

## Scruton, mysticism and music

A spectre is haunting Western culture - the spectre of mysticism. All the powers of Western culture have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre.<sup>1</sup> Mysticism, that great pornography of modern philosophy, assiduously studied and absorbed (by predominantly male philosophers) as its influence is dissembled about, denied<sup>2</sup> - or simply not recognised - has not only been fundamental to the rise of Western culture, of Western science - and to Marx's materialist theory of knowledge

---

<sup>1</sup> Pace Marx and Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, 1848

<sup>2</sup> Some examples:

- regarding Leibniz: 'The major representative of ... a pantheistic world view in the seventeenth century was, of course, Baruch Spinoza. ... For Spinoza ... God was simply identical to the world grasped in its entirety or as "one". Leibniz, whose conception of the relation of god and world had elements of this Neoplatonist emanationism, was clearly influenced by Spinoza and interested in his ideas, but at the same time did much to cover up this interest. ...

Leibniz's interest in Neoplatonism was ... not simply manifested in his metaphysical conception of the universe, which combines elements of the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions with those of the emerging new physics ... He also seems to have been attracted to, and interested in, mystical *experience* such as that of the medieval Christian mystics. According to Jean Baruzi, Leibniz was "nourished on mystic literature. He was familiar with Jacob Bohme, [John of] Ruysbroeck, John of the Cross, [Valantin] Weigel and [Johann Angelus] Silesius, as well as Saint Terese and Angela of Foligno" (Baruzi 1907: 436nl).' Paul Redding, *Continental Idealism: Leibniz to Nietzsche*, Routledge, London, 2009, pp. 33-34. In his Notes Redding wrote 'Kristeller (2001) and Popkin (1992) have drawn attention to the *Neoplatonic* features of Spinoza's thought.' and 'Hence Leibniz seemed to downplay his famous visit to Spinoza at the Hague in 1676.' p. 184.

- regarding Schopenhauer: 'The third dimension of silence concerns the reception of Schopenhauer's musical remarks. ... Schopenhauer's specifically musical remarks pervaded musical discourse amidst an aura of silence. Incorrectly I believe, some commentators interpret this silence as indicative of neglect. ... I shall suggest that, regarding Schopenhauer's specifically musical remarks, the fact of their silent reception was indicative not of neglect, but of a pervasive and uncritical approval.' Lydia Goehr, 'Schopenhauer and the musicians: an inquiry into the sounds of silence and the limits of philosophising about music' pp. 200-228 in Dale Jacquette, Ed., *Schopenhauer; philosophy, and the arts*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p. 203.

- regarding Nietzsche: 'Nietzsche had sent his student Adolf Baumgartner to borrow Max Stirner's works from the Basel library in 1874. Was it perhaps a precautionary measure to have the student bring them? In any case, that is how the news was received by the public'. Rudiger Safranski, *Nietzsche, A Philosophical Biography*, Trans., Shelley Frisch, Granata Books, London, 2002, p. 126. On the following page Nietzsche was quoted from a conversation in which he said that people would say he was a plagiarist but that the person with whom he was talking, who reported the conversation in her memoirs (Ida Overbeck, a close friend of his in the 1870's), would not let on that he was familiar with the writing of Stirner (referred to by Marx and Engels in their lengthy critique of him in *The German Ideology* as 'Saint Max' and 'John the Divine'). Safranski quotes one contemporary of Nietzsche's having written that Nietzsche would have been 'permanently discredited in any educated milieu if he had demonstrated even the least bit of sympathy for Stirner' p. 126.

- regarding Scruton: while seeking to delicately distance himself from Schopenhauer, Croce and Collingwood, he advocates (and uses them to advocate) the same Neoplatonism they do - Schopenhauer's 'bold theory of music' should be 'properly amended', Roger Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1999, pp. 49, 365 and Croce and 'his disciple' Collingwood 'set the concept of expression within a discredited metaphysical framework' (although we should do well to respect their theorising, 'even if we cannot endorse them entirely.' *Ibid.*, p. 148.

via the Christian Neoplatonist Hegel,<sup>3</sup> but continues to be pervasive today - particularly in our philosophy, in our visual arts and in our literature.<sup>4</sup> To progress in the most rounded manner - positioning linguistic, propositional reason as *one* form of thought - we must be honest and own all that has made us and the entirety of who we have become. What has nurtured and nurtures, what *comprises* the 'reason' and 'thought' we pride ourselves so much on?

The complexity of the *Enneads* is structured around the apophatic device of a sculptor hewing his marble. Beautifully translated by MacKenna,<sup>5</sup> it advocates a spiritual artistry of self that has resonated through Western culture. In its return from furthest emanation in the material world back to the One, Soul dances with desire in a profoundly aesthetic process of beauty, power, life and creativity. For these reasons Neoplatonism is a philosophy that has been particularly attractive to many with a belief in or commitment to creativity - but the Neoplatonic realm is one of contemplation and exists in consciousness divorced from practice and the material world - the former is *counterposed* against the latter. It will be my contention that key elements and the

---

<sup>3</sup> Redding wrote that Hegel linked the allegedly "speculative" dimension of Aristotle (his doctrine of *noesis noeseos*) 'to what for Hegel was the most developed form of Greek philosophy, late-antique neo-platonism, which could equally be considered a form of neo-aristotelianism (Hegel 1995: vol II, 381), especially in its Proclean form (438), and thereby to the *trinitarianism* of the succeeding Christian theology (440-9) which neo-platonism had influenced.' Paul Redding, 'Hegel's Philosophy of Religion' in Graham Oppy and Nick Trakakis Eds. *The History of Western Philosophy of Religion, Volume IV: Nineteenth-Century Philosophy and Religion*, Chesam: Acumen, 2007, pre-print, p.13; 'Hegel's link to Proclus was not lost on Ludwig Feuerbach, who labelled Hegel "the German Proclus."' Ludwig Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, Trans. M. H. Vogel, Intro. T. H. Wartenberg (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1986), p. 47. Nussbaum wrote 'Hegel's philosophy ... has been aptly described as "the crowning achievement of Neoplatonism."' Charles, O. Nussbaum, *The Musical Representation, Meaning, Ontology, and Emotion*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2007, p. 266. Redding wrote 'It is common within recent accounts of the emergence of German Idealism to find stressed the impact of Spinozism on the generation to which Schelling and Hegel belonged, but it is less common to find discussion of the neoplatonic aspects of their thought, despite the fact that this was commonly noted in the 19th century. ... Both early Schelling and Hegel were clearly attracted to Plotinian thought, and especially the particular role Plotinus had given to the processes of life.' Paul Redding, 'Mind of God, Point of View of Man, or Spirit of the World? Platonism and Organicism in the Thought of Kant and Hegel', pp. 9 and 10, in *Von Kant bis Hegel 4*, Concordia Univ., Montréal, October, 2008. Again, 'in contrast to Aristotle, Hegel's "theology" insists on the "incarnation" of God in man, symbolised in the divinity of Jesus. Thus Hegel might be said to have been a *Christian Aristotelianised* Platonist, but his is a form of Christianity in which ... there is no "transcendent" place for the God of Augustine.' Paul Redding, 'The Metaphysical and Theological Commitments of Idealism: Kant, Hegel, Hegelianism', 30.11.2008, p. 22, for volume, Douglas Moggach, Ed., *Politics, Religion and Art: Hegelian Debates*, Northwestern University Press, forthcoming. Neoplatonism was primarily built on an amalgamation of the writings of Plato and Aristotle - Porphyry wrote 'Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, especially, is condensed in (the *Enneads*), all but entire.' 'On the Life of Plotinus and the Arrangement of His Work' in Plotinus, *The Enneads* (Abridged), Trans. Stephen MacKenna, Penguin, London, 1991, p. cxii.

<sup>4</sup> William Franke's groundbreaking two volume anthology *On What Cannot Be Said*, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, 2007 traces the history of apophaticism in the West through the writing of its greats in philosophy, religion, literature and the arts. Mark Cheetham has written on its impact on pivotal moments in the visual arts: M. Cheetham, 'Mystical Memories: Gauguin's Neoplatonism and "Abstraction" in Late-Nineteenth Century French Painting', *Art Journal*, Spring, 1987, Vol. 46, No. 1 and *The Rhetoric of Purity, Essentialist Theory and the Advent of Abstract Painting*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991.

<sup>5</sup> 'But how are you to see into a virtuous Soul and know its loveliness? Withdraw into yourself and look. And if you do not find yourself beautiful yet, act as does the creator of a statue that is to be made beautiful: he cuts away here, he smooths there, he makes this line lighter, this other purer, until a lovely face has grown upon his work. So do you also: cut away all that is excessive, straighten all that is crooked, bring light to all that is overcast, labour to make all one glow of beauty and never cease chiselling your statue, until there shall shine out on you from it the godlike splendour of virtue, until you shall see the perfect goodness surely established in the stainless shrine.' I.6.9, Plotinus, *The Enneads*, op. cit., p. 54.

processes of Plotinus's philosophy, modified over a long period,<sup>6</sup> form the basis for Scruton's 'acousmatic realm', down to his *divorce* of that from the material world - with, as Plotinus also correctly held, no third possibility,<sup>7</sup> that the arguments he used to justify that 'realm' are Neoplatonic, that those who he discussed in support showed those same influences and that even those of whom he was critical - Adorno and Schoenberg - also, in turn, wrote and composed in the apophatic tradition.

As the divine creator of the *Timaeus* modelled the world of becoming on the world of being, Scruton, in reverse, modelled his phenomenal acousmatic realm (which 'beckons to the Platonic imagination [though] it will never persuade the sceptical philosopher'<sup>8</sup>) on that eternal moving image of eternity.<sup>9</sup> At the point where time intersects with the timeless,<sup>10</sup> the 'impassable'<sup>11</sup> metaphysical barrier we cross when we listen to music strips sound and the space it occurs in of physical causality leaving tonality, behind the acousmatic veil, as a force of nature. Tonality is subject to the causality of 'reason', the causality of 'life', and functions in a dynamic and flowing tonal world of 'pure process.'<sup>12</sup> In this virtual world of non-representational striving and metaphor, 'above' the world of mere contingency, the movement of the soul and the eternal order is revealed - 'even though the *how* of it lies deep in the nature of things and hidden from view.'<sup>13</sup> As we listen to music, we engage intuitively with "a peculiar 'reference without predication' that touches the heart, but numbs the tongue."<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> 'Early Christian theologians, for example, the fourth century thinker Marius Victorinus, "telescoped" the first two hypostases (the One and Intellect), combining them in the divine mind. According to Blumenthal, Plotinus himself occasionally telescoped the second and third hypostases (Intellect and World Soul). Later Neoplatonic thinkers, including Cusanus and Bruno, telescoped all three hypostases. This tendency to telescope the original Plotinian hypostases seems to have carried through to Kant's conception of the intuitive understanding.' Nussbaum, *The Musical Representation, Meaning, Ontology, and Emotion*, op. cit., pp. 348-349

<sup>7</sup> Scruton refers to the question underlying all others: 'Which precedes or is the product of the other - consciousness or matter (the philosophical concept for objective reality)?'

<sup>8</sup> Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music*, op. cit., p. 76.

<sup>9</sup> 'Of course, all this is a sophisticated illusion ... Plato in the *Timaeus*, and following him Plotinus, described time as the moving image (*eikōn*) of eternity.' Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music*, op. cit., p. 74.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 64. His quotation on this point is from T.S. Eliot/'The Dry Savages': 'The point of intersection of the timeless/With time, is an occupation for the saint.' The 'time' of Scruton's acousmatic realm - 'time lifted from the tangle of causes and presented in all its mystifying simplicity' - is Neoplatonic duration (to quote Scruton 'in the acousmatic realm temporal order is *dissolved*' [my emphasis] ... time emancipated from itself). Scruton writes 'the temporal nature of experience is so deep a fact, that it can never be explained without assuming it.' Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music*, op. cit., pp.74-76. 'Time' can, in fact, be explained quite simply - it is matter in motion. 'Clock time' is the conventional standard of measure of this.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 132. The desire for a unifying intuition (the immediate unity in 'knowledge' of subject and the object of its creation) underlies Plotinus's doctrine. He held that it is by this method that Soul attains complete unity with the One, thereby shedding all distinction and that any intuition depends on how much of what is being intuited we have within ourselves.

Scruton repeatedly emphasised *movement* in music, arguing that ‘musical motion is *pure* motion, *a motion in which nothing moves*’<sup>15</sup> (my emphasis) and attributes this motion to the inter-related functions of melody, harmony, rhythm and pitch.<sup>16</sup> The meaning and aesthetic worth of music depends on its expressive power. We, as ‘pure subjectivity, beyond the reach of concepts,’<sup>17</sup> respond to the expression (which Scruton defines negatively)<sup>18</sup> in music of another subjectivity and in recognising this, we empathetically absorb that expression - ‘what it is like to be you’, gaining a first-person perspective made immediately available to us. This awareness is non-discursive and ineffable.<sup>19</sup> ‘Expressive’ and ‘ineffable’ go together.<sup>20</sup> The experience of another’s expression ‘may provide an intimation of a whole state of mind, regardless of whether the state can be described’.<sup>21</sup> The voice for example, as in the polyphony of Palestrina, automatically transports us into a religious context of Neoplatonic duration<sup>22</sup>

Tonality with its melody, harmony and rhythm has the power to carry us through tonal space to unity: melody provides the unity of movement, rhythm the pulse of ‘life’ and rationality, miraculously fused, and harmony fills tonal space with an image of community beyond language. As one individual finds unity with another through their intuition of the expression of that person, so bodies of individuals - audience and orchestra. Scruton referred to Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy*, writing of a community that embraces each of us and of the cancellation of our separation from each other. Reaching back to unity through the communitarian resolution of alienation in Hegel, he writes ‘art endorses life only through the “we” of the implied community, which redeems the death and grief of the mere individual.’<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 49. Scruton makes this point a few times - again: ‘Although musical understanding involves the perception of imaginary movement, it is a movement in which nothing moves.’ Ibid. p. 211. Scruton continued in the above quotation ‘it is therefore *the most real motion*, motion manifest as it is in itself. Bergson too writes of melody as a “change in which nothing changes”.’ Bergson, who acknowledged his profound obligation to Plotinus (H. Larrabee, Ed., *Selections from Bergson*, New York, 1949, p. xiii) and who suggested the possibility of applying the term ‘God’ to the source from which all things flow, also positioned intuition and ‘movement’ at the centre of his Neoplatonic, vitalist philosophy. Proclus wrote of ‘the unmoved principle which is unmoved even in its activity’ Prop. 20, Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*, Trans. E.R. Dodds, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004, p. 23. Another indebted to Plotinus was Augustine who wrote “You are ever active, yet always at rest.” I.4, Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, Trans. R.S. Pine-Coffin, Penguin, London, 1961, p. 23.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Through melody, harmony, and rhythm, we enter a world where others exist besides the self, a world that is full of feeling but also ordered, disciplined but free.’ Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music*, op. cit., p. 502.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 350

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 169.

<sup>19</sup> ‘I imagine what it is like to be you, feeling this; I then entertain your emotion within my own point of view.’ Scruton writes a little bit later of ‘entering into’ someone’s state of mind. ‘There is nothing to be said about what I thereby come to know (because it is inexpressible) ... But the experience may be of peculiar importance ... cementing the bond between us’ Ibid., p. 362. In *On Hunting* Scruton wrote ‘There by the willow-cumbered banks I saw the moving image of eternity. Here was the unselfconscious union between species ... It was like God ... as inward and secret and comforting as the soul is, and as durable.’ p. 35. Again, ‘God intended that we ... see into the subjectivity of one another, and into the subjectivity of the world - which is God himself.’ p. 79. In M.W. Rowe, *British Journal of Aesthetics* Vol. 39, Issue 4, October 1999, pp. 423-429.

<sup>20</sup> Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music*, op. cit., p. 364.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 363.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 167. ‘The masses of Palestrina are important ... because they present, in musical form ... an experience of serene belief in the midst of tumultuous change, of *timeless stasis in the stream of time*. (my emphases) Ibid., pp. 430-431.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 495.

Key elements of Scruton's 'acousmatic' realm are also central to the philosophies of those on whom he drew or to whom he referred:

there is an ineffable other realm which can not be known but only referred to with apophatic devices:<sup>24</sup>

Nussbaum, writing of the 'idealists' 'horror of the contingent'<sup>25</sup> discussed 'the seldom-noted fascination of (the) arch rationalist (Kant) with a brand of Neoplatonic mysticism.' He wrote 'Toward the end of the *Dreams of a Spirit Seer*, Kant concludes, with characteristic resignation, that "human reason was not given strong enough wings to part clouds so high above us, clouds which withhold from our eyes the secrets of the other world".<sup>26</sup> That other noumenal world of 'in-itself' Schopenhauer named 'Will' - an arational, creative and pervasive flux<sup>27</sup> - of which essence music 'speaks.' We can only describe music by analogy.<sup>28</sup> The 'Will' of Schopenhauer became Nietzsche's Dionysiac will of ineffable Oneness.<sup>29</sup> Nietzsche wrote: 'music forces us to see more and more deeply than we otherwise would ... to our spiritualised inner vision ... How could the verbal poet supply anything analogous, striving as he does to achieve that internal expansion and illumination of the visible stage-world indirectly, with the much more imperfect mechanism of words and concepts?'<sup>30</sup> Busoni wrote 'In the pursuance of my observations I have been gradually forced to the opinion that our conception of the essence of music is still fragmentary and dim; that only very few

---

<sup>24</sup> These include simile, metaphor, parataxis, suggestion, analogy and negation. Plotinus: 'strictly speaking, we ought not to apply any terms at all to It; but we should, so to speak, run round the outside of It trying to interpret our own feelings about It, sometimes drawing near and sometimes falling away in our perplexities about It...' VI.9.3, Plotinus, *Enneads*, op. cit., quoted in Vol. I, p. xv; Proclus: 'Prop. 123. All that is divine is itself ineffable and unknowable by any secondary being because of its supra-existential unity, but it may be apprehended and known from the existents which participate it: wherefore only the First Principle is completely unknowable, as being unparticipated.' Proclus, *The Elements of Theology* op. cit., p. 109.

<sup>25</sup> 'This horror of the contingent, as it might be called, is at the root a metaphysico-religious sentiment.' Nussbaum, *The Musical Representation, Meaning, Ontology, and Emotion*, op. cit., p. 259. 'Already in the *Dreams of a Spirit Seer* (65) we find Kant claiming that "[t]he moral quality of our actions can, according to the order of nature, never be fully worked out in the bodily life of men, but it can be so worked out in the spirit-world, according to spiritual laws.'" Ibid., p. 353. Nussbaum himself accepts musical ontology with its 'types' and 'tokens.'

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 297.

<sup>27</sup> Schopenhauer's 'Will' is Plotinus's One - undifferentiated power beyond comprehension. "So he was all will, and there is nothing in him which is not that which wills - nothing, then, before willing. So he himself is primarily his will. So then he is also as he willed and of the kind he willed, and what follows upon his will, what this kind of will generated - but it generated nothing further in himself, for he was this already.' VI.8.21 in Plotinus, *Enneads* (in seven volumes), Trans. A.H. Armstrong, William Heinemann, London, 1966-1988, Vol. VII, p. 297. The title of the tractate is 'On Free Will and the Will of the One.' Plotinus also wrote on free will in relation to providence and fate in III.2-3. Also 'Neither can it have will to anything...' VI.9.6. Plotinus *The Enneads* op. cit., p. 543. Augustine's notion of free will was derived from Plotinus.

<sup>28</sup> 'Schopenhauer works also within an age-old tradition of German analogical mysticism' Goehr, op. cit., p. 202.

<sup>29</sup> 'the world-symbolism of music cannot be exhaustively interpreted through language, because it symbolically refers to ... the primal Oneness, and thus symbolises a sphere beyond and prior to all phenomena. In comparison with this, all phenomena are mere symbols: hence *language*, as the organ and symbol of phenomena, can never uncover the innermost core of music' Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit of Music* (1872) Trans. Shaun Whiteside, Ed. Michael Tanner, Penguin, London, 1993. p. 35. In stating that the language of the phenomenal sphere is utterly inadequate for that of 'the primal Oneness', Nietzsche has exemplified a 'limitation' with a very long and extremely influential history in which 'the ineffable' functions in a person's relations with *another and theological world* and not in this material one. Augustine, for example, wrote 'Then with a sigh ... we returned to the sound of our own speech, in which each word has a beginning and an ending - far, far different from your Word, our Lord, who abides in himself for ever, yet never grows old and gives new life to all things.' IX.10, Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, op. cit., pp. 197-198.

<sup>30</sup> *The Birth of Tragedy*, op. cit., p. 103.

are able to perceive it and fewer still to grasp it, and they are quite unable to define it.<sup>31</sup> Wagner wrote '[T]his unspeakable is not a thing unutterable per se, but merely unutterable through the organ of understanding.'<sup>32</sup>

that realm entails unity.<sup>33</sup>

Of Will Schopenhauer wrote that it is 'free from all *plurality* although its manifestations in time and space are countless. It is itself one, though not in the sense in which an object is one, for the unity of an object can be known only by contrast with a possible plurality; nor yet in the sense in which a concept is one, for the unity of a concept originates only by way of abstraction from a plurality; but it is one as that which lies outside time and space, the *principium individuationis*, i.e. the potential for plurality.'<sup>34</sup> Since music is the objectification of Will and therefore acts directly on the emotions of the hearer, it enables us to identify not only with Will but - therefore - with others. For Nietzsche, the Dionysian is a primal ground of Oneness which resolves differentiation and alienation, affirming the unity between people.<sup>35</sup> Music stimulates our intuition of Dionysiac unity. For Busoni, in music, Oneness and essence equate. He wrote that this is one of the most important and uncomprehended truths.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> Ferruccio Busoni, *The Essence of Music and Other Papers*, Trans., Rosamond Ley, Rockliff, London, 1957, p. 193. He continued 'My earlier realisation of the Oneness of music might pass as a premonition of what I set myself to formulate here: a premonition hitherto perceived intuitively by philosophers'.

<sup>32</sup> 'Beethoven's symphonies reveal to us through our feelings, Wagner writes: a schema of the world's phenomena quite different from the ordinary logical scheme ... [I]t thrusts home with the most overwhelming conviction ... that the logic-mongering reason is completely routed and disarmed.' in Goehr in Dale Jacquette, Ed., *Schopenhauer, philosophy, and the arts*, op. cit., p. 221

<sup>33</sup> Plotinus: 'The Unity is none of all; neither thing nor quantity nor quality nor intellect nor soul; not in motion, not at rest, not in place, not in time: it is the self-defined, unique in form or, better, formless, existing before Form was, or Movement or Rest, all of which are attachments of Being and make Being the manifold it is.' VI.9.3, Plotinus, *The Enneads*, op. cit., p. 539; Proclus: 'Prop. 20. ... all things, whatsoever their grade of reality, participate unity (prop. 1), not all participate intelligence: for to participate intelligence is to participate knowledge, since *intuitive knowledge is the beginning and first cause of all knowing* (my emphasis). Thus the One is beyond the Intelligence./Beyond the One there is no further principle; for unity is identical with the Good (prop. 13), and is therefore the *principium* of all things, as has been shown (prop. 12).' Proclus, *The Elements of Theology* op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>34</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World As Will And Idea*, ed. David Berman, trans., Jill Berman, Everyman, London, 1995, p. 45. Regarding Kant's similar transcendental unity of apperception, Redding wrote 'In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant had interpreted Plato's "ideas" as non-empirical ("pure", "transcendental") concepts which while not *constitutive* of any knowledge claims, were nevertheless essential for *regulating* all rational scientific inquiry with its drive to *unify* knowledge. The Platonic conception of the cosmos as a unified whole, he noted, expresses the goal of such explanatory unification ... for Kant, Plato's ideas were rightly understood as demands for the unification of the understanding'. Paul Redding, 'Hegel's Philosophy of Religion' op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> 'Under the charm of the Dionysian not only is the union between man and man reaffirmed, but nature which has become alienated, hostile, or subjugated, celebrates once more her reconciliation with her lost son, man ... Now, with the gospel of universal harmony, each one feels himself not only united, reconciled, and fused with his neighbour, but as one with him, as if the veil of *maya* had been torn aside and were now merely fluttering in tatters before the mysterious primordial unity.' Quoted in Nussbaum, *The Musical Representation, Meaning, Ontology, and Emotion*, op. cit., p. 283. In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche repeatedly refers to 'the primal Oneness.' Schopenhauer and Nietzsche equally 'rejected' the life of this material world and equally *affirmed* 'life' theorised Neoplatonically - which they based on 'Will' and the 'Dionysian'. In Scruton's 'acousmatic world' the driver is tonality - 'the irreplaceable core of music' Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music*, op. cit., p. 490.

<sup>36</sup> Busoni, *The Essence of Music and Other Papers*, op. cit., p. 21. He wrote that inspiration gave him the ability to compose - 'a thought which leads us out of the Jewish Orthodoxy into the sphere of Catholic mysticism.' p. 46.

that realm is ‘higher’, ‘deeper’, more substantial and more profound than the material world.<sup>37</sup> Hegel wrote ‘music ... lifts the soul to the apprehension of a higher sphere.’<sup>38</sup> ‘Nietzsche wrote of ‘an ecstatic reality, which again pays no heed to the individual, but even seeks to destroy individuality and redeem it with a mystical sense of unity’<sup>39</sup>

the material world exists in time, that other in duration/eternally.<sup>40</sup>

Nietzsche wrote of ‘the eternal life that lies beyond the phenomenal world ... music is the immediate idea of that life’<sup>41</sup> and Dionysus transforms our experience into that timeless unity. Busoni wrote ‘Come, follow me into the realm of music. Here is the iron fence which separates the earthly from the eternal.’<sup>42</sup>

that realm is the pinnacle of an aesthetics of self.<sup>43</sup>

Hegel described the musician as ‘fully alive ... himself made into an animated work of art.’<sup>44</sup> The core simile of the spiritual sculptor in the *Enneads* recurs over and again in Nietzsche’s writing,

---

<sup>37</sup> Plotinus: ‘The Unity ... is great beyond anything, great not in extension but in power, sizeless by its very greatness as even its immediate sequents are impartible not in mass but in might. We must therefore take the Unity as infinite not in measureless extension or numerable quantity but in fathomless depths of power. Think of The One as Mind or as God, you think too meanly’ VI.9.6, Plotinus, *The Enneads*, op. cit., p. 542; Proclus: ‘Prop. 137 ... the One is constitutive of all things’ Proclus, *The Elements of Theology* op. cit., p.121.

<sup>38</sup> Hegel, G.W.F., *Aesthetics - Lectures on Fine Art*, Trans. T.M.Knox, Vol. II, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2010, p. 933.

<sup>39</sup> Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>40</sup> Plotinus: ‘To that Intellectual Cosmos belong qualities, accordant with Nature, and quantities; number and mass; origins and conditions; all actions and experiences not against nature; movement and repose, both the universals and the particulars: but There time is replaced by eternity and space by its intellectual equivalent, mutual inclusiveness.’ V.9.10, Plotinus, *The Enneads*, op. cit., p. 433; Proclus: ‘Prop. 52. *All that is eternal is a simultaneous whole. ...*’ Proclus, *The Elements of Theology* op. cit., p.51, ‘Prop. 54. *Every eternity is a measure of things eternal, and every time of things in time; and these two are the only measures of life and movement in things.* For any measure must measure either piecemeal or by simultaneous application of the whole measure to the thing measured. That which measures by the whole is eternity; that which measures by parts, time. There are thus two measures only, one of eternal things, the other of things in time.’ Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>41</sup> Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, op. cit., p. 80.

<sup>42</sup> The words he continued with are a compendium of Neoplatonism: ‘Have you undone the fetters and thrown them away? ... Unthought-of scales extend like bands from one world to another, *stationary*, and yet *eternally in motion*. Every tone is the centre of immeasurable circles. And now *sound* is revealed to you! ... Now you realise how planets and hearts are one ... sound, movement and power are identical, and each separate and all united, they are life.’ Busoni, *The Essence of Music and Other Papers*, op. cit., p. 188. Circles are important in the *Enneads*. The third hypostasis circles around the second and both around the first. ‘There is, we may put it, something that is centre; about it, a circle of light shed from it; round centre and first circle alike, another circle, light from light; outside that again, not another circle of light but one which, lacking light of its own, must borrow.’ IV.3.17, Plotinus *The Enneads*, op. cit., p. 270.

<sup>43</sup> Plotinus: ‘What is this Dionysiac exultation that thrills through your being, this straining upwards of all your soul, this longing to break away from the body and live sunken within the veritable self?’ I.6.5, Plotinus, *The Enneads*, op. cit., p. 50; Proclus: ‘Prop. 131. *Every god begins his characteristic activity with himself. ...each divinity is filled to overflowing*’ Proclus, *The Elements of Theology* op. cit., p. 117.

<sup>44</sup> Hegel, *Aesthetics - Lectures on Fine Art*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 955.

most overtly in *The Birth of Tragedy* and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. It also appears in Collingwood's writing - for whom the essence was God as self.<sup>45</sup> For Croce, the aesthetic work of art is internal.<sup>46</sup>

there is a process of emanation and (particularly) of return:<sup>47</sup>

Schopenhauer put it simply, in musical terms: 'Thus ... the nature of melody is a constant digression and deviation from the keynote in a thousand ways, not only to the harmonious intervals, the third and dominant, but to every tone, to the dissonant seventh, and to the extreme intervals; yet there always follows a final return to the keynote. In all these ways, melody expresses the many different forms of the will's efforts, but also its satisfaction by ultimately finding again a harmonious interval, and still more the keynote.'<sup>48</sup> Augustine, to whom Scruton repeatedly refers, wrote of 'the heavenly stream that flows from your fountain, *the source of all life which is in you* ...'<sup>49</sup> For Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy* (modelled on the Christian birth, death and resurrection echoed in the mythic life of Dionysus) Apollo individuates in a world of fragmented individuals - causing

---

<sup>45</sup> 'Man is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art: the artistic power of the whole of nature reveals itself to the supreme gratification of the primal Oneness amidst the paroxysms of intoxication. the noblest clay, the most precious marble, man, is kneaded and hewn here, and to the chisel-blows of the Dionysiac world-artist there echoes the cry of the Eleusinian mysteries, 'Do you bow low, multitudes? Do you sense the Creator, world?' Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* op. cit., pp. 17-18; again 'Ah, you men, I see an image sleeping in the stone, the image of my visions! Ah, that it must sleep in the hardest, ugliest stone!/Now my hammer rages fiercely against its prison. Fragments fly from the stone: what is that to me?/I will complete it: for a shadow came to me - the most silent, the lightest of all things once came to me!/ The beauty of the Superman came to me as a shadow. Ah, my brothers! What are the gods to me now!' Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra - A Book for Everyone and No One* (1883-85), Trans. and Introduction, R.J. Hollingdale, Penguin, London, 2003, p. 111. Collingwood wrote 'But if a man has won his union with the mind of god, has known God's thought and served God's purpose in any of the countless ways in which it can be served, his monument is not something that stands for an age when he is dead. It is his own new and perfected life; something that in its very nature cannot pass away, except by desertion of the achieved ideal. This is the statue of the perfect man, more perennial than bronze; the life in a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' Robin G. Collingwood, *Religion and Philosophy*, Thoemmes Press, Bristol, 1994, p. 167

<sup>46</sup> 'It is customary to distinguish between the work of art which exists inside us and that which exists in the outside world: this way of speaking seems infelicitous to us, since the work of art (the aesthetic work) is always internal; and what is called the external work is no longer the work of art.' Benedetto Croce, *The Aesthetic as the Science of Expression and of the Linguistic in General* (1902), Trans., Colin Lyas, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992, p. 57.

<sup>47</sup> Plotinus: 'To Real Being we go back, all that we have and are; to that we return as from that we came. Of what is There we have direct knowledge, not images or even impressions; and to know without image is to be; by our part in true knowledge we are those Beings; we do not need to bring them down into ourselves, for we are There among them. Since not only ourselves but all other things also are those Beings, we all are they; we are they while we are also one with all: therefore we and all things are one. When we look outside of that on which we depend we ignore our unity; looking outward we see many faces; look inward and all is the one head.' VI.5.7, Plotinus, *The Enneads*, op. cit., p. 461; Proclus: 'Prop. 31. *All that proceeds from any principle reverts in respect of its being upon that from which it proceeds.* ... all things desire the Good, and each attains it through the mediation of its own proximate cause: therefore each has appetite of its own cause also. *Through that which gives it being it attains its well-being*' (my emphasis), Proclus, *The Elements of Theology* op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>48</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World As Will And Representation*, Trans. E.F.J.Payne, Vols. I and II, Dover, New York, 1969, Vol. I, p. 260.

<sup>49</sup> IX.10, Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, op. cit., p. 197. Scruton wrote of 'the mysterious movement that flows through music' Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music*, op. cit., p. 161. Plotinus wrote 'Then the soul, receiving into itself an outflow from thence, is moved and dances wildly and is all stung with longing and becomes love.' VI.7.22, Plotinus, *Enneads*, op. cit., pp. 156-157.

suffering; Dionysus closes the gulfs between people and unifies - in 'the womb of the sole true reality.'<sup>50</sup> The end of individuation is met with a 'roaring hymn of joy.'<sup>51</sup>

movement - profoundly dynamic, vital, creative, aesthetic and powerful is emphasised:<sup>52</sup>

Nietzsche, (pre-dating Bergson's *Creative Evolution*) wrote 'For a brief moment we really become the primal essence itself ... the constant proliferation of forms of existence forcing and pushing their way into life, the exuberant fertility of the world will. ... we become one with the vast primal delight in existence and sense the eternity of that delight in Dionysiac ecstasy. ... (we become) the single living thing, merged with its creative delight.'<sup>53</sup> Croce wrote of 'feeling as a non-cognitive *activity* 'that has caused great embarrassment to philosophers, who have therefore tried either to deny its existence, insofar as it is an *activity* (my emphases), or to assign it to the natural, by excluding it from the spirit.'<sup>54</sup> Collingwood wrote that art is action. ... as the expression of emotion<sup>55</sup> and that 'The union with God thus attained does not deprive the individual of all activity. Rather it directs and makes more fruitful and potent this activity'<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* op. cit., p. 106.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 52. The same 'roaring hymn of joy' with which Beethoven concluded his ninth symphony, which, in its entirety, is a testament to Neoplatonism. Of the Ode to Joy, Scruton wrote 'We are made to rehearse, in our extended sympathies, a particular movement of the soul. We return from private struggle to public comfort, and we feel this return as natural, inevitable. We sense that it is possible, after all, to explore the depths of human isolation, and still to re-emerge in communion with our fellow men. Beethoven's sincerity lies in the process whereby we are led from isolation to community.' Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music*, op. cit., p. 359. Beethoven's language is apophatic: 'Music is the one incorporeal entrance into the higher world of knowledge which comprehends mankind but which mankind cannot comprehend. ... Every real creation of art is independent, more powerful than the artist himself and returns to the divine through its manifestation. It is one with man only in this, that it bears testimony to the mediation of the divine in him.' (quoted in letter from Bettina von Arnim to Goethe, 1810 in *The Life of Ludwig van Beethoven*, Alexander Wheelock Thayer, ed. Henry Edward Krehbiel, vol. II, G. Schirmer, New York, 1921, 188-189, at [http://www.archive.org/stream/lifeofludwigvanb02thay/lifeofludwigvanb02thay\\_djvu.txt](http://www.archive.org/stream/lifeofludwigvanb02thay/lifeofludwigvanb02thay_djvu.txt)) Scruton wrote that the coda culminates in a Dionysiac presto and of the frenzy with which the work ends - 'which seems more like a loss of reason than a celebration of it, and a sign of an underlying lack of balance in Beethoven's vision.' Roger Scruton, *Understanding Music, Philosophy and Interpretation*, Continuum, London, 2011, pp.116-117. Plotinus wrote 'But whoever has become at once contemplator of himself and all the rest and object of his contemplation, and, since he has become substance and intellect and "the complete living being", no longer looks at it from outside - when he has become this he is near, and that Good is next above him, and already close by, shining upon all the intelligible world. It is there that one lets all study go...' VI.7.36. Plotinus, *Enneads*, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 199.

<sup>52</sup> Plotinus's philosophy concerns one vast living system, streaming from the One - 'Life streaming from Life; for energy runs through the Universe and there is no extremity at which it dwindles out...' III.8.5, Plotinus *The Enneads*, op. cit., p. 238. The life (activity, movement) of Intellect is far superior, far more vital, creative and real, than life in this world. Of the intelligible, Plotinus wrote of an '...endlessness for ever welling up in it, the unwearying and unwearing nature which in no way falls short in it, boiling over with life', VI.5.12, Plotinus, *Enneads*, op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 357. Armstrong: 'Here we touch an element in Plotinus's thought which is of great importance, the emphasis on life, on the dynamic, vital character of spiritual being. Perfection for him is not merely static. It is a fullness of living and productive power. The One for him is Life and Power, an infinite spring of power, an unbounded life, and therefore necessarily productive.' Plotinus, *Enneads*, op. cit., Vol. I, p. xix. Proclus: 'Prop. 84. *All that perpetually is is infinite in potency.*' Proclus, *The Elements of Theology* op. cit., p. 79. 'Life' for Plotinus is eternal creativity and creation - ultimately that of self.

<sup>53</sup> Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, op.cit., pp. 80-81.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., pp. 82-83.

<sup>55</sup> Robin G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* (1937), Clarendon, Oxford, 1967, p. 332.

<sup>56</sup> Collingwood, *Religion and Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 29.

contemplative intuition and emotion or expression are the means we employ to attain that realm and to move others to it:<sup>57</sup>

Of the singer of a work by Rossini, Hegel wrote ‘in the act of divine service ... nothing at all is left beyond the universal note of feeling.’<sup>58</sup> Schopenhauer, Croce and Collingwood believed that the artist intuitively and in successful instances, their audience does so also, after them.<sup>59</sup> Schopenhauer wrote ‘the artist ... can give no justification of what he does. He works ... from pure feeling, unconsciously, indeed instinctively.’<sup>60</sup> Scruton wrote that Collingwood made the concept of expression central to aesthetics<sup>61</sup> and the latter argued that the vision in the ‘mind’ of the artist is conveyed to the ‘mind’ of the viewer - ‘the *feeling* evoked by the artefact resembles the *feeling* evoked by the original’<sup>62</sup> - so a unity forms between artist and interpreter and, on the basis of feeling, there is no distinction between artist and audience. The expression and exploration of emotions *overcomes* difference and *unites* both creator and audience.

an experience or recollection can initiate that process:<sup>63</sup>

For Croce: ‘from time to time, from the index we pass to the book, from the label to the thing, from petty intuitions to the greater, and so to the sublimest and greatest.’<sup>64</sup> For Collingwood, the artist *suggests* and *indicates* the knowledge he has acquired through the exploration of his emotions aesthetically, thereby evoking that knowledge through his art in his audience. Through the flow of

---

<sup>57</sup> For Plotinus, intuition is the most perfect form of expressive act. He defined ‘intuition’ as ‘knowledge with identity’ IV.4.3, Plotinus *The Enneads*, op. cit., p. 289; Proclus: ‘intuitive knowledge is the beginning and first cause of all knowing.’ Prop. 20, Proclus, *The Elements of Theology* op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>58</sup> Hegel, *Aesthetics - Lectures on Fine Art*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 957.

<sup>59</sup> ‘The critic holds himself honour bound to set aside, when confronted by a work of art, all theories and abstractions and to judge it by intuiting it directly.’ Croce, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>60</sup> Doss-Davezac, Shehira, ‘Schopenhauer according to the Symbolists: the philosophical roots of late nineteenth-century French aesthetic theory, pp. 249-276 in Jacqueline op. cit., p. 262.

<sup>61</sup> Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music*, op. cit., p. 348.

<sup>62</sup> Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* op. cit., p. 53.

<sup>63</sup> What concerned Plotinus was not memory but *self*-recollection. He believed we have forgotten our true nature, which lies within us - resulting in self-contempt, self-alienation and an acquisitiveness for material things. So this ‘ascent of the mind to God’, fuelled by desire and remembrance, is equally a journey within, to the core of our being. ‘For who that truly perceives the harmony of the Intellectual Realm could fail, if he has any bent towards music, to answer to the harmony in sensible sounds? ... surely no one seeing the loveliness lavish in the world of sense - this vast orderliness, the Form which the stars even in their remoteness display - no one could be so dull-witted, so immovable, as not to be carried by all this to recollection, and gripped by reverent awe in the thought of all this, so great, sprung from that greatness. Not to answer thus could only be to have neither fathomed this world nor had any vision of that other.’ II. 9.16, Plotinus *The Enneads*, op. cit., p. 129; ‘The nature of an Ideal-form is to be, of itself, an activity; it operates by its mere presence: it is as if Melody itself plucked the strings. The affective phase of the Soul or Mind will be the operative cause of all affection; it originates the movement either under the stimulus of some sense-presentment or independently - and it is a question to be examined whether the judgement leading to the movement operates from above or not - but the affective phase itself remains unmoved like Melody dictating music...the Melodic Principle itself is not affected, but only the strings...’ III.6.4, *ibid.*, p. 193; ‘any skill which, beginning with the observation of the symmetry of living things, grows to the symmetry of all life, will be a portion of the Power There which observes and meditates the symmetry reigning among all beings in the Intellectual Cosmos. Thus all music - since its thought is upon melody and rhythm - must be the earthly representation of the music there is in the rhythm of the Ideal Realm.’ V.9.11, *ibid.*, p. 434.

<sup>64</sup> Croce, op. cit., p. 10. Again ‘And what, other than physical stimuli to reproduction, are those combinations of words that are referred to as poetry, prose, poems, novels, romances, tragedies, comedies, and those series of tones that are referred to as operas, symphonies and sonatas, and those combinations of lines and colours that are called pictures, statues, works of architecture? The spiritual power of memory, subsidised by the physical things which are provided, makes possible the conservation and reproduction of the intuitions man continually produces.’ p. 108. Proust’s madeleine served a similar purpose.

emotion and of the sharing, recognition and recollection of knowledge all are carried back to a universal pool of the most intense one-ness.

there are two types of knowledge - the lesser, of this world (conceptual, analytic, step-by-step - the knowledge of science) and a deeper, of the other (intuitive, immediate, non-discursive, unified, non-representational).<sup>65</sup>

Of Kant's position on 'intuition' Nussbaum wrote 'Not only is active intuition (that intuitive understanding that relates directly to its objects) unmediated by concepts; it is also unmediated by extended chains of material causes, whereas human sensible intuition is causally mediated. ... This Kantian notion of active intuition accords with a constant and pervasive theme in personal accounts of mystical religious experience, an awareness of the immediate presence of the deity.'<sup>66</sup> Schopenhauer wrote 'the scholar, whose merit lies in abundance of abstract knowledge, is so inferior to the man of the world, whose merit consists in perfect intuitive knowledge, which an original disposition has conceded to him ... (with intuition) no concept stands between the object and us: we do not lose sight of it.'<sup>67</sup> and of 'a direct and intuitive knowledge that cannot be reasoned away or arrived at by reasoning; a knowledge that ... cannot be communicated, but must dawn on each of us. It therefore finds its real and adequate expression not in words.'<sup>68</sup>

Nietzsche opposed Dionysiac 'wisdom' to 'science'. For him, the ineffable offers a new form of knowledge 'As soon as one puts one's faith in reason and reasoning, as opposed to intuition mediated through music, one has forfeited the possibility of genuine knowledge.'<sup>69</sup> Croce wrote: 'Knowledge takes two forms: it is either intuitive knowledge or logical knowledge ... knowledge of individuals, or knowledge of universals; of particular things, or of the relationships between them.'<sup>70</sup> For him, art and the expression of intuitive knowledge are identical.<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> Plotinus: 'And again the reasoning thing is not of that realm: here the reasoning. There the pre-reasoning.' VI.7.9, Plotinus *The Enneads*, op. cit., p. 478; Proclus: '(that which is a thing of process is) therefore object of discursive reason. If, then, the gods are supra-existential, or have a substance prior to existents, we can have neither opinion concerning them nor scientific knowledge by discourse of reason, nor yet intellection of them.', Prop. 123, Proclus, *The Elements of Theology* op. cit., p. 111.

<sup>66</sup> Nussbaum, *The Musical Representation, Meaning, Ontology, and Emotion*, op. cit., p. 266.

<sup>67</sup> Schopenhauer, *The World As Will And Representation*, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 76.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., Vol. I, p. 370.

<sup>69</sup> Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, op. cit., p. xx.

<sup>70</sup> Croce op. cit., p. 1. These are the first words of his book.

<sup>71</sup> 'The spirit only intuits by making, forming, expressing.' Ibid., pp. 8-9. Scruton wrote "For Croce a work of art expresses an 'intuition', and he had in mind something like the immediate and preconceptual apprehension of the world which Kant (and Croce likewise) contrasted with the discursive 'concept' required by scientific knowledge." Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music* op. cit., p. 346.

consciousness and what that consciousness is conscious of unite - subject, in 'thinking' (contemplating), *becomes* object.<sup>72</sup>

Collingwood wrote "art unites us with God ... It unites subject with object."<sup>73</sup> Developing on Brillenburg Wurth<sup>74</sup>, one can achieve *Neoplatonically* what one cannot by subscribing to *the sublime*, which, although it has Neoplatonic elements (theological language, longing for Oneness, negative definition through lack, movement from multiplicity and division towards unity), the movement is endless, and unity of subject and object is impossible.

that realm is often associated not only with melody, harmony and rhythm, 'beauty' and 'the Good', but with a theological/religious perspective:<sup>75</sup>

Scruton points to the post-Kantian 'elevation of the aesthetic to a position that had hitherto been reserved for religion.'<sup>76</sup> For Croce 'beauty is not something physical and does not belong to things, but to human activity, to spiritual energy.'<sup>77</sup>

All of these are the fundamentals of Neoplatonism and developments - particularly Christian - on it. Scruton's repeated assertion that 'musical motion is ... a motion in which nothing moves' summarises the heart of Plotinus's system, the One - the greatest activity in the greatest (Platonic) stillness. The centrality and complexity of movement (of Soul in its emanation from and return to unity in the One) in Neoplatonism is what most distinguishes it from the overt stasis of Platonism.<sup>78</sup>

Music can't express the ineffable but in performance, it functions Neoplatonically to *initiate* 'movement' towards unity. Not only do performer/s and audience constitute themselves by reference

---

<sup>72</sup> For Plotinus, in Intellect (the realm of unity-in-multiplicity) the subject's thought and the object of desired knowledge have identity as the partless essence of what is, complete within itself. In bringing one's contemplation to vision, one perceives substance from *within it* and comes to unity with *oneself*. One contemplates...(One)self - as the god 'silently present'. V.8.11, Plotinus *The Enneads*, op. cit., p. 422. Restating this, and clearly pointing to Hegel - Proclus: 'Prop. 168. *Every intelligence in the act of intellection knows that it knows: the cognitive intelligence is not distinct from that which is conscious of the cognitive act.* For if it is an intelligence in action and knows itself as indistinguishable from its object (prop. 167), it is aware of itself and sees itself. Further, seeing itself in the act of knowing and knowing itself in the act of seeing, it is aware of itself as an active intelligence: and being aware of this, it knows not merely *what* it knows but also *that* it knows. Thus it is simultaneously aware of the thing known, of itself as the knower, and of itself as the object of its own intellectual act.' Proclus, *The Elements of Theology* op. cit., p. 147.

<sup>73</sup> Robin G. Collingwood, 'The Philosophy of Art' in *The Philosophy of Enchantment*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2005, p. 79

<sup>74</sup> Kiene Brillenburg Wurth, *The Musically Sublime: Indeterminacy, Infinity, Irresolvability*, Fordham University Press, New York, 2009

<sup>75</sup> Plotinus: '(The musician is sensitive) to tones and the beauty they convey; all that offends against unison or harmony in melodies or rhythms repels him. He longs for measure and shapely pattern./This natural tendency must be made the starting-point to such a man; he must be drawn by the tone, rhythm, and design in things of sense ... he must be shown that what ravished him was no other than the Harmony of the Intellectual world and the Beauty in that sphere ... the truths of philosophy must be implanted in him to lead him to faith in that which, unknowing it, he possesses within himself.' I.3.1, Plotinus *The Enneads*, op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>76</sup> Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music*, op. cit., p. 477.

<sup>77</sup> Croce, op. cit., p. 108. For him, what is ugly is that which is *false*. p. 109. This too is Plotinus's position: 'Why is the living ugly more attractive than the sculptured handsome? It is that the one is more nearly what we are looking for, and this because there is soul there, because there is more of the Idea of The Good' VI.7.22, Plotinus *The Enneads*, op. cit., p.492.

<sup>78</sup> Scruton described what amounts to the Neoplatonic process of emanation and return in his philosophy - 'the ideal community, the act that separates us (whether error or sin), and the ultimate restoration as the community is reconstituted', Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music*, op. cit., p. 462 - a community beyond language - which is the great achievement of bourgeois civilisation.' Ibid., p. 467.

to the other, in the expression of emotions musical performance further stimulates our *recollection* of unity. Another means for stimulating recollection and thereby movement towards unity is the audience's *manner* of attention to the performance.<sup>79</sup>

Scruton's view of musical performance - ranging from that of the individual composer for their self<sup>80</sup> to a body of musicians in a concert hall for an audience - is Neoplatonic. He not only argued that music offers the kind of solace once offered by religion, comparing the orchestra performing for an audience (like Plato's rhapsode<sup>81</sup> - between muses, poet and audience) with the priest mediating between the worshippers and God,<sup>82</sup> he and those on whom he drew described a process of *Neoplatonic* inspiration generated by the composer which flowed through performer/s and conductor to audience - in which process religious purpose is made profoundly aesthetic - and returns to unity in the 'tonal space' *within* each.

Silence before the music which 'speaks' - whether that of the listener at home<sup>83</sup> or audience in space or concert hall as modern church<sup>84</sup> is that of reverence and *submission*.<sup>85</sup> Hearer, in the act of hearing, seer in the act of seeing merge with the heard and the seen and each person, as 'part', becomes the whole.<sup>86</sup> We thereby attain a perfection otherwise unachievable in everyday life. Schopenhauer wrote 'With the disappearance of willing from consciousness, the individuality is really abolished also'<sup>87</sup> leaving all present as 'pure subject of knowing'.<sup>88</sup>

---

<sup>79</sup> 'This possibility of dual attention, of attending to the work in the performance and of attending to the performance as of the work, makes the experience of beholding a performance of a work particularly rich aesthetically. The immediate experience of a particular performance of a particular work is enriched by being related to the experience of other renditions of the same work and other performances by the same performers.' Paul Thom, *For An Audience: A Philosophy of the Performing Arts*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1993, p. 72.

<sup>80</sup> 'Even when writing for himself, the composer is writing for an audience: for music is the intentional object of a human experience'. Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music*, op. cit., p. 451.

<sup>81</sup> Collingwood wrote 'the artist's activity is a mystery to himself ... In a word, he feels himself *inspired*. ... This universal experience is expressed sometimes by saying that the artist is inspired by gods, sometimes by ascribing the origin of art to the unconscious mind ... The artist who feels himself inspired feels that the aesthetic activity which goes on in him is not his activity; consequently his correct attitude towards it is not to work hard in the attempt to promote it, but to place himself passively at its disposal.' Collingwood, *The Philosophy of Enchantment*, op. cit., p. 57.

<sup>82</sup> Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music* op. cit., p. 439.

<sup>83</sup> 'I come to see myself as one member of an implied community, whose life is present and vindicated in the experience of contemplation.' Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music* op. cit., p. 460.

<sup>84</sup> 'when Mendelssohn introduced Bach's St Matthew Passion into the modern repertoire he, to put the point crudely, took the music away from the church and put it into the concert hall.' Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992, 2003 (Online), p. 248.

<sup>85</sup> The silence required for Cage's work 4'33", though more *overtly* apophatic, is in effect no more so than that required for any work in the standard repertoire.

<sup>86</sup> 'In the religious experience too there is an implied but partly absent community: for the religious rite implicates not the living only, but the dead and the unborn.' Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music* op. cit., p. 461.

<sup>87</sup> Schopenhauer, *The World As Will And Representation*, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 371.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. Plotinus wrote '(Soul suffers) "...only when we withdraw from vision and take to knowing by proof, by evidence, by the reasoning processes of the mental habit. Such logic is not to be confounded with that act of ours in the vision; it is not our reason that has seen; it is something greater than reason, reason's Prior, as far above reason as the very object of that thought must be.' VI.9.10, Plotinus *The Enneads*, op. cit., p. 547.

Scruton argued that serial atonality was a failure. But Adorno's and Schoenberg's 'harbinger of a new religion'<sup>89</sup> was no less justified by apophaticism than Scruton's own musical affirmation of 'life' through tonal music. Both *formally* divergent commitments placed equal emphasis on the centrality of expression - but for Adorno and Schoenberg it was the expression through dissonance of *suffering* in modern life - the 'shedding of tears' musically for Adorno and Schoenberg bore one along the same current of return that Scruton drew upon in *his* philosophising.<sup>90</sup>

Adorno's view of the artist was not Marxist<sup>91</sup> but romantic.<sup>92</sup> He drew the Neoplatonic distinction between discursive knowledge<sup>93</sup> and intuition<sup>94</sup> and wrote that music contains a theological dimension - that dimension, I add, being apophatic. For Adorno, the 'truth' of an artwork lies in its expressive mimetic potential to restore, through the subject's non-discursive remembrance, the dirempted subject to their collective universal<sup>95</sup> - music presents the 'name' of God.<sup>96</sup> Scruton wrote that the redemption that Adorno promised was not to be achieved by social reform but by personal salvation. He described Adorno as Hegel's 'beautiful soul.'<sup>97</sup> Adorno wrote of Schoenberg's *espressivo* style which 'differs in quality from Romantic expression precisely by means of ...

---

<sup>89</sup> Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music* op. cit., p. 472.

<sup>90</sup> 'The human being who surrenders himself to tears and to a music which no longer resembles him in any way permits that current of which he is not part and which lies behind the dam restraining the world of phenomena to flow back into itself. In weeping and in singing he enters into alienated reality. "Tears dim my eyes: earth's child I am again" ... The gesture of return ... characterises the expression of all music'. Theodor Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music* (1948), trans., Anne G. Mitchell, Wesley V. Blomster, Seabury, London, 1973, p. 129.

<sup>91</sup> Scruton correctly advised, when considering Adorno, to 'lay aside the Marxist mumbo-jumbo', Scruton, *Understanding Music, Philosophy and Interpretation*, op. cit., p. 213.

<sup>92</sup> 'the artist works as social agent, indifferent to society's own consciousness.' Theodore Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* (1970), Trans. and Ed. Robert Hullot-Kentor, Continuum, London, 2004, p. 55.

<sup>93</sup> 'Though discursive knowledge is adequate to reality, and even to its irrationalities, which originate in its laws of motion, something in reality rebuffs rational knowledge. Suffering remains foreign to knowledge' Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>94</sup> 'Art is the intuition of what is not intuitable; it is akin to the conceptual without the concept.' Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>95</sup> '(Artworks embody longing for) the reality of what is not ... metamorphosed in art as remembrance. ... Ever since Plato's doctrine of anamnesis the not-yet-existing has been dreamed of in remembrance, which alone concretises utopia without betraying it to existence. ... art's imago is precisely what, according to Bergson's and Proust's thesis, seeks to awaken involuntary remembrance' Ibid., pp. 174-175; 'An artwork is, as Beckett wrote, *a desecration of silence*.' Ibid., p. 177. Gerrit Steunebrink questions whether Adorno's philosophy is a negative theology, Gerrit Steunebrink, 'Is Adorno's Philosophy a Negative Theology?', in *Flight of the Gods, Philosophical Perspectives on Negative Theology*, Eds. Bulhof, Ilse Nina and Kate, Laurens ten, Fordham University Press, New York, 2000, pp. 293-320. From the Introduction to Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*: 'The original paratactical text is concentrically arranged around a mute middle point through which every word seeks to be refracted ... The linear argumentative structure imposed on the text by the translation thus dismissed the text's middle point as a detour and severed its nexus.' Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* op. cit., p. xiii-xiv.

<sup>96</sup> William Franke, Ed. *On What Cannot Be Said, Apophatic Discourses in Philosophy, Religion, Literature and the Arts*, Vol. 2 *Modern and Contemporary Transformations*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 2007, p. 261.

<sup>97</sup> Scruton, *Understanding Music, Philosophy and Interpretation*, op. cit., p. 212.

intensification<sup>98</sup> Franke quotes from unfinished operas by Schoenberg exemplifying the overt apophaticism in the libretto.<sup>99</sup>

In his advocacy for his 'acousmatic realm', that filled with 'movement', culminating in the most intense activity and stillness in unity; in his *divorce* of that from not simply the physical world - 'the world of sound' - but and thereby from the complexities of *real life* - essentially from *change* - Scruton again exemplifies an aspect of that philosophical commitment which runs back to Plotinus and beyond. The final words in Armstrong's translation of the *Enneads* are "'This is the life of gods and of godlike and blessed men, deliverance from the things of this world, a life which takes no delight in the things of this world, escape in solitude to the solitary."<sup>100</sup> Armstrong referred to this as the 'flight of the alone to the Alone'. That same extremely negative view of the world and others was held by Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Collingwood - and Scruton. His defence of bourgeois ideology<sup>101</sup> to which the philosophy he advocates has been fundamental (particularly in the humanities and the field of creativity) precisely because it advocates *stasis* - is particularly Nietzschean. Eagleton wrote:

The (Kantian) aesthetic is in one way cognitive, but it has about it something of the form and structure of the rational; it thus unites us with all the authority of a law, but at a more affective, intuitive level. What brings us together as subjects is not knowledge but an ineffable reciprocity of feeling. And this is certainly one major reason why the aesthetic has figured so centrally in bourgeois thought.<sup>102</sup>

Creativity and its products in the West, particularly since the advent of Romanticism, cannot be understood and therefore fully appreciated without an understanding of Neoplatonism and the developments within and upon it and how these are reflected *in* creativity. Given the centrality of creativity to Neoplatonism, the relation between artistic practice and Neoplatonic theory has been profound. But it must be asked, what is the price paid in asserting and reflecting a philosophy which advocates *flight* from the material world and argues for an 'acousmatic realm' that *rejects* material change?

---

<sup>98</sup> Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, op. cit., p. 38.

<sup>99</sup> In his unfinished *Moses und Aron* Schoenberg presents the true God as unrepresentable and inexpressible. 'He is present, Moses insists, only as pure idea or thought: "Unrepresentable God!/Inexpressible, many-sided Thought!" (II,v). Especially the episode of the Golden Calf brings to dramatic crisis the conflict between all forms of idol worship and Moses's new religion of "one eternal, omnipresent, invisible and unrepresentable God" (I, i; repeated in I, iv).' Moses cannot express his vision which is why he relies on Aaron to be his mouthpiece. William Franke, Ed. *On What Cannot Be Said, Apophatic Discourses in Philosophy, Religion, Literature and the Arts*, Vol. 2, op. cit., pp. 246-247.

<sup>100</sup> Plotinus *The Enneads* op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 345.

<sup>101</sup> 'it is still pertinent to defend the bourgeois order', Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music*, op. cit., p. 468.

<sup>102</sup> Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1990, p. 75.