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On Richard Wagner's concept of 'time'

Introduction

The main aim of my paper is to show how the concepts of 'time' and 'temporality' for Wagner relate to the notion of 'truth' which is more Hegelian in his late work. In his late writings, time, or, 'immediacy of experience', is perceived as the dimension in which truth should be articulated. Wagner's most important late writings that are taken into account in the present paper are as follows: *Zukunftsmusik* (1860), *Über Staat und Religion* (1864), *Was ist deutsch?* (1865), *Deutsche Kunst und deutsche Politik* (1867), *Zum Judenthum in der Musik* (1869), *Beethoven* (1870), *Über die Bestimmung der Oper* (1871), *Über Schauspieler und Sänger* (1872), *Über die Anwendung der Musik auf das Drama* (1879), *Wollen wir hoffen?* (1879), *Religion und Kunst* (1880), *Metaphysik, Kunst und Religion, Moral, Christenthum* (1870-1882).¹

In more detail, Wagner's reconstruction of another reality is based on the concept of art, and especially music, as possessing a relationship to reality. This kind of 'utopianism', which is worked more systematically in Wagner's writings from 1860 onwards, provides a juxtaposition between abstraction (the future reality) and immediacy of experience (mainly associated with the experience of listening to music).² By this juxtaposition, immediacy of experience is eliminated in a process of inwardization which is attained by means of recollection in music. There is no other concept better related to Wagner's above ideas than Hegel's notion of 'Erinnerung', mainly associated with the term 'Aufhebung'. In his *Phänomenologie* (1807) Hegel writes:

As its [*Erinnerungs*] fulfillment consists in perfectly knowing what it is, in knowing its substance, this knowing is its withdrawal into itself in which it abandons its outer existence and gives its existential shape over to recollection. Thus absorbed in itself, it is sunk in the night of its self-consciousness; but in that night its vanished outer existence is preserved, and this transformed existence—the former one, but now reborn of the Spirit's knowledge—is the new existence, a new world and a new shape of Spirit. In the immediacy of this new existence the Spirit has to start afresh to bring itself to maturity as if, for it, all that preceded were lost and it had learned nothing from the experience of the earlier Spirits. But recollection, the inwardizing, of that experience, has preserved it and is the inner being, and in fact the higher form of the substance. So although this Spirit starts afresh and apparently from its own resources to bring itself to maturity, it is none of the less on a higher level that it starts.³

It is precisely this meaning of 'Erinnerung' which is applied in Wagner's equation between 'recollection' (Erinnerung) and 'self-inwardization' (Er-Innerung).⁴ The same concept is applied even to Wagner's idea of improvisation which, in *Die Bestimmung der Oper* (1872), he perceives as a 'mimetic' one. (PW, V, 143) In this way, improvisation becomes a necessary 'reversal' of the poet's nature since the highest level of expression in Wagner's perception of 'Erinnerung' is perceived similarly to Hegel's concept of the same term: 'the immediacy of a new spiritual existence'. Immediacy, for Wagner, in this way, implies the further inwardization of experience achieved through the medium of music.⁵

Music and time

According to Hegel, music's role is to be perceived as follows:

Subjective inwardness constitutes the principle of music. But the most inward part of the concrete self is subjectivity as such, not determined by any form content and for this reason not compelled to move in this or that direction; rather resting in unbounded freedom solely upon itself.

Musical expression is only appropriate...for completely objectless inwardness, abstract subjectivity as such. This is our completely empty ego, the self without further content.⁶

It seems that Wagner's theory of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, mainly developed in his *Oper und Drama*, follows Hegel's above definition of music's role since music is perceived as a means for the expression of 'pure' emotion with an 'infinite' character which has to become objectified by other artistic means. Music, within this concept, preserves unity, or else, accommodates a meaningful correspondence with the Goethean aesthetic of the symbol according to which the particular aesthetic representation exists and gains legitimacy because of its indication of a universal.⁷ It is precisely the notion of 'universal' which music has to preserve within separated forms of expression so that its 'unbounded freedom' —to use Hegel's words in the above quotation— would gain some meaning by being directed to an object whose identification, however, is beyond its capacity. In this way, music's main role is to 'mediate' a given object so that this object, by relating itself to the notion of 'universality', should attain an 'inwardness' as a negation of its individualism. This main function of music, as perceived in Wagner's theory of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, involves an element of reflection which creates demands on the principle of 'recurrence' (*Wiederkehr*) once translated into music, if such a reflective structure is to be elaborated.⁸ 'Recurrence', in this way, becomes a principle which reflects theoretical statements not only as concerns the drama's plot but also as bearers of a wider reality which music is supposed to confront and bear within itself. While phenomenal reality is selectively articulated by means of action (gesture) and words (dialogue), music stands in between the phenomenal experience and its negation by continuously 'remembering' and interpreting such critical

experiences; all these create a compound symbolic language whose artistic originality is based on its lack of orientation as a conceptual unity with finite limits.

For Wagner, music is given a special function of corresponding to a process towards the optimum, or else, for heightening expression by representing its pure inwardness; on the other hand, music has to carry the weight of an interpreter who hovers between his attempt to be meaningful and his superficial attempt to underline the obvious by using simple metaphors. Both these functions are supposed to be fulfilled by the so-called 'leitmotivic' system which, in this respect, is simultaneously one of the strongest and yet weakest inventions of Wagner's theory of *Gesamtkunstwerk*. If music is to be both immediate and eternal, if it should claim temporality and, at the same time, protest against it, then it needs an ideological 'cover' which will secure its 'presence' and, at the same time, deny it in the name of its role as a mediator. Music, thus, should be both dynamic and static (or, temporal and atemporal); in the context of a drama, time and space should be 'annihilated',⁹ or time should become space.¹⁰ Wagner's notion of 'presence', in this sense, acquires a broader meaning than the one indicated by the word itself since 'presence' becomes an idea abstracted from the empirical form of time. Carl Dahlhaus gave a clear explanation of the meaning of the dramatic 'present' for Wagner:

[F]or Wagner, the child of an age permeated with the philosophy of Hegel, the individual moment receives its meaning from the history accumulated within it, and the present, even as represented on stage, is virtually 'inundated with the past' [...] The narrative of a music drama is [...] mainly a system of relations and interweavings intended to be externalised to the sensory faculties. Each moment on stage appears to be a point within the system, a point that sheds a particular colour and perspective on the whole. In other words, each separate leitmotif, besides expressing in music an instant within the drama, also forms a node within the web of leitmotives. This makes it possible for us to sense what Wagner understood by 'present': a point in time whose substance resides entirely in the fact that it serves to illuminate the meaning of part of the past.¹¹

However, such an extended 'present', which could only be articulated by a net of motives, did not just serve in order to illuminate the meaning of the drama's past but, also, extended the 'present' forward by proclaiming an idea before its concretization on stage by means of text and action. A definition of such a concept of 'presence' is well given by Klaus Kropfinger who divides time (or, 'time consciousness') into two categories, that is, into 'real' and 'ideal' time.¹² As he writes,

[R]eal time ties us to a particular point in time which, while part of a succession, excludes any possibility of our experiencing this in 'the present'. But ideal time, not being tied to the present, leaves us free to look into the past or future. This depends on the 'extended present' of ideal time, since our apprehension is actually in the nature of a progression.¹³

Casting off the empirical element of time, then, according to the theory of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, should be music's —especially melody's— goal. This concept is adumbrated in Wagner's early writings of the 1840s; however, a more mature theory is elaborated in Wagner's later writings from 1860 onwards. However, the inherent weakness of the role given to music in Wagner's theory of *Gesamtkunstwerk* is challenged by his own compositional practice: it is the leitmotivic system which has to be overcome if music is to claim its autonomy not only as the medium for a dynamic allegory of a historical 'becoming', but also as being the process of allegory itself.

What differentiates Wagner's later theoretical writings from the inconsistencies of the earlier ones is his greater consciousness of the 'absolute' (associated with the terms 'unity', 'universal', 'divine', and, metaphorically, with the notion of 'feminine') which should not be attained *by* means of music-drama but placed in direct contact with the perceiver *through* a music-drama. In this way, the role of a music-drama as a generator of theoretical statements is altered because the 'fragments' of truth should be left to be united by the perceivers. While in *Oper und Drama* Wagner attempts to reconstruct a relationship between different artistic means within a music-drama depending on the way they articulate meaning, in his late writings Wagner reconstructs a relationship between a music-drama and the perceiver; at the same time, with music placed at the heart of such a relationship, the role of music is being continuously re-interpreted. In this way, music's formal and symbolic role becomes more significant than before since music's restrictions as a means of expression within a music-drama are not defined through relationship with the other arts, but as conditioned by 'absolute' reality. We find support for the above arguments in the increasing importance given by Wagner to the definition of 'truth', or meaning, on the one hand, and to issues of performance, on the other.¹⁴

Music, time and truth

In the next paragraphs, I will explore the idea that art, in its very processes, according to Wagner's late theories, reflects the Hegelian identification of 'truth' with 'its own self-movement'. Wagner believed that he had discovered 'glimpses' of his later theories on aesthetics in Schopenhauer's writings which, therefore, helped him to define inner reality as totally distinguished from the outer one. However, the ideas which Wagner 'borrowed' from Schopenhauer merely assisted him to define further his own theoretical development of ideas. Thus, although music's role of expressing 'inwardness' was already articulated in Wagner's *Zukunftsmusik* (1860), in *Beethoven* (1870) it receives an additional ideological support from Schopenhauer since, as Wagner writes,

[Schopenhauer] starts from wonder at Music's speaking language immediately intelligible by everyone, since it needs no whit of intermediation through abstract concepts (*Begriffe*);...whereas..., the Poet interprets these ideas to the visual consciousness (*dem anschauenden Bewusstsein*) through an employment of strictly rationalistic concepts...., Schopenhauer believes he must recognise *in Music itself an Idea of the world ...*¹⁵

There is nothing new in the juxtapositions 'music-immediacy-feeling' versus 'poetry-abstraction-rationality'; we can even trace such concepts in Wagner's earlier essays of the 1840s. What is new, however, is the complete distinction between inner and outer reality which leads to a distinction between 'divine' and 'human' and, finally, between music's unique ability to express the 'divine' along with the highest essence of the 'human' and poetry's inadequacy to play a similar role unless it becomes as musical as music in its 'proper' sense. Whereas in *Oper und Drama* music should become a literal component in a music-drama during the so-called 'chief-moments' (with the help of the leitmotivic system) and, thus, act as poetry's 'second nature', according to Wagner's late ideas, the duet 'music-poetry' should be performed as two simultaneously heard solo parts in the sense that the 'musicality' of each of the arts of the drama will not depend on the way they are related to each other, but on their ability to become bearers of inner reality either separately or together. Thus, music's relationship to poetry ceases to exist in the sense it existed both in theory and in practice earlier on, since, if they were to become 'bearers' of the 'other' reality—whether Schopenhauerian or Hegelian is not a crucial question since, in this respect, Hegel's ideas on the 'sublime' and on the relationship 'subject-object' are present in the notion of the 'other' reality as expressed in Wagner's *Beethoven*—, music and poetry should properly adjust their forms to the process of 'truth' in order to reflect it to the audience. Poetry could function like that, for example, at moments of the drama when 'individualism' is at stake, when inner reality ceases to be 'real' and such negativity brings up a higher stage of consciousness; complete alienation becomes the 'otherness' of complete de-alienation, both of them been equally important and complementary concepts.¹⁶ However, truth should be transcended mainly through music with melody taken not as a literal component but as an element within a musical developmental structure. Performance, therefore, becomes the process which can introduce the most novel ideas, or the concept of 'newness' ('absolute' reality), because it denies stasis; additionally, it denies what is obvious by being transformed into a kind of ritual between performers and audience. Evidence for this statement is Wagner's idea of the audience's active participation in a performance of a work of art. On 6 January 1872, for example, Wagner told Cosima that he would like to have a theatre with circus-like podium so that the distinction between performer and spectator would vanish since there would be only participants; as we read in Cosima's *Diaries*,

[Wagner] would like to place the orchestra in the middle of the hall with the chorus surrounding it as in a circus; everyone should join in the singing...for this music is not just to be listened to, the true impression is to be gained only by those who are swept along inside it...he says all music is designed for its executants.¹⁷

Following the same principle, that is, the 'immanence' of truth, Wagner even thought of the theatre's own temporality; in the speech which he delivered at the ceremony in Bayreuth, 1872, Wagner recalled as models for his own theatre these festival halls 'with wooden structures' which were 'knocked together in German towns for gathering of singers and the like, and pulled down again as soon as the festival [was] over'. (PW, V, 324) For the expression of such a notion of temporality, music, the most temporally contingent art-form, appeared to be the most appropriate art not only in terms of its form but also in relation to a whole spectrum of ideas which linked temporality with the 'spirit', or the 'soul'.¹⁸

By using such a notion of 'temporality', Wagner forms his concept of performance's authenticity. Thus, according to another essay of the same period, (*Über die Bestimmung der Oper* [1871]),¹⁹ music is capable of producing 'truth' because a proper technique can secure a faithful reproduction of the composer's intentions. Poetry cannot always secure this 'immediacy' (improvisation) because the actors are not 'embodied' poets. Such an idea is largely due to Wagner's perception of poetry's role, which is bound up not only with the notion of 'individualism' but also with the notion of 'abstraction' which contradicts the notion of 'temporality' and, subsequently, that of 'truth'. Finally, because of the primacy given to performance, the voice is perceived as a means of expressing truth more 'naturally' and song, as 'instinctive transgressions', becomes an expression of ideal aspirations. (PW, V, p.152)

Wagner's arguments on music's and poetry's roles, therefore, are mainly focused on the way that these arts are performed; what Wagner attempts to express in his later essays is how a direct communication of the notion of 'truth' to the perceiver should take place. In doing so, Wagner pronounces musical performance as, by definition, adequate to communicate to the audience the notion of 'truth'; additionally, singers become 'mimes' and stand as interpreters between music and poetry corresponding, thus, both with outer and inner reality.²⁰

Temporality and truth (Christianity and Germanness)

Music's own autonomy is restricted not only because absolute reality is defined as something external to it but, also, because of its *required* correspondence with absolute reality. It is this limitation of music's autonomy which secures its combination with other arts in a form of a

music-drama and, moreover, it necessitates the existence of other arts in the formation of a 'perfect' art-work. Such a statement might sound paradoxical since, if nothing else, it is supported by a reasoning external to the argument and internal to the paradox created between Wagner's theory and practice. Thus, to put it briefly, if Wagner never reaches the point of writing symphonies —he often expressed a wish to do so in his later period of life— it is mainly owing to the fact that he never actually reaches the point of considering music as an autonomous art. Music's role as a perfect form of art in terms of expressing Christianity and Germanness (that is, truth, for Wagner) is still a role which is, more or less, a non-artistic one and this results in music's characterization either as a metaphor of the process of awakening from dreams or as a breakthrough from darkness to light.²¹ Thus, Wagner's metaphor of understanding as 'seeing' is deeply embedded in his consciousness although his visualization of truth as a process, together with the development of his compositional technique, enables musical forms to fall away from the architectural design of the 1840s and 1850s (i.e. chief moments in a drama which are compared with 'pillars' in *Oper und Drama*). However, music is still seen in relation to *what it is not* and this statement is more evident than ever in Wagner's ideas during his post-1860 period. It is this attitude towards music which enables the other —neglected— arts to participate in a perfect art-work as long as truth is seen as a separable form of reality, that is, as one which is not inherent in a 'chosen' art-form.²² The correspondence of poetry and visual forms with such a reality is briefly defined as 'mimetic improvisation', for poetry, and as 'externalizations of a dream-like procedure', for visual forms, with acting being a direct presentation of inner reality, owing to its temporality.

Epilogue

In conclusion, time, according to Wagner's late theory, is perceived as the dimension in which truth should be articulated; subsequently, dynamic forms become the proper medium of truth; and the leitmotivic methodology, as well as the earlier perception of an organic hierarchy in art, is drastically altered in terms of a substantial correspondence between the drama's structure and meaning. Music, in such a structure, stands for what is in itself (form) and what is for others (medium of truth).

Wagner's attitude towards music is seen as an attempt on behalf of culture in an age of literal 'decadence', according to his own interpretation of culture.²³ In this way, music's role is seen as a mode of cultural, philosophical and historical experience which can generate theoretical positions. Wagner's dialectics of 'absolute' reality, on the other hand, are coloured by the principles of 'Christianity' and 'Germanness'. In the last years of his life, Wagner perceived such principles as completely abstracted from phenomenal reality; it is no coincidence that, on 3rd March 1879, Wagner told Cosima that 'there are no Germans'. (CD, II, 273)

The abstraction of concepts into a 'historiography of spirit' goes hand in hand with Wagner's preference for absolute music and, in paradoxical terms, his preference for Bach rather than Beethoven because, as he believed, Bach's music had broken free from the phenomenal world whereas Beethoven's music remained always dramatic. In these last years of his life, Wagner contemplated the idea of writing monothematic compositions which, for him, were the only undramatic musical forms. This last statement, together with the fact that Wagner never realised such a concept, supports my argument that music, for Wagner, was never actually perceived as an autonomous form (a thing in itself) but only in relation to another reality, a utopia, which is maintained in society as a concept. Certainly Wagner would like to put a spell on music in order to identify it with that concept, but his 'vision' of a monothematic composition did not appear to be as ambitious as the veritable wish itself.

Friedrich Nietzsche, one of the first intellectuals who acknowledged the Hegelian quality in Wagner's music, was right to observe: "Er [Wagner] wurde der E r b e H e g e l 's...Die Musik als "Idee".²⁴

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The standard edition of the original German prose is Richard Wagner, *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen*, 2nd ed., 10 vols, (Leipzig, n.d. [1911-16]; reprint Hildesheim: Olms, 1976); hereafter cited in the main text as SSD. Prose citations in this chapter are in English. For Wagner's prose citations I have used the only complete English edition of *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, trans. William Ashton Ellis, 8 vols, (London: Kegan Paul, 1892-9); hereafter cited in the main text as PW.

² Utopianism's conceptual validity can be challenged by questioning its realism (in this case, its historicism) which brings up a contradiction between this term and 'historic inevitability' or, 'determinism' (utopian impulse involving the endeavour to escape the constraints of time and place). It might be the case that utopianism, within Wagner's ideology, loses its historical perspective and becomes closer to the inherent criteria and attributes of utopianism itself. This observation is determined by my belief that, at the later period, Wagner abstracts concepts from their historical concreteness and this results in a construction of an ideology which can be applied to both aesthetic and political ideas. On the other hand, the same abstraction expressed in Wagner's music, might indicate an inherent contradiction between its intentionality and the way of expressing it. For Adorno, this argument is seen within the following perspective: 'The contradiction underlying the formal and melodic structure of Wagner's music may generally be located in the fact that eternal sameness presents itself as eternally new, the static as the dynamic, or that, conversely, intrinsically dynamic categories are projected onto unhistorical, pre-subjective characters'. (Theodor Adorno, *In Search of Wagner*, trans. R. Livingstone, (London, 1991, 62). The coexistence of opposite tendencies, however, is not something to be seen as a negative, or even problematic element in Wagner's music since, even at an unconscious level, there is a Hegelian demand for underlying the otherness, although such a demand cannot always fulfill the dialectical process of 'becoming' in a Hegelian fashion. (See in more detail this argument in Anastasia Siopsi, *Richard Wagner's Der Ring des Nibelungen: The Reforging of the Sword or, Towards a Reconstruction of the People's Consciousness*, U.E.A., U.K., 1996 (PhD thesis))

³ G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J.B. Baillie, (2nd ed., London, 1931), 492.

⁴ Although P.W.Ellis has translated 'Er-innerung' as 'self-collection', I think that 'self-inwardization' renders better its meaning.

⁵ The idea of 'Erinnerung' creates an abstract process of 'becoming' (Werden) which Wagner applies to his theories of both politics and aesthetics and, also, focuses on the notion of 'development of consciousness' which, in his later writings, is perceived as a collective one (the folk's consciousness). In turn, it is this notion of 'collectivity' which coincides with the abandonment of 'individualism' within the ideological scheme of 'becoming' that allows Wagner to transform his deterministic attitude towards human evolution into an autonomous concept (a concept existing in itself) to be fulfilled by the process of 'becoming' within a holistic ideogram of society. The notion of 'collectivity' within the ideological scheme of 'becoming' creates a demand for spiritual hierarchy since the 'will' of the people (for Wagner, of the German folk) is abstracted and distinguished from people themselves. Due to the systematization of this idea, Wagner's theory emerges out of empirical reality; subsequently, 'truth' (as something in the process of becoming) is perceived as a notion between empirical reality and the concept itself being transcended. (See Anastasia Siopsi, "On the notion of 'Community': A comparative study between the early romantics and Wagner", *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, Vol. 42/2 (December 2011): 285-315).

⁶ Hegel, *Aesthetics* (1818-20); trans. T.M.Knox, *Aesthetics. Lectures on Fine Art*, (Oxford, 1975), 210, 129.

⁷ Since I refer to the notion of 'symbol' and, also, to that of 'allegory', it is as well necessary to clarify these terms briefly. Therefore, I will use Daverio's 'summary' of the Romantics' perception of the above terms which gives an outline of a quite clear conceptual distinction between them; it is as follows: ' [The Romantics], by aligning themselves with the symbol and disavowing the potency of allegory as a vehicle for modern poetic expression,...were able to clear out a space for their own achievements as thinkers and artists. For Goethe, who introduced the opposition, the simultaneous presence of the general *and* the particular in the symbol...accords with the very nature of poetry, while allegory is described as a mere means of seeking access to the general *through* the particular. The symbol is therefore intransitive (self-referential) and synthetic (capable of fusing contraries); insofar as it can be employed to point beyond itself, it also belongs to the class of motivated or natural signs. Allegory, on the other hand, is transitive, its poetic force exhausted as soon as its referent has been determined; and as an unmotivated or arbitrary sign, it signifies directly, much like a hieroglyph. If the symbol affords a means of expressing the inexpressible, then allegory answers to this infinity of meaning with a fixed term whose expressive power is used up at the very moment when its meaning has been uncovered.' In:

John Daverio, *Nineteenth-Century Music and the German Romantic Ideology*, (New York, 1993), 98.

⁸ As Adorno observes, to quote a brief comment on the principle of 'reflection', 'the mere fact of repeating something in an identical form involves an element of reflection'. (Adorno 1991, 38).

⁹ See *Oper und Drama (Opera and Drama)*, [1852], SSD III, 222-320, IV, 1-229; PW, II, 350.

¹⁰ See *Parsifal*, Grail scene, Gurnemanz's words to Parsifal: 'Du sieh'st mein Sohn, zum Raum wird hier die Zeit' ('You see my son, time here becomes space'). (*Parsifal*, Act I, scene 1) The expression 'time becomes space' in *Parsifal* identifies 'time' with 'eternity', that is, with the ideality of time whose 'presence' links past, present and future in a single reality.

¹¹ Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth Century Music*, trans. J.B. Robinson, (Berkeley, 1989), 197-8.

¹² Klaus Kropfingher, *Wagner and Beethoven, Richard Wagner's reception of Beethoven*, trans. P. Palmer, (Cambridge, 1991; originally published in German in 1974), 146. Klaus Kropfingher's definition of 'real' and 'ideal' time is based on Nicolai Hartman's observations in his *Philosophie der Natur*, (Berlin, 1950).

¹³ *Ibid.*, 146.

¹⁴ The above direction, taken in Wagner's late writings, is the one which creates the phenomenon of the 'aestheticization' (figuration) of the political so that a music-drama can be perceived as an aesthetic equivalent of Wagner's model for social renewal. There is a common structure between the artistic and the political which is their ability of uniting the empirical and the normative, or, the everyday and the absolute. Such a union creates an interdependence, or even, a tension between the genetic and the normative moment within their form. According to B. Singer, who attempts to make a comparison between the work of art and politics "politics [as a work of art] remains essentially mimetic; that is to say, it seeks to recover the truth of some underlying, virtual *physis* (be it defined in terms of the nature of man, or the polis, the genius of the people, a racial heritage etc.). Within the horizon of a particular mimetic structure, politics serves to render it present to itself and to render it present to itself in terms of a model that allows its identification as the embodiment of some deepest truth. Politics involve the creation of that "fiction" deemed necessary for the formation of collective identity...and as a fiction it is closely tied to the most archaic of "techné", "mythos",

In: Brian Singer, 'The "Heidegger affair": Philosophy, politics, and the "political"', *Theory and Society*, 22/4 (August, 1993): 539-68, 559).

¹⁵ *Beethoven*, [1870], SSD IX, 61-126; PW V, 57-126: 65.

¹⁶ I have in mind here Guttrune's scene in *Götterdämmerung*, Act III, scene 3. (See Siopsi, *Der Ring...*)

¹⁷ *Cosima Wagner's Diaries*, trans. G. Skelton, (London, 1978/80), 2 vols, hereafter CD; CD, I, 446-47. Here Wagner refers to the stage performance of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*.

¹⁸ See, for example Schiller's perception of the nature of music in the very interesting essay by Hans Schulte, 'Work and Music, Schiller's "Reich des Klanges"', in *The Romantic Tradition. German Literature and Music in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. G. Chapple, F. Hell & H. Schulte, (London, 1992), 133-64.

¹⁹ SSD IX, 127-156; PW V, 127-155.

²⁰ The importance of Wagner's essay on *Beethoven* rests on two main aspects: (i) the conceptualisation of music's role as a dynamic one, since music should enact an allegory of a process of someone's awakening from dreams and (ii) the subsequent search for an adaptation of a different musical vocabulary from that described in *Oper und Drama*, since the laws that music should obey now had to be 'inner' ones and, therefore, should not be conditioned, or dictated, by the needs of the drama. However, the essay proposes that musical vocabulary is supposed to change to the extent that music reconstructs the Hegelian 'becoming' not within its form but by its relationship to a system of ideas while, at the same time, having to respond to the overall dramatic plot. Whether these two roles of music are proved in practice to be compatible or not is a question which relates to the general issue of the relationship between different layers of meaning in Wagner's music-dramas and the way this relationship corresponds to dramatic forms. However, the point to be made here is that musical forms should owe their autonomy to the autonomy of reality, or 'truth', for which they stand not as symbols but as a medium. Additionally, the clarity of concepts, brought up by means of music, should only be related to what is truth and, since truth is identified with its process, music's own process can directly correspond to this notion.

²¹ See *Beethoven* (1870).

²² In this respect, music's relationship to other arts is conditioned by the ability of each of them to become a medium of the absolute. Whereas the opposition between inner and outer reality is defined in *Oper und Drama* as something inherent in the arts' potential ability, Wagner's later writings, even if they still articulate the restrictions implied by the nature of each of the arts by underlying the opposing functions between music and poetry, seem to 'resist' such definitions since Wagner takes pains to find roles for poetry and visual forms which will enable them to correspond to inner reality. (See *Beethoven* (1870), *Über die Bestimmung der Oper* (1871) and *Über die Schauspieler und Sänger* (1872).)

²³ The political implications of the idea of music's ability to express 'morality' is evident in Wagner's critiques of the development of culture in different nations. For Wagner, in the 1860s, to criticize the music of any given culture is enough in order to prove the signs of that culture's moral decadence. Thus, it is because of the notion of 'Jewishness' in music, according to Wagner, that both German and French cultures have morally been deprived. In these years, Wagner's notion of 'Jewishness' in music was defined in relation to an ideology which had as a central idea the elevation of the conservatism of the German spirit; this ideology was used as a standard *tableau* of critique against types of art which, according to Wagner, did not correspond to the folk's spirit. Thus, for example, Jews could not produce any kind of higher cultural music because Jewish music was not derived from the Jewish folk since its spirit had been lost. The Jewish intellectuals' attempts to restore the old purity of the Jewish songs was fruitless since they could not find their artistic material in the real source of life among the folk, because the songs' nature could not be reflected in this source. So, even if they controlled public taste, the Jewish intellectuals were alien both to the public's 'true' needs and to those of their own people.

²⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, 'Der Fall Wagner' (1888), in *Nachgelassene Schriften*, V13: *August 1888- Anfang Januar, 1889* (Berlin: Vintage Books, 1969), 30 (original emphasis).