journal of the Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (December 2010): 343-391. I continue the stylistic part of this emphasis in Babich, “On Nietzsche’s Judgment of Style and Hume’s Quixotic Taste,” cited above.
- ²³ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Prologue, §v.
- ²⁴ See, again, Babich, “The Science of Words or Philology.”
- ²⁵ Nietzsche, *Human, All-too-Human, The Wanderer and his Shadow*, §140.
- ²⁶ This is the ultimate point to be sure of my forthcoming book publication, [The Hallelujah Effect: Philosophical Reflections on Music, Performance Practice and Technology](#) (Surrey: Ashgate, 2013) and see also my related blog, [The Hallelujah Effect](#). See too Babich, “[The Birth of kd lang’s Hallelujah out of the ‘Spirit of Music’: Performing Desire and ‘Recording Consciousness’ on Facebook and YouTube](#),” *Perfect Sound Forever. online music magazine*—Oct/Nov 2011.
- ²⁷ In addition, of course, to Adorno and Anders, Don Ihde goes some way in this direction and the musicologist F. Joseph Smith who also wrote on this theme was enthusiastic about possible future collaboration, but this collaboration did not happen for no more than the usual academic reasons academics do not engage one another. See Ihde’s book: *Listening and Voice: Phenomenologies of Sound* (Ohio: de Gruyter, 1993) and Smith’s earlier article “Further Insights into a Phenomenology of

Sound,” *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, 3/2 (1969): 136-146. Other discussions include David Lewin, “Music Theory, Phenomenology, and Modes of Perception,” *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 3/4 (Summer, 1986): 327-392. Here, as elsewhere in philosophical aesthetics, the continental-analytic divide often serves to block dialogue and research. However, some recent explorations include Bruce Benson’s nuanced monograph, *The Improvisation of Musical Dialogue: A Phenomenology of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) and Brian Kane’s discussion of Pierre Schaeffer’s own investigations Kane, *L’Objet Sonore Maintenant: Pierre Schaeffer, Sound Objects and the Phenomenological Reduction*,” *Organised Sound*, 12/1 (2007): 15-24.

- ²⁸ See Nancy van Deusen’s article “Music, Rhythm” in: Allan D. Fitzgerald, Allan Fitzgerald, and John C. Cavadini, eds., *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (London: Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 572-574. Also useful on rhythm and time, including a discussion of Augustine and his context is Lewis Rowell’s *Thinking About Music: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Music* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 198).
- ²⁹ These are Nietzsche’s sketches for his lectures, *Vorlesungsaufzeichnungen 1870 - 1871: KGW II/3*, Fritz Bornmann and Mario Carpitella, eds. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993).
- ³⁰ Thus it might be said that F. Joseph Smith (see note 27 above) fell (more violently than in most such cases) between two stools: philosophy and musicology. He was certainly disappointed by both professions. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that both professions failed him, as with Günther Anders on the side of non-success (though Anders enjoyed far more success than Smith despite the fact that his extraordinary work was not translated into English) and even Adorno despite his clear renown. On the side of philosophy, it did not help that Anders was associated with continental philosophy, which is a marginalized approach in professional philosophy (and which has just about disappeared and what it now practiced as continental tends to be done by those with analytic background who admit, without a trace of irony, that they don’t see a difference). And although Smith was one of the founding members of the American Heidegger Society, he, also “officially” withdrew from the society (with a good deal of anger in his letter to the society that was met with complete incomprehension), for reasons having less to do with Heidegger than Smith’s own frustrations with the fads of Heidegger scholarship that tend alas to characterize the Heidegger Society. As a scholar he also suffered as he managed to be one of the few tenured professors to nonetheless lose a job for ideological reasons and was treated with the kind of uncommon disrespect the academy reserves for thinkers who do not cultivate mainstream themes in mainstream ways. Indeed, and as both Adorno and Anders also observed, monotony and repetition is rewarded in the cultural collectivity. This contradictory double speak bodes ill for radical thinking, as the current fortunes of critical theory in the wake of Habermas — no friend of Adorno, and vice versa, illustrates. To this day, the original Frankfurt School remains without an institutional legacy be it in Frankfurt or Berlin or anywhere else.
- ³¹ Smith, *The Experiencing of Musical Sound: Prelude to a Phenomenology of Music* (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1979). Smith’s book is important but includes the occasional edge or academic protest and such a style can be fatal to a fair academic reception. What is certain is that his work is little noted, and although some scholars mention it in passing, they do not engage it.
- ³² See Roman Ingarden. Carl Dahlhaus, features a penultimate chapter, “Towards a Phenomenology of Music” in Dahlhaus, *Esthetics of Music* trans. William Austin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 74-83. See too Lawrence Ferrara and Elizabeth Behnke’s contribution “Music,” in Embree, et al., eds., *Encyclopedia of Phenomenology* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1997), pp. 467-473, reviewing most of the literature around Husserl.
- ³³ Smith, *The Experiencing of Musical Sound*, p. 105.
- ³⁴ Smith, *The Experiencing of Musical Sound*, p. 105.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 95ff.

- ³⁶ Ibid., p. 147. There is, as there is always such historical difficulty, as Nietzsche himself was fond of noting in antiquity, some dispute about the person of Jacques de Liège called Jacobus. In this dispute, the name, and the work may refer to Iacobus de Oudenaerde, who was also a Professor at Paris, and thus an academic favorite, or else another Jacobus, one Iacobus de Montibus. This confusion follows the Latinization of medieval names, Jacobus Leodiensis, *Speculum musicae*, ed. Roger Bragard, *Corpus scriptorum de musica*, Vol. 3/6 (Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1955). See further in addition to Smith's three volume commentary on de Liège, his essay "Jacques de Liège's Criticism of the Notational Innovations of the *Ars Nova*," *Journal of Musicological Research*, Vol. 4, Issue 3-4, (1983): 267–313. Cf. too Ernest McClain's similarly number oriented in his *The Myth of Invariance*.
- ³⁷ See Dorit Tanay, *Noting Music, Making Culture: The Intellectual Context of Rhythmic Notation, 1250–1400*. (Holzgerlingen: American Institute of Musicology and Hänssler-Verlag, 1999) as well as Laurie Köhler, *Pythagoreisch-platonische Proportionen in Werken der ars nova und ars subtilior* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1990), 2 volumes, and more formulaically, Anna Maria Busse Berger, "The Evolution of Rhythmic Notation" in: Thomas Street Christensen, ed., *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory, The Cambridge History of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 628–656. A recent thesis takes a modern approach to the theme. See Karen Desmond, *Behind the Mirror: Revealing the Contexts of Jacobus's Speculum musicae* (NYU, Diss. 2009).
- ³⁸ See Friedrich Kittler's 2003 essay "Zahl und Ziffer," translated by Geoffrey Winthrop-Young as "Number and Numeral," *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol. 23, 7/8 (2006): 51–61.
- ³⁹ Ibid., p. 69. The passage continues "— and thanks to Turing they are so once again." Ibid. But see further and in addition, as Kittler himself recommends, his teacher, Johannes Lohmann's studies on Pythagorean mathematics and music: Lohmann, *Musiké und Logos. Aufsätze zur griechischen Philosophie und Musiktheorie* (Stuttgart: Musikwissenschaftliche Verlags-Gesellschaft, 1970). And see too Kittler, *Musik und Mathematik. Band 1: Hellas, Teil 1: Aphrodite* (Munich/Paderborn: Fink, 2005) and his *Musik und Mathematik. Band 1: Hellas, Teil 2: Eros*. (Paderborn/Munich: Fink, 2009).
- ⁴⁰ See for a discussion Babich, "[Wort und Musik in der Antiken Tragödie. Nietzsches 'fröhliche' Wissenschaft.](#)" *Nietzsche-Studien* 37 (2007): 230–257, I replicate Nietzsche's own illustration below.
- ⁴¹ See again my essay, Babich, "Nietzsche's Philology and Nietzsche's Science" and Babich, "The Science of Words or Philology" as well as Günther, *Rhythmus beim frühen Nietzsche*.
- ⁴² See further on this technical dimension, "*Mousike techne*."
- ⁴³ Ibid.
- ⁴⁴ It must be underscored, with some regret that that we have yet to begin to engage his claim as philosophers if must also be said that classical philologists remain, if anything, still further away from such engagement, despite the efforts of Pöschl, William Arrowsmith, Hugh Lloyd-Jones. Other scholars such as Glenn Most but also Cančik and James Porter are happy to bring Nietzsche into the fold but they do not see as their task the issue of engaging Nietzsche on music or indeed on the matter of prosody. And at the same time one must also note that this shows signs of beginning to change. See Babich, "The Science of Words or Philology" and see too for a discussion of the methodological relevance of classical philology for science, especially for the structure of Darwin's origin of the species, Babich "Towards a Critical Philosophy of Science."
- ⁴⁵ This is the subtitle of Thomas Harrison's *1910: The Emancipation of Dissonance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). The term is usually attributed to Arnold Schoenberg who uses it in his 1926 essay "Gesinnung oder Erkenntnis?" in: Schönberg, *Stil und Gedanke. Aufsätze zur Musik*, ed. Ivan Vojtěch (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1976), Vol. 1, p. 211. But see for a discussion of the origination of Schönberg's "Emanzipation der Dissonanz" in August Halme's 1900 *Harmonielehre*, as "Befreiung der Dissonanz." See Rafael Köhler, *Natur und Geist. Energetische Form in der Musiktheorie* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1996), throughout, but here: p. 230ff. Of course the claims in this regard go even further back in the 19th century (see here, among others, Barbara R. Barry, *The Philosopher's Stone*:

Essays in the Transformation of Musical Structure [New York: Pendragon Press, 2000]) a circumstance to be expected given the dynamic between consonance and dissonance as this Beethoven discusses just this tension in his own writings on composition, as does indeed, and to be sure, everybody else.

- ⁴⁶ See Brian Kane's discussion of Pierre Schaeffer's *Traité des objets musicaux* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1966), and his *La musique concrète* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1967) in Kane "L'Objet Sonore Maintenant: Pierre Schaeffer, Sound Objects and the Phenomenological Reduction," *Organised Sound*, 12, 1 (2007): 15-24 as well as Solomos, *Schaeffer phénoménologue* in: *Ouïr, entendre, écouter, comprendre après Schaeffer* (Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 1999). Kane notion of the profiling of the "emergent sound object" (Kane, pp. 21f) and, in the technological, especially the radio era, the "acousmatic" reduction of sound "to the field of hearing alone" (Kane, p. 19) although indebted to Schaeffer as well as Attali and manifestly to Adorno also seems convergent with Levarie's discussion cited earlier. This is also a point that Smith seeks to make using the neologism, acoumenology, or the phenomenology of sound. In Smith, p. 91ff.
- ⁴⁷ Again, see Ashby, *Absolute Music* and others, particularly Robert Hullot-Kentor insightful reading in *Things Beyond Resemblance: Collected Essays on Theodor W. Adorno* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), especially his "Second Salvage," see in particular pp. 107ff.
- ⁴⁸ Allison, *Reading the New Nietzsche* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), p. 64. Allison specifically references Robert Jourdain, *Music, the Brain, and Ecstasy: How Music Captures Our Imagination* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1997).
- ⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ⁵⁰ Beethoven's studies with Albrechtsberger, as we may read these and as Nietzsche would have known them, may be found in a collection from Beethoven's handwritten posthumous works as edited by Ignaz Xavier Seyfried (Available in Henry Hugo Pierson's edition in both English and German. See *Ludwig van Beethovens Studien im Generalbass, Contrapunkt und in der Compositionslehre aus dessen Handschriftlichen Nachlass gesammelt und herausgegeben von Ignaz Xaver von Seyfried* (Leipzig/Hamburg/New York: Schubert & Comp, 1853 [1832]), throughout but especially p. 130. In English as *Studies in Thorough-bass, Counterpoint and the Art of Scientific Composition. Collected from the Autograph Posthumous Manuscripts of the Great Composer and first published together with Biographical Notices Ignatius von Seyfried, Translated and Edited by Henry Hugh Pierson (Edgar Mannsfeldt), with Beethoven's Portrait, and Other Illustrative Plates* (Leipsic, Hamburg and New York: Schubert and Comp, 1853). Cf. Johann Georg Albrechtsberger's *Gründliche Anweisung zur Composition mit deutlichen und ausführlichen Exempeln, zum Selbstunterrichte, erläutert; und mit einem Anhang: Von der Beschaffenheit und Anwendung aller jetzt üblichen musikalischen Instrumente* (Leipzig: Breitkopf, 1790). It should be said, of course that in the interim we do not read Seyfried at all, as decreed by Gustav Nottebohm, *Beethoveniana: Aufsätze und Mittheilungen*, (Leipzig Rieter Biedermann, 1872), pp. 175ff. Nottebohm's specific complaints are that Seyfried is incomplete, in places inaccurate, that he transcribes some of Beethoven's studies along with Albrechtsberger and Fux and others, without indicating which is which. Indeed as Nottebohm concludes, using an argument not unlike the argument used to exclude the material in Nietzsche's similarly invented *Will to Power*, "Es ist also, als Ganzes genommen, falsch." Nottebohm, *Beethoveniana*, p. 203. In the impatient scuttlebutt of modern history, this has meant that one does not read Seyfried and Nottebohm's criticisms have absolute standing. I cannot but leave this to one side, however the facts may stand or fall (and my point here is that this is unquestioned) because the Nietzsche of *The Birth of Tragedy* would only have had reference to Seyfried in any case.
- ⁵¹ M. Owen Lee, *Athena Sings: Wagner and the Greeks* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division, 2003).
- ⁵² Allison, *Reading the New Nietzsche*, p. 64.
- ⁵³ Allison, *Reading the New Nietzsche*, p. 65.

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- ⁵⁴ Allison, *Reading the New Nietzsche*, p. 66.
- ⁵⁵ Allison, *Reading the New Nietzsche*, p. 67.
- ⁵⁶ Thus Ruth A. Solie prefaces her discussion with an epigraph from Eduard Hanslick and Edward Dannreuther's 1876 "Beethoven and his Works." See Solie, "Beethoven as Secular Humanist: Ideology and the Ninth Century in Nineteenth Century Criticism" in: Eugene Narmour and Ruth Solie, eds., *Explorations in Music, the Arts, and Ideas: Essays in Honor of Leonard Meyer* (New York: Pendragon, 1988), pp. 1-42 (and also included as the first chapter in Solie, *Music in Other Words: Victorian Conversations* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004]). As Solie points out, drawing instructively on Barthes, the terms "Titan" and "Prometheus" are widely associated with Beethoven (pp. 3-4), and of course and to be sure, these terms run throughout Nietzsche's first book.
- ⁵⁷ Dannreuther, "Beethoven and his Works" cited in Solie, "Beethoven as Secular Humanist," p. 14. Solie cites Nietzsche's invocation word and tone, the very point (p. 16), but she does not comment further as it serves only to set off Wagner's crowning/contestation of Beethoven.
- ⁵⁸ Franz Brendel, *Die Musik der Gegenwart und die Gesamtkunst der Zukunft* (Leipzig: Bruno Hinze, 1854), p. 173. Here Brendel also cites, as Solie does, Wagner's „Denn die Musik ist ein Weib.“ And see F. P. Laurenein, „Beethovens Missa *Solemnis* und deren Stellung zur Gegenwart und Vergangenheit,“ *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (5 July 1861, 2nd part of a series), 10-12, here p. 10. See Vollbach, *Die Zeit des Klassizismus: Beethoven* (Munich: no publisher's details listed, 1905), p. 59.
- ⁵⁹ See Otto Jahn, *W. A. Mozart, Zweiter Theil* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Hartel, 1867 [1856]). Jahn's report echoes that of Schindler and Seyfried, but follow direct communication with Czerny, where the dispute concerns the nature of the improvisation in question. See here: Ludwig Schiedermair, *Der junge Beethoven* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1925), p. 185.
- ⁶⁰ Such claims begin fairly early, see, for example: Hugo von Daffner's pamphlet, *Friedrich Nietzsches Randglossen zu Bizets Carmen* (Regensburg: Gustave Bosse, 1912) as well as John W. Klein, "Nietzsche and Bizet," *Musical Quarterly*, IX, 4 (1925): 482-505. See further, George Leiner, "To Overcome One's Self: Nietzsche, Bizet and Wagner," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, No. 9/10, (Spring/Autumn 1995): 132-147 but see too Benoît Goetz, "Nietzsche aimait-il vraiment Bizet?" *La Portique*, 8₂ (2001) and somewhat obliquely, Sander L. Gilman, "Nietzsche, Bizet, and Wagner: Illness, Health, and Race in the Nineteenth Century," *The Opera Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 2-3 (Spring-Summer 2007): 247-264.
- ⁶¹ This is the powerful presupposition of many scholars, from Ernst Bertram to Curt Paul Janz as to Tracy B. Strong and indeed to Georges Liébert. In addition to the argument of his book, *Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration*, Tracy B. Strong repeats this claim and further extends it to include a reference to my own notion of concinnity, in his introduction to Richard Polt's translation of Nietzsche's *Twilight of the Idols*, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1997), pp. vii-xviii, especially pp. xx-xxii.
- ⁶² I argue that Nietzsche writes *The Gay Science* in part to reprise the argument of *The Birth of Tragedy*. See Babich, "Nietzsche's 'Gay Science'" in *Words in Blood, Like Flowers*, p. 55ff.
- ⁶³ Stephen Hinton, "Not Which Tones? The Crux of Beethoven's Ninth," *Nineteenth Century Music*, XXII/1 (Summer 1998): 61-.
- ⁶⁴ See too Ian Bent, "Plato-Beethoven: A Hermeneutics for Nineteenth-Century Music?" *Indiana Theory Review*, Vol. 16. (1995): 1-33. A former student of Gadamer (like the present author herself), Bent offers an insightful discussion of the working of hermeneutics in classical philology as well as classical musicology, in both senses of "classical." Andrew Bowie's "Adorno, Heidegger and the Meaning of Music," *Thesis Eleven*, 56 (February 1999): 1-23 does not engage the issue of hermeneutics to the extent that he is concerned to engage mainstream names in mainstream philosophy, like Roger Scruton. Yet one cannot get to the heart of continental contributions to the philosophy of music by remaining fixed in this way on mainstream concerns. This plea for hermeneutic sensitivity is essential where

Adorno's own concerns have everything to do with the "becoming quotation" of music, that is also its culinary commodification. I note too that Nicholas Cook makes a similar point with regard to the tendency to read Nottebohm's transcription of Beethoven's Ninth "as if it were a purely mechanical process as distinct from making sense of them." Cook, *Beethoven Symphony, No. 9* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 18-19. For Cook, and this is one way of speaking of hermeneutic without invoking the term, "Beethoven's sketches have to be interpreted rather than simply read." (p. 19).

⁶⁵ Hinton, "Not *Which* Tones?", p. 61.

⁶⁶ Ibid. See especially Hinton's illustrations of Beethoven's Symphony Number Nine, movement IV, baritone recitative, mm. 216-236, p. 62.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 63. See here Hinton's illustrations of Beethoven's Symphony Number Nine, movement IV, instrumental recitative, mm. 7-16 and 81-84, p. 62.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 66. Hinton, who had been Carl Dahlhaus's assistant at the Freie Universität Berlin, notes this crucial point (rare even within Nietzsche scholarship), citing the Kaufmann translation of Nietzsche's "Music and Word" in Dahlhaus, *Between Romanticism and Modernism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 103-119.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 67.

⁷⁰ Loraux, *The Mourning Voice*, p. 14ff. "The theater of Dionysus is not in the agora," which serves as the title for Loraux's second chapter is also repeated as incipit: as the first line and is the basis for her radical — in the truest sense of the term — geo-philosophical, geo-philological reading of ancient tragedy.

⁷¹ I take this up in Babich, "[Mousike techne: The Philosophical Praxis of Music in Plato, Nietzsche, Heidegger](#)." In: Robert Burch and Massimo Verdicchio, eds., *Gesture and Word: Thinking between Philosophy and Poetry* (London: Continuum, 2002), pp. 171-180; 200-205.

⁷² Both disciplinary assumptions are wrong has been shown again and again. Such refutations can be found in a good many studies but they tend nonetheless to remain bootless. Thus such a scotosis that grievously mars what would otherwise have been Ferenc Feher's very insightful reading of the relationship between Max Weber's musicological studies and those of Bloch and Adorno in Feher's "Weber and the Rationalization of Music," *International Journal of Politics and Society* 1 (2) (Winter 1987): 147-162. Feher follows Lukacs and misses the point and the fundamental substance of Nietzsche if his reason for this is well-meaning, marking off a fascist proto- or still-Nazi political readings of music from other, better kinds, thereby claiming the latter on Weber's behalf. But as we shall see, Feher errs in his summary of Nietzsche's project: "For Nietzsche, it was precisely Socratic rationality, the spirit, and the gaze of the antimusical observer of tragedy, that had undermined and ultimately destroyed the Dionysian qua the musical and had doomed to failure tragedy as a genre. In turn, both music and tragedy would resurrect, through the anti-Socratic, Aryan, and thoroughly anti-rationalist spirit of German music, the music of Richard Wagner." (p. 148) With or without its implicit value judgments, Feher's description articulates what is conventional wisdom for most theorists. For one rather regrettable example of a theorist who knows his way about Riemann and Wagner but who assumes that a similar conversancy is unneeded even in a discussion of Nietzsche, see Leslie David Blasius, "Nietzsche, Riemann, Wagner: Where Music Lies," in: Suzannah Clark and Alexander Rehding, *Music Theory and Natural Order: From the Renaissance to the Early Twentieth Century*, p. 93-107. Limiting himself to little Nietzsche and limited commentary (just the analytic and high Wagnerian Julian Young and Eric Blondel's fairly unmusical and just as fairly analytic study of Nietzsche and "the body," Blasius gives himself an author's pass in a parenthesis on his first page: "(Given the almost accidental character of his references to the theorist, I trust that my own misappropriation of Nietzsche is no more irresponsible than that of others.)" (p. 93). But and to the plain extent that Nietzsche's references were not all accidental, Blasius's confidence is unfounded. For

my own part, I have found that is wise to be careful with an author who seems as easy or ripe for the picking as Nietzsche.

- ⁷³ These texts in KGW II/2 and also appear in part in English translation, thanks to the efforts of William Arrowsmith, who also published as polemical intervention (that that it worked, but for my part, I find the effort laudable, Nietzsche's "Wir Philologen," specifically as directed to contemporary Classicists. See, for example, the translation by James Halporn, cited above, of Nietzsche's "On the Theory of Quantitative Rhythm" James W. Halporn, trans. *Arion*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Summer, 1967): 233-243.
- ⁷⁴ Nietzsche, "Introduction" to his first lecture, KGW, II₃, p. 7
- ⁷⁵ See, Babich, "Wort und Musik in der Antiken Tragödie," p. 235.
- ⁷⁶ From Babich, "Musik und Wort in der Antiken Tragödie und *La Gaya Scienza*," p. 235.
- ⁷⁷ See on Kittler in a related if broader context, Geoffrey Winthrop-Young, *Kittler and the Media* (London: Polity, 2011). And see for a useful discussion of Kittler, Nandita Biswas Mellamphy, "[Nietzsche's Pharaonic Thought: Hieroglyphic Transduction](#)."
- ⁷⁸ See on Heinrich Köselitz or Peter Gast, Frederick Love, *Nietzsche's Saint Peter: Genesis and Cultivation of an Illusion* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991).
- ⁷⁹ Nietzsche, *Griechische Lyriker*, KGW II/2, p. 375.
- ⁸⁰ Nietzsche, *Greek Rhythm*, KGW II/2, p. 102.
- ⁸¹ Nietzsche, *Greek Rhythm*, KGW II/2, p. 102.
- ⁸² See Loraux's discussion of *Orchestik* in her study, *The Mourning Voice*. As A. M. Dale notes in an earlier discussion, the reference to dance is vestigial at best: "'arsis' and 'thesis' echo the lift and fall of the dancer's feet." Dale, *The Lyric Metres of Greek Drama*, p. 2. In a footnote she further emphasizes caution, before noting that her own discussion will be left to her final chapter: "These terms, obscured as they have been by the varied and contradictory usage of past generations of scholars can only lead to confusion in a modern system of metric." (Ibid.) A number of authors who write on Nietzsche's "Orchestik" manage to leave the Greek origination of the term out of consideration both in reviewing Nietzsche's own writings and their estimation of its current significance. Thus Axel Pichler in his Nietzsche, *Die Orchestikologie und das dissipative Denken* (Wien: Passagen Verlag, 2010) makes what I believe is a great contribution to dance but I regret that Pichler excludes a discussion of Nietzsche's own textual focus on antiquity per se and which must be interpreted, as Nietzsche does and intriguingly as Dale does in her own work above, with reference to lyric poetry and meter (and it is in this context that Nietzsche invokes folk song). Pichler useful discussion does use the Greek term which is missing in Georg Stauth and Bryan S. Turner's Weberian and hence regrettably less philosophical and still less philological account in their wonderfully (but misleadingly titled) *Nietzsche's Dance: Resentment, Reciprocity and Resistance in Social Life* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988). In addition to Dale's broader study, see the above cited monograph by Günther's on Nietzsche and rhythm and see too Günther, „Am Leitfaden des Rhythmus. Kritische Wissenschaft und Wissenschaftskritik in Nietzsches Frühwerk“ in: Carlo Gentili & Cathrin Nielsen, eds., *Der Tod Gottes und die Wissenschaft. Zur Wissenschaftskritik Nietzsches* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), pp. 107-122. See too Adorno, *Towards a Theory of Musical Reproduction*, p. 57. As Curt Sachs writes, in accord with Nietzsche's time measure and as opposed to stress: "The metric accents in both poetry and melody followed the so-called quantitative principle, they materialized as long syllables or short ones, not as strong among light beats." Curt Sachs, *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World: East and West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1943), p. 263. Adorno likewise foregrounds ancient dance in the context of his own comments on Riemann "Ad ancient musical notation," in: Adorno, *Towards a Theory of Musical Reproduction*, p. 57.
- ⁸³ Nietzsche, *Greek Rhythm* in : KGW II/2, p. 102.
- ⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 103.

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- ⁸⁵ Ibid.
- ⁸⁶ Illich uses this illustration in his *In the Vineyard of the Text*, his commentary on Hugh of St. Victor's *Didascalicon*. "They listen to recitations done on one tone (*recto tono*)..." p. 59.
- ⁸⁷ See the reference to Thurmond above. Indeed, in a coincidental correspondence with the current context, characterizing both Beethoven (and Brahms) as the 'Greeks of musical art' (96), Godowsky similarly emphasizes the fundamental rules of interpretation for piano mastery: "There are laws of interpretation. One of them is never to lay stress on a consonance but rather on a dissonance. The stronger the dissonance, the heavier the stress put upon it." Harriette Brower, *Piano Mastery: The Harriet Brower Interviews. Talks with Paderewski, Hofmann, Bauer, Godowsky, Grainger 1915-1926*, Jeffrey Johnson, ed., (NY: Dover, 2003), p. 98.
- ⁸⁸ After: James Morgan Thurmond, *Note Grouping* (Camp Hill, Pennsylvania: JMT Publications, 1982).
- ⁸⁹ Adorno, "On Jazz," p. 152. This also recurs in Robert Fink's defense of Susan McClary's transgression against the elders of standard Beethoven reception as she details in her *Feminine Endings* and as inspired fits of anxiety. See for his own insightful account, Fink, "Beethoven Antihero: Sex, Violence, and the Aesthetics of Failure, or Listening to the Ninth Symphony as Postmodern Sublime" in: Andrew Dell'Antonio, ed., *Beyond Structural Listening: Postmodern Modes of Hearing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 109-153. Note that Fink defends McClary and also and at the same time stakes his claim to a reading of Beethoven's sublime contra Dmitri Tymoczko's "The Sublime Beethoven: Did the Composer Share an Aesthetic Principle with Immanuel Kant?" *Boston Review A Political and Literary Forum*, 2000, answering no, not Kant but Lyotard. I note in passing that the status of the postmodern remains worrisome for musicologists and other theorists although it has by now lost most of its threatening cachet. See too where Fink takes this up again, Fink's *Repeating Ourselves: American Minimal Music as Cultural Practice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005) and see also Robynn J. Stillwell, "[Hysterical Beethoven](#)," *Beethoven Forum*, 10.2 (2003): 162-182.
- ⁹⁰ For a discussion of ancient Greek music drama, here in connection with Wagner, see Fr. Owen Lee, *Athena Sings*.
- ⁹¹ See Beethoven himself here: Henry Hugo Pierson, ed., *Ludwig van Beethovens Studien im Generalbass, Contrapunkt und in der Compositionslehre aus dessen Handschriftlichen Nachlass gesammelt und herausgegeben von Ignaz Xaver von Seyfried* (Leipzig/Hamburg/New York: Schubert & Comp, 1853 [1832]), throughout but especially p. 130.
- ⁹² As Beethoven formulaically explains that "*Keine Dissonanz soll eher resolvieren, als bis der Sinn der Worte völlig geendet ist — Wo man sich verweilet: lange Noten; wo man wegeilet: kurze Noten.*" Ibid., p. 316.
- ⁹³ In his *The Rational and Social Foundations of Music*, Max Weber, the theorist of the 19th century writes that "The intervals contained in harmonic triads or their inversions are (either perfect or imperfect) consonances. All other intervals are dissonances. Dissonance is the basic dynamic element of chordal music, motivating the progression from chord to chord. Seventh chords are the typical and simplest dissonances of pure chord music, demanding resolution into triads. In order to relax its inherent tension, the dissonant chord demands resolution into a new chord representing the harmonic base in consonant form." Ibid., p. 6. See for a then contemporaneous discussion, which would also be extremely important for Adorno, August Halm, *Harmonielehre* (Berlin: Göschen, 1900) and for a recent account, Lee Allen Rothfarb, *August Halm: A Critical and Creative Life in Music* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2009).
- ⁹⁴ I cite this elsewhere, but see for a brief discussion, Nicholas Cook, *Beethoven: Symphony No. 9* (Cambridge University Press, 1993).

- ⁹⁵ For a general discussion of what the author calls the “symphonic monument that towered over the nineteenth century,” Daniel K. L. Chua, *Absolute Music and the Construction of Meaning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 235f.
- ⁹⁶ Thus it is important to place Nietzsche in his own context, not only as someone whose life was enfolded, encircled by music as the music theorist Curt Paul Janz articulates this throughout his multi-volume biography of Nietzsche’s life. Indeed it is relevant here that Janz has also edited a volume of Nietzsche’s own musical work.
- ⁹⁷ This begins with Wilamowitz von Moellendorff. It is worth reflecting that to this day philologists take Wilamowitz to have won the day and simply skip any reading Nietzsche even when their own themes concern his areas of specialization.
- ⁹⁸ See on this transfiguring effect, Tracy B. Strong, *Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration*.
- ⁹⁹ I discuss this in several places, particularly Babich, [Words in Blood, Like Flowers](#) as well as “Wort und Musik in der Antiken Tragödie” and again in *The Hallelujah Effect*.
- ¹⁰⁰ Cf. KSA 7, 1 [53], 25-26.
- ¹⁰¹ Loraux, *The Mourning Voice*, p. 54.
- ¹⁰² See Siegfried Mandel, “Genelli and Wagner: Midwives to Nietzsche’s The Birth of Tragedy,” *Nietzsche-Studien* 19 (1990): 212-225 as well as Dieter Jähnig for a discussion in *New Nietzsche Studies*, Volume Four: Nos. 1 & 2, Summer/Fall 2000, pp. 77-121, and, more generally, Peter Durno Murray, *Nietzsche’s Affirmative Morality: A Revaluation Based in the Dionysian World* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), p. 9.
- ¹⁰³ Cf., again, KSA 7, 1 [53], 25-26. This is also the central theme of Tracy Strong’s *Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
- ¹⁰⁴ [„We see how the poet, seeking to interpret his deep Germanic Dionysian impulse in images that as a modern man he only barely knows how to stammer. If Beethoven now represents what is actually Schiller’s underground, we thus have the infinitely-higher and more perfect.” Heft 1871 10 This point recurs in Nietzsche’s remark towards the end of his *Beyond Good and Evil*: Achtes Hauptstück, Völker und Vaterländer 245. " . . . Beethoven is the intermediary between an old mellow soul that is constantly crumbling and a future over-young soul that is constantly *arriving*; upon his music there lies that twilight of eternal loss and eternal extravagant hope—the same light in which Europe lay bathed when it dreamed with Rousseau, when it danced around the Revolution’s Tree of Liberty and finally almost worshipped before Napoleon. But how quickly *this* feeling is now fading away, how hard it is today even to *know* of this feeling—how strange to our ears sounds the language of Rousseau, Schiller, Shelley, Byron, in whom *together* the same European destiny that in Beethoven knew how to sing found its way into words!—,,
- ¹⁰⁵ See Nietzsche, *Schopenhauer as Educator*, §9 vii
- ¹⁰⁶ Nietzsche, *Schopenhauer as Educator*, 3. (iii)
- ¹⁰⁷ Nietzsche, Heft - Anfang 1874 - Frühjahr 1874 – 52.
- ¹⁰⁸ Thus we read Wagner’s final (and coincidentally literally philological footnote to his 1870 *Beethoven*: “In Härtel’s otherwise so admirable *Complete Edition of Beethoven’s Works* a member of what I have elsewhere styled the ‘Musical Temperance Union,’ entrusted with the “critical” supervision, has effaced this speaking feature from pages 260 *et seq.* of the score of the Ninth Symphony, and on his own authority has substituted for the ‘frech’ of Schott’s Original Edition the decorous, the moral-moderate ‘streng.’ Pure chance disclosed to me this falsification, whose motive is calculated to fill us with grave anxiety as to the ultimate fate of the works of our great Beethoven if they are to be subjected to a revision progressing along such lines.—R. WAGNER. From: Richard Wagner, *Beethoven* translated by William Ashton Ellis, from *Actors and Singers: Richard Wagner’s Prose Works*, Volume 5, pp. 61-126.

Published in 1896. The relevance of this point is already patent early in the last century, see Gerhard Rosenkrone Schjelderup, *Richard Wagner und seine Werke: ein Volksbuch*, (Leipzig: Leuckart, 1913), p. 440 as well as most recently, Anton Seljak, *Friedrich Nietzsche: Wegbereiter der philosophischen Moderne. Eine Annäherung* (Norderstedt: Books on Demand, 2011) and for a discussion that specifically addresses Wagner's focus, Martine Prange "Nietzsche's Artistic Ideal of Europe: The Birth of Tragedy in the Spirit of Richard Wagner's Centenary Beethoven-essay," *Nietzsche Forschung, Nietzsche und Europa – Nietzsche in Europa* (Oldenbourg: Academia Verlag, 2007), pp. 91-117. For his part, Nietzsche echoes this same verbal point which he connects with his own (by no means uncomplicated terminology of the "free spirit" in his *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, where he writes in the last section before his epilogue to this, his final text, "Es gibt freie freche Geister, welche verbergen und verleugnen möchten, daß sie im Grunde zerbrochne unheilbare Herzen sind – es ist der Fall Hamlets: und dann kann die Narrheit selbst die Maske für ein unseliges *allzu gewisses* Wissen sein. —" KSA 6, p. 436.

¹⁰⁹ Here I acknowledge and gratefully refer to Robert Fink's email concerning the dynamic of Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah* precisely as such a "strophic song." Indeed, Fink's discussion of strophic song repays reading and my own discussion in *The Hallelujah Effect*, in correspondence with Fink and McClain, with specific reference to other performances of Cohen's songs as such also illustrates the way in which musical styling renders strophic song as such. See more broadly, Fink, *Repeating Ourselves: American Minimal Music as Cultural Practice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

¹¹⁰ See Schoenberg, *Theory of Harmony 100th Anniversary Edition*, Roy E. Carter, trans. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Nietzsche, KSA 7, 7 [127], p. 185. Emphasis added.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 363. This is an Aristotelian allusion.

¹¹⁵ This is evident in Manos Perrakis' *Nietzsches Musikästhetik der Affekte* (Freiburg: Alber, 2011) regrettably not especially informed by Nietzsche's philological studies. But there are other instances such as Aldo Venturelli's "Der musiktreibende Sokrates. Musik und Philosophie in der Entstehungsgeschichte der Geburt der Tragödie" and Christoph Landerer "Form und Gefühl in Nietzsche's Musikästhetik," both in Volker Gerhardt and Renate Reschke, eds., *Nietzscherforschung: Jahrbuch der Nietzsche-Gesellschaft, Vol. 13: Zwischen Musik, Philosophie und Ressentiment* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2006), pp. 25-38 and 51-57 respectively, and as I have sought to argue in other contexts. See too, for background Friedrich Nietzsche, *Der Musikalische Nachlass*, ed. Curt Paul Janz (Basel: Barenreiter, 1976).

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Nietzsche, BT §1.

¹¹⁹ Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, §53, p. 88. I have already cited many of those who read Beethoven and Adorno, be it against Adorno or through him, and see for a recent discussion engaging the theoretical concerns of both Adorno and Horkheimer and the "totalitarian" undercurrents in Schiller, Nicholas Vaszonyi "Hegemony through Harmony: German Identity, Music, and Enlightenment Around 1800" in Nora M. Alter, ed., *Sound Matters: Essays on the Acoustics of German Culture* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2004), pp. 33-48, here esp. pp. 40ff.

¹²⁰ See for a discussion of Nietzsche's very early use of synaesthetic metaphor, Babich, "[Between Hölderlin and Heidegger: Nietzsche's Transfiguration of Philosophy](#)," *Nietzsche-Studien*, 29 (2000): 267-301 and see too Diana Behler, "Synaesthesia in Nietzsche's *Die Geburt der Tragödie* and Its Correlation to French and Russian Symbolism; Melanges offerts a Jacqueline Leiner," in: Antoine, ed., *Carrefour de Cultures* (Tubingen : Narr, 1993). See also Rainer Hansche, "[Nietzsche's Synaesthetic Epistemology: The Restitution of the Holistic Human](#)" and Martin Seel takes this up in the context of aesthetics in his book *The Aesthetics of Appearing*, John Farrell, trans. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), pp. 29ff. and Nietzsche himself returns to the notion of synaesthesia with his reference to "Chladni sound patterns" in his *The Gay Science* §373, reflecting on how little such investigations tell us about music. It can be hard to situate the project in contemporary terms as current research is not only important for the science of weather research (and control) but also for a host of other related interests. Regarded as the father of meteoritics, Chladni also explored visual acoustic patterns in sound or cymatics, see Ernst Florens Friedrich Chladni, *Entdeckungen über die Theorie des Klangs* (1787) as well as and including systematic depictions of the different sound figures formed, in each case, with respect to a specific tone in his *Die Akustik* (Olms, Hildesheim [reprint: Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1802], 2004.). On Chladni, see Dieter Ullmann's *Chladni und die Entwicklung der Akustik von 1750-1860* (Basel 1996). See further, Ernst Heinrich Weber and Wilhelm Weber, *Wellenlehre auf Experimente gegründet oder über die Wellen tropfbaren Flüssigkeiten mit Anwendungen auf die Schall- und Lichtwellen* (Leipzig, 1825) and in general on the topic of acoustic vibration patterns, see Waller 1961. In addition see Christa Jungnickel, Russell McCormmach, *Intellectual Mastery of Nature. Theoretical Physics from Ohm to Einstein. Volume 1: The Torch of Mathematics, 1800 to 1870* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986). Sound figures are also of interest in the world of nanotechnology, see Marko Dorrestijn, et al. „Chladni Figures Revisited Based on Nanomechanics," *Phys. Rev. Lett.* 98 (2007): 026102-1-4. Beyond physics, see for a historical discussion of the notion of metaphor [*Übertragung*] in scientific physiology, Laura Otis, „The Metaphoric Circuit: Organic and Technological Communication in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 63.1 (2002): 105-128. Otis refers to Nietzsche in passing (p. 125f). For a thorough discussion, see Thomas L. Hankins and Robert J. Silverman, *Instruments and the Imagination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999). Adorno discusses a kind of musical limit condition, a writing of music that had never been sounded. See Adorno on Chladni and Ritter in "Nadelkurven" in his *Musikalische Schriften* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1984), pp. 525-529, first published in *Musikblätter des Anbruch* 10 (February 1928): 47-50 together with „Die Form der Schallplatte," pp. 530-534. Today, the term is used by neuroscientists, in both normal but especially in pathological contexts, see for example, Richard Cytowic, *Synesthesia: A Union of The Senses*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002) and Cretien van Campen, *The Hidden Sense. Synesthesia in Art and Science* (Cambridge, MA: Leonardo Books, 2007) as well as and in a metonymic conjunction or contraction to describe more a more ecstatic aesthetics, see for one example, Josephine Machon, (*Syn*)aesthetics: *Redefining Visceral Performance* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

¹²¹ Thus Ernst Hans Gombrich emphasizes the dangers of historical "presentism", echoing Nietzsche and Heidegger, and here specifically the classical historian H. D. F. Kitto as he does so, that it is "always risky to assume that the ancient Greeks operated with the same concepts of religion, science and art as we do. They had no word for art..." *The Image and the Eye: Further Studies in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (London: Phaidon, 1982) p. 218. As he observes, like Heidegger, in his encyclopedia article „Kunstliteratur," *Atlantisbuch der Kunst: eine Enzyklopädie der bildenden Künste*, Zurich, 1952, pp.665-679, the concept of art was alien to antiquity, as both the Greek *techne* and the Latin *ars* referred to "any form of skill." Here p. 667.

¹²² See my essay "Nietzsche's Erotic Artist as Actor/Jew/Woman," Chapter Nine in: Babich, *Words in Blood, Like Flowers*, p. 147f.

¹²³ *Human, All-too-Human*, I: §153.

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- ¹²⁴ Nietzsche, KGW III/4, 21 [22], S. 122. I discuss this in Babich, ““On Nietzsche’s Zarathustra as Empedocles’ Reformer and Lucian’s Übermensch,” in Eli Friedlander and Horst Hutter eds., *Becoming Loyal to the Earth: Nietzsche’s Teaching as a Therapy for Political Culture* (London: Continuum, forthcoming: 2013) and see too Babich, [“The Philosopher and the Volcano,”](#) *Philosophy Today*, 2011.
- ¹²⁵ Ibid.
- ¹²⁶ Adorno, *Beethoven*, p. 156.
- ¹²⁷ Adorno, *Beethoven*, p. 157.
- ¹²⁸ Adorno, *Beethoven*, p. 157.
- ¹²⁹ Adorno, *Beethoven*, p. 140.
- ¹³⁰ Adorno, *Beethoven*, p. 143.
- ¹³¹ Adorno, *Beethoven*, p. 143.
- ¹³² Babich, [“Nietzsche and Eros Between the Devil and God’s Deep Blue Sea: The Erotic Valence of Art and the Artist as Actor — Jew — Woman,”](#) *Continental Philosophy Review*, 33 (2000): 159-188, here p. 174.
- ¹³³ Babich, [“Nietzsche’s Post-Human Imperative: On the “All-too-Human” Dream of Transhumanism.”](#) *The Agonist*. Vol. IV, Issue II (2012): 1-39, here p. 24.
- ¹³⁴ See Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia, 1983), p. 16 and see too the subtle and very musical point Joan Stambaugh also argues in her important and too little understood book, *Nietzsche’s Thought of Eternal Return* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1972).
- ¹³⁵ Beethoven and Hölderlin were both born in 1770 and as Günter Miethe observes the influence of Schiller’s Ode to Joy, “An die Freude” is to be seen in Hölderlin’s representation of Bacchus as “Freudengott” in Miethe, *Friedrich Hölderlin: Zeit und Schicksal* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2007), p. 113.
- ¹³⁶ Nietzsche, KSA 7, 9 [29], p. 281.
- ¹³⁷ Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy*, §25.
- ¹³⁸ See Tenney, James. *A History of ‘Consonance’ and ‘Dissonance’*. London: Routledge, 1988..
- ¹³⁹ Johann Samuel Ersch, Johann Gottfried Gruber, et al., *Allgemeine Encyclopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1822), p. 202. Gottfried Weber was the author of the entry as well as of a *Theory of Musical Composition: Treated with a View to a Naturally Consecutive Arrangement of Topics*, trans. John F. Warner (London: Robert Cocks and Co., 1851), Volume 1, including a section exploring traditional definitions of dissonance. The first mentioned encyclopedia entry is drawn in part from the larger book, in the section on tied or slurred or bound dissonances, in his chapter on preparation, pp. 234ff. Tenney’s nuanced *A History of ‘Consonance’ and ‘Dissonance’* begins where it is best to begin with harmony, and the belonging together of the two notions. Thus Tenney’s first footnote underlines nothing other than “the currently equivocal status of *dissonance* and *consonance*,” p. 32. Helmholtz analyses consonance and dissonance in these terms, speaking of pulses or beats, in his *On the Sensations of Tones*, (Dover, New York 1954 [1862]). Using the language of wave interference and the terminology of entanglement that may be familiar to readers of popular science authors on quantum mechanics, the 19th century physicist and student of physiological psychology defines consonance in his “Retrospect” as “*a continuous, dissonance an intermittent sensation of tone. Two consonant tones flow on quietly side by side in an undisturbed stream; dissonant tones cut one another up into separate pulses of tone.*” p. 352. The beauty of this definition is that it allows a mathematical model but the point of the distinction is already expressed for Helmholtz in Euclid whom he cites: “Consonance is the blending of a higher with a lower tone. Dissonance is incapacity to mix, when two tones cannot blend, but appear rough to the ear.” See on this Robert Fink’s

discussion of Helmholtz in his *The Origin of Music: A Theory of the Universal Development of Music* (The Greenwich-Meridian Co., 1981), pp. 132ff in addition to the brilliant historian of science, H. Floris Cohen's discussion in his *Quantifying Music: The Science of Music at the First Stage of Scientific Revolution 1580-1650* (Frankfurt am Main: Springer, 1984), foregrounding a beautiful discussion of Zarlino and Kepler on distinguishing consonance and dissonance. Today's scientifically minded cognitive philosophy makes much of this and recent research feeds this interest. See, e.g., Karen Johanne Pallesen, Elvira Brattico, et al., "Emotion Processing of Major, Minor, and Dissonant Chords: A Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging Study," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences. The Neurosciences and Music II: From Perception to Performance*, Vol. 1060, (December 2005): 450-453. I would note here without pursuing it further, that Pallesen et al. tilt their results, despite the impressive epistemological appeal of their mathematical models, to the extent that they begin with hermeneutically expert subjects, namely musicians.

- ¹⁴⁰ As noted, Schoenberg uses it in his 1926 essay "Gesinnung oder Erkenntnis?" But for a discussion of the origination of Schönberg's "Emanzipation der Dissonanz," see August Halme's *Harmonielehre* (Berlin: Göschen, 1900) analyzed as "Befreiung der Dissonanz." See too, again, Köhler, *Natur und Geist*. But see too, also relevant here, Duke Ellington "Interview in Los Angeles: On Jump for Joy, Opera, and Dissonance as a 'Way of Life,'" included in: Mark Tucker, ed., *The Duke Ellington Reader*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 150.
- ¹⁴¹ Nietzsche cites: „Hier sitz' ich, forme Menschen / Nach meinem Bilde, / Ein Geschlecht, das mir gleich sei, / Zu leiden, weinen, ? Genießen und zu freuen sich, / Und dein nicht zu achten, / Wie ich.“ Goethe, Prometheus, J. W. Goethe, *Goethe's Werke: Vollständige Ausgabe letzter Hand*, Vol. II (Stuttgart: J. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung, 1827 [1773]), pp. 76-78.
- ¹⁴² Today, of course, this need hardly be said, the focus on Wagner has been transposed into whatever art form one might favor, from rock and roll to jazz to the blues and so on.
- ¹⁴³ Despite, of course, the efforts in the past by William Arrowsmith, Hugh Lloyd-Jones and others, as already noted.
- ¹⁴⁴ I note however that to the extent that we focus on Wagner we do tend to miss the overall context and thus ascribe an all-or-nothing kind of dependency on Wagner to Nietzsche. This can be especially dangerous when it comes to Nietzsche's understanding of music in general as well as when it comes to his notoriously poorly understood first book on tragedy. Thus Nietzsche was influenced by Wagner's music as well as his theoretical writings and I am not arguing against that and because the literature abounds in arguments of this kind I have not felt the need to repeat them here. Rather I have been arguing that Nietzsche, like Wagner himself, was influenced by Beethoven's music and particularly by the notes on counterpoint that he thought he could rightly take from Beethoven, but which as we noted above Seyfried fails to underscore as they also drew on other teaching notes as those could also have resonated with Nietzsche in this way. Thus I also argue that Nietzsche was influenced by yet another nominal relative of Wagner starting with the first sentence of his first book on tragedy. This *other* Wagner, Johann Jakob Wagner's *Aesthetik* thus frames Nietzsche's first line in his first book, illuminating what Nietzsche here calls "the science of aesthetics." Nietzsche, BT §1. In fact the reference the battle between the sexes makes sense both generically and specifically if we add in the importance of this aesthetics of music. "Prime ist der Ton der ganzen Saite, Oktave der der halben Saite, und umgekehrt in der Bewegung: Prime ist der Ton der einfachen, Oktave der der doppelten Bewegung. Prime und Oktave verhalten sich in Masse und Bewegung wie 1 zu 2. Ist die Oktave in der Schwingung doppelt so schnell und hat die Prime nur die Hälfte ihrer Schwingung, so ist bei jener nur die Hälfte der Masse von der Prime. Prime und Oktave sind identisch, weil beide doppelt und beide halb sind. Das ist das reine Consonanzverhältniß. Eine Consonanz ist, wenn der eine Ton gerade so viel Bewegung mehr hat, als der andere Masse. Ist das Verhältniß nicht so, so entsteht eine Dissonanz. Das Verhältniß von Prime und Oktave ist ein Weltverhältniß, denn das Reale hat gerade soviel Masse mehr, als das Geistige Bewegung mehr hat. Im Geschlechtsverhältniß heißt die Consonanz Ehe. Der Mann hat die Ganzheit von Geist und Halbheit von Gemüth, das Weib die Ganzheit von Gemüth und Halbheit

von Geist, — Die Prime steigt zur Oktave hinauf durch Terze und Quinte und die Oktave steigt durch sie zur Prime herab. Terze und Quinte sind Mittelstufen und drücken das Erlöschen der Prime und Hervortreten der Oktave aus. Sie sind im magnetischen Stabe die Pole. In der Mitte liegt der Indifferenzpunkt; rechts und links davon, wo der Plus- und Minus-Pol anfängt sichtbar zu werden, sind die von dem Entdecker ungeschickt sogenannten Gulminationspunkte.“ Johann Jakob Wagner, *Aesthetik*, ed. Philip Ludwig Adam (Ulm: Adams Verlag, 1855), pp. 83. In addition, Johann Jakob Wagner also discusses the chorus and the nature of dissonance, consonance, accord and so on.

¹⁴⁵ Nietzsche, BT §22.

¹⁴⁶ I discuss this, as noted, in Babich, “Music and Word.”

¹⁴⁷ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, §24.

¹⁴⁸ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, §25.

¹⁴⁹ “What is the feeling for harmony? On the one side, a subtraction [*wegnehmen*] of the with-sounding *mitklingenden* overtones, on the other side, a not-individual-hearing of the same.” Nietzsche, KSA 7, 164.

¹⁵⁰ Including discussion of the complexities of Nietzsche’s correspondence with von Bülow as with the musicologist Fuchs and indeed with the composer Peter Gast and so on. There are many efforts that attempt to begin to do this — and they are well known — but almost without exception they tend to be preoccupied with Wagner, which makes it hard to see the details. But a good start may be had, at least in the case of Köselitz in Frederick Love’s *Nietzsche’s Saint Peter: Genesis and Cultivation of an Illusion* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991) as well as in the work of Curt Paul Janz, “Die Kompositionen Friedrich Nietzsches,” *Nietzsche-Studien*, 1 (1972): 173-184 and “Nietzsche Verhältnis zur Musik seiner Zeit,” *Nietzsche-Studien*, 7 (1978): 308-26 as well as his three volume *Friedrich Nietzsche Biographie* (Munich: Hanser, 1993).

¹⁵¹ In fact the reference the battle between the sexes makes sense both generically and specifically if we add in the importance of this aesthetics of music. “Prime ist der Ton der ganzen Saite, Oktave der der halben Saite, und umgekehrt in der Bewegung: Prime ist der Ton der einfachen, Oktave der der doppelten Bewegung. Prime und Oktave verhalten sich in Masse und Bewegung wie 1 zu 2. Ist die Oktave in der Schwingung doppelt so schnell und hat die Prime nur die Hälfte ihrer Schwingung, so ist bei jener nur die Hälfte der Masse von der Prime. Prime und Oktave sind identisch, weil beide doppelt und beide halb sind. Das ist das reine Consonanzverhältniß. Eine Consonanz ist, wenn der eine Ton gerade so viel Bewegung mehr hat, als der andere Masse. Ist das Verhältniß nicht so, so entsteht eine Dissonanz. Das Verhältniß von Prime und Oktave ist ein Weltverhältniß, denn das Reale hat gerade soviel Masse mehr, als das Geistige Bewegung mehr hat. Im Geschlechtsverhältniß heißt die Consonanz Ehe. Der Mann hat die Ganzheit von Geist und Halbheit von Gemüth, das Weib die Ganzheit von Gemüth und Halbheit von Geist, — Die Prime steigt zur Oktave hinauf durch Terze und Quinte und die Oktave steigt durch sie zur Prime herab. Terze und Quinte sind Mittelstufen und drücken das Erlöschen der Prime und Hervortreten der Oktave aus. Sie sind im magnetischen Stabe die Pole. In der Mitte liegt der Indifferenzpunkt; rechts und links davon, wo der Plus- und Minus-Pol anfängt sichtbar zu werden, sind die von dem Entdecker ungeschickt sogenannten Gulminationspunkte.“ Johann Jakob Wagner, *Aesthetik*, ed. Philip Ludwig Adam (Ulm: Adams Verlag, 1855), pp. 83. It should be added to that Johann Jakob Wagner also discusses the chorus and the nature of dissonance, consonance, accord and so on.

¹⁵² I discuss this, as noted, in Babich, “Music and Word.”

¹⁵³ Just in order to write a recent book, from I have drawn for the essay, [The Hallelujah Effect](#), it cost the author (the copyright holder, Sony in this case, does not charge such fees to the publisher) nearly a thousand dollars for the right to quote Cohen’s *Hallelujah*.

¹⁵⁴ I take this up obliquely in my discussion of Sloterdijk and Žižek in Babich, “[Sloterdijk’s Cynicism: Diogenes in the Marketplace](#)” in: Stuart Elden, ed., *Sloterdijk Now* (Oxford: Polity, 2011), pp. 17-36;

186-189 and more recently, more directly at the conclusion of Babich, “Heidegger on Overcoming Metaphysics,” *Telos: Special Issue on Politics After the End of Metaphysics*. (Fall 2012).

- 155 Although I am suggesting that there is more overlap between the groupings in question, I recommend [Erica Glaiser’s Social Media Participation Chart](#) also posted, which is how I came across it, on Mark Carrigan’s [Sociological Imagination](#) for a very nice outline of the same.
- 156 I discuss Anders and music in connection with Adorno in the *Hallelujah Effect*. I offer a broader discussion of Anders in relation to technology and its culture in Babich, „[Geworfenheit und prometheische Scham im Zeitalter der transhumanen Kybernetik Technik und Machenschaft bei Martin Heidegger, Fritz Lang und Günther Anders](#),” in: Christoph Streckhardt, ed., *Die Neugier des Glücklichen* (Weimar: Bauhaus Universitätsverlag, 2012), pp. 63-91. Forthcoming in English as “On Machines as the Masters of Humanity: Martin Heidegger, Günther Anders, and the Singularity of Digital Technology.”
- 157 See my discussion of this in connection with Adorno and Nietzsche (among others) in Babich, “[Adorno on Science and Nihilism, Animals, and Jews](#),” *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy/Revue canadienne de philosophie continentale*, Vol. 14, No. 1, (2011): 110-145.
- 158 Adorno, *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music* (Stanford: Stanford University Press,), p. 28.
- 159 Adorno, *Beethoven*, p. 30.
- 160 Adorno, *Beethoven*, p. 80.
- 161 Adorno, *Beethoven*, p. 80.
- 162 Adorno, *Beethoven*, p. 100.