

means of this, it runs against the present kind of cultural fatalism that professes disgust for the banalities of current taste and the good-natured commonplaces of the global culture industry. Let me close with Rudolf Kassner's words, taken from his essay *Music and Morals*:

“Nebenbei, der Musiker wird die Tugenden des anderen als ein Mittel gegen den Fatalismus lieben und pflegen, gleichwie es seine eigene, höchst persönliche und verschwiegene Tätigkeit bleibt, sich gegen den Fatalismus zu behaupten. Denn dort, wo der Fatalismus der Inbegriff und Spiegel aller Tugenden ist, dort hört der Musiker auf und geht verloren. Der Musiker ist kein Fatalist, wie gerne er diesen auch vor Leuten oder vor sich spielen mag. Er ist wesentlich kein Fatalist“ (Kassner 1912, p. 115).

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## On Hermeneutical Ethics and Education: ‘Bach als Erzieher’

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### 1. Education Now and Four Hundred Years Ago: Rosa, Lorenzo and Dorotea

Once a year, music teachers at secondary schools in Spain must assume quite a different job and act as publicists. Music is an optional subject at secondary schools, and if it does not attract enough students each year, it can even disappear from the syllabus. This is the reason why teachers must spend the last weeks of each academic year trying to convince their potential pupils of the advantages of choosing music as one of their courses for the next year. If they do not succeed in such a task, they may be asked to teach some of those subjects that are usually more popular among students, such as Computer Science, German Language or even Philosophy. Many music teachers carry out a veritable advertising campaign, with posters, brochures, lectures or musical soirees, in order to exhibit the charms of music to teenagers. However, in the middle of this marketing humbug, one can also find reasoned answers to the question of why bother to learn music today. What could be the reasons to prefer music to computers, languages or sports? Rosa Q. Ñ., one of the music teachers who carry out the aforementioned campaigns, gives the following ones:

“I attempt to explain to my potential pupils that this subject will enable them to enjoy the legacy of Western musicians such as Beethoven, Cage or De Victoria, and will also make them become acquainted with and take pleasure in things produced by people from other civilisations or ages. [...] This could eventually be a great help to them in order to better appreciate today's and tomorrow's music. [...] If they like playing an instrument, my classes will surely enable them to improve their performance skills, and if any of them is interested in composing, I am certain that I could help them to come up with useful ideas in order to write their own pieces.” (Pérez Pueyo, 1999, 27)

If one thinks it over, it can be said that Rosa's line of argument is rather tautological: learning music serves to know more about music; it enables you to listen, perform or create music in a better way, better than if you had not learnt anything about music. Simple as it may sound, the aim of musical education is, paraphrasing Verlaine (1884),

"*de la musique avant toute chose*". This might seem a bit too simple: what must teaching music serve for, but to learn about *music*?

Nevertheless, the thing is that this did not sound like a platitude for European culture some four hundred years ago, nor during the previous two millennia. During all that time, getting into the artistic realm of the philharmonic muse Euterpe did not only serve to get acquainted with the beauty of sounds, but brought about many other advantages as well. Musical education was not just musical education, but also moral and political education, and it provided the most valuable knowledge about the world, the gods and human beings, or more precisely, about the close connection between the world, the gods and human beings. Let us, for instance, look for a moment at Alessandro Striggio, Jr., who wrote in 1607 the libretto for Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, which, by the way, was the second opera ever written. The opera opened with an impersonation of Music, which gives us a nice example of the sort of 'marketing' techniques that a music teacher from the beginning of the 17th century could have deployed in order to advertise the advantages of musical education:

"Io la Musica son, ch'ai dolci accenti  
So far tranquillo ogni turbato core,  
Et or di nobil ira et or d'amore  
Poss'infiammar le più gelate menti.  
Io su cetera d'or cantando soglio  
Mortal orecchio lusingar talora;  
E in questa guisa all'armonia sonora  
Della lira del ciel più l'alme invoglio."<sup>10</sup> (Striggio, 1609, 66)

As we may here perceive, Music in person was much more ambitious than its present-day defenders (such as Rosa) concerning the values it could offer to its disciples. Even back in 1607, learning music served for more than just playing, singing, writing or listening to music; that is to say, it served for purposes other than the strictly musical ones. The impersonation of Music has other attractive gifts to proffer to its disciples: it will enable them to manipulate the mood of the listeners ("*so far tranquillo ogni turbato core*"); move the audience to carry out acts of rage or acts of love ("*or di nobil ira et or di amore...*"); and, most importantly, it will remind their soul that the main harmony is not the one produced by conventional string or wind instruments, but a

<sup>10</sup> "I am Music, who, with accents sweet/ can bring tranquillity to every troubled heart/ and now with noble wrath, now with love/ can kindle even the iciest minds./ Singing to a golden lyre, I am wont/ sometimes to charm mortal ears;/ and in this way inspire souls with a longing/ for the sonorous harmony of heavens lyre."

heavenly one supposedly emitted by the stars in their harmonic revolving ("*della lira del ciel più l'alme invoglio*").

The differences between the reasons given nowadays by teachers such as Rosa, looking for new students, and the ones given in days of yore by opera characters such as Striggio's Music are caused by something more than different rhetorical strategies. In fact, although Alessandro Striggio is clearly more poetic and enthusiastic than Rosa, his proposals did not sound excessively metaphoric or pretentious to his contemporaries. Even at the beginning of the 17th century, the art of music entailed not only the mere harmony of voices or musical instruments, but also the harmony between human passions and will; and these two kinds of harmony were the earthly reflection of a third sublime harmony brought about by the stars moving around the sky with mathematical regularity: a heavenly harmony that our unworthy ears could not perceive.<sup>11</sup> Thus, musical education certainly introduced human beings to the secrets of the lute and the zither, of the soprano's song or the composer's scores; but, more importantly, it presented human beings, at the same time, the secrets of the human soul, of the natural world (in particular, the mysteries of its most sublime part: heaven) and to the enigma of the harmonic union between both humans and the world: "because (as Sextus Empiricus put it) the entire universe is harmonically ruled" (*Adversus Mathematicos*, VII, 95).<sup>12</sup> Musical education was more than teaching how to produce or consume music: it was teaching, by analogy, the particular laws of the human heart, soul and spirit, and the particular ways in which heavenly objects fit with each other and with human inner life. Music served to clarify the hidden harmony engraved by a Creator or Demiurge in the whole Cosmos,<sup>13</sup> with both human and natural counterparts.

<sup>11</sup> With the only exception of Pythagoras' ears; these, according to Porphyry, could hear "the universal harmony of the spheres and the stars moving within those spheres" (Diels and Kranz, 1956, 31, B129). The other mortals are unable to hear it since, as Aristotle says (*De Caelo*, B 9, 290, b12) "we perceive the sound from the time we are born and, therefore, we cannot tell it apart from its contrary, silence, because sound and silence can only be distinguished by mutual contrast. Thus, men have the same problem as smiths, they are so used to noise that they do not notice it."

<sup>12</sup> Diogenes Laertius refers to this same idea when he makes Philolaus say: "Nature became harmonious into the world [...], both the universe and everything within it" (*Lives of the Philosophers*, VIII, 85).

<sup>13</sup> Pythagoras himself defended an image of the world and the soul as something put in order according to musical harmony; hence, it can hardly be surprising that, at the same time, he was the first to use the word *Cosmos* (Greek word for 'orderliness' as opposed to *Chaos*, 'disorder') with the aim of referring "to everything as a whole, due to its inherent order", as we can read in Aetius (Diels and Kranz, 1956, 14, 21).

For this very reason, we find that 17th century intellectuals accept plainly the way Music advertises herself in Striggio and Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*. Her 'marketing campaign' benefits of a little discussed and hardly debatable supposition that wholly pervaded Europe's vision of the world. Among the innumerable existing instances of this, the most outstanding one is perhaps that of the Shakespearian character Lorenzo, in *The Merchant of Venice*, where he tells his wife in the utmost natural way:

"Sit, Jessica; look how the floor of heavens  
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:  
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st  
But in his motion like an angel sings;  
[...] But whilst this muddy vesture of decay  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it..." (Act V, Scene 1)<sup>14</sup>

In fact, the idea that the universe could 'sing' was not a far-fetched one, since that was what it did according to the cultural belief at that time: the sky movements, indeed, could be regularly and astronomically predicted as long as they were a physical parallel of the harmonic regularity of music or chant.<sup>15</sup> When Shakespeare pointed out (in fact, he rather presupposed) the value of music as an indispensable key in order to comprehend the physical world (especially all about astronomy: 'the floor of heaven'), he was reaping the fruits of a notion that had existed for nearly two millennia.<sup>16</sup> This notion bears out one of the two features that Striggio's Music advertised of herself, its ability to make us know the world. In order to see the other feature, e.g., the value of music as the key to human subjectivity, we need to go back to the other great writer of

the 17th century in Europe, Miguel de Cervantes. In his most famous work, *Don Quijote* and Sancho meet Dorotea, a young shepherdess who is lost in the valleys of Sierra Morena; and she refers to her previous life as a Renaissance maid in a small Andalusian town as follows:

"Los ratos que del día me quedaban después de haber dado lo que convenía a los mayores, capataces y otros jornaleros, los entretenía en ejercicios que son a las doncellas tan lícitos como necesarios, como son los que ofrece la aguja y la almohadilla, y la rueca muchas veces; y si alguna, por recrear el ánimo, estos ejercicios dejaba, me acogía al entretenimiento de leer algún libro devoto, o a tocar una harpa, porque *la experiencia me mostraba que la música compone los ánimos descompuestos y alivia los trabajos que nacen del espíritu.*"<sup>17</sup> (*El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*, I, XXVIII; my italics)

Whereas Lorenzo described music as something essentially analogous to the external world, in this extract from Cervantes music is presented as something fundamentally linked to the events that take place in the interior of human beings: This way, it is easy for music to get inside someone in order to "*componer los ánimos descompuestos y aliviar los trabajos que nacen del espíritu*". Human psychology was in fact a matter of harmony,<sup>18</sup> and this was *not* a simple metaphor at the time – although it might seem so now, since we are used to the more scientific-like language of our psychologists. The harmony of the sounds produced by a musical instrument could percolate through the listener (or the performer) very easily and arrive inside her in order to harmonize her whole interiority: it was a 'contagious' harmony that flowed gently from Dorotea's harp towards her spirit, or from the stars in Shakespeare's sky to

<sup>14</sup> The best example of these ideas within Spanish lyric poetry is the *Oda a Francisco Salinas* by Fray Luis de León, which was written just a few years before Shakespeare's text and published only a few years later.

<sup>15</sup> According to Aristotle: "The movement of such big heavenly bodies must produce some kind of sound, just as happens when an earthly body moves, although these have a smaller size and less speed. When the sun, the moon and all the stars, which are so numerous and big, move so quickly, they must necessarily make an amazingly strong sound. Considering this, and taking into account the fact that their different speeds, measured in relation to their distance, relate among themselves just like musical concord, they affirm that this proves that the sound produced by the circular movement of the stars is harmonic" (*De Caelo*, B 9, 290b 12). Shakespeare's view opposes Aristotle's explanation of why we cannot hear this heavenly music (see note number 18), following Boethius' alternative theory (*De institutione musica*, II), according to which it is our earthly human condition ("this muddy vesture of decay") what deprives us of the ability to discern this sublime sound.

<sup>16</sup> "It seems, said I, that ears are made to perceive the harmonic movement, just like eyes are made for astronomy, and that these two sciences are related to each other" (Plato, *Republic*, 530d).

<sup>17</sup> "Such parts of my day as remained after dealing with the stewards, the foremen, and the day-labourers, I spent in occupations, which are so much rightful as necessary to young ladies: like sewing with my needles and pincushion, and often spinning. And if I left these tasks at times to refresh my mind, I turned to the recreation of some books of devotion or to playing the harp: *for experience showed me that music composes disordered moods and eases the troubles which are born of the spirit.*"

<sup>18</sup> Both Plato (*Phaedo*, 85e-86d, 88d) and Aristotle take up the idea that "soul [...] is a kind of harmony" (*De anima*, 407b-408a; *Politics*, 1340b 17-20). See also Diels and Kranz (1956, 44A23), Gottschalk (1971) and García Gual (2000, 80-82). Lorenzo, in *The Merchant of Venice*, did not completely ignore the presence of music within the soul, and thus, in his above-mentioned speech, he recommends Jessica: "The man that hath no music in himself, / Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds, / Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils; / The motions of his spirit are dull as night, / And his affections dark as Erebus; / Let no such man be trusted." This idea appears in the *Oda a Francisco Salinas* too, turning into a beautiful poetic summary that unifies Lorenzo's images with Dorotea's reflections.



the perfectly audible notes of a song (perfectly audible for Pythagoras at least). Music had the privilege of reflecting the radical accord shared by the whole Cosmos. Thus, teaching musical arts would open the door for students to study both about the world and about themselves, becoming wiser and perhaps even more moral, learning how to be skilled mathematicians and good citizens too. What has come to pass in Europe for such a promising musical education to turn into something that only serves to create and listen to music (or better: to produce and consume music<sup>19</sup>)? What does the fact that we have lost the vision of the world (*Weltanschauung*) that before used to associate music with so many virtues imply for our Western culture? Is it possible to change the present status quo and give music (and musicians, such as Bach) an educational role beyond the strictly musical role? This article will try to find the answer to such questions. We will first refer to the cultural evolution of Europe from Ancient Greece, so as to grasp better what has made the role of music change from the privileged situation attested in Striggio, Shakespeare and Cervantes to the modest position it is currently in. As we will see, such a transformation does not only affect music as an academic subject, but it also reflects a general shift that has been taking place throughout the historical evolution of our European civilisation during the last two and a half millennia. This alteration has consisted in the change from 1) a globally and metaphysically organised world, a unitary world, governed by the same general principles: a pre-modern world; to 2) a world lacking a global organisation and divided into two halves (the Subject and the Object), each one with an independent order; two halves between which understandable contact is almost impossible: a modern world. Then, we will appreciate how the principles that used to govern this second 'modern world' (and that had reduced music to its merely musical role) are no longer acceptable. Given this situation, what should we do? Should we bend over backwards to return to the pre-modern world and recover the role that music had until the beginning of the 17th century? Should we instead create a brand new educational role for music, neither modern nor pre-modern, but adapted to the contemporary challenges of our particular cultural condition? The last section of this article will try to outline this new programme, outside modern or pre-modern guidelines, a programme that could well be dubbed as 'hermeneutical ethics'.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> See Small (1980), on the role of Western music as a product of consumerism in our time, as against the richness of its functions in other civilisations or in the past.

<sup>20</sup> In the sense proposed by Gadamer (1972b, 1974) and Vattimo (1988a; 1994, 37–52, 73–92), as we will see later. See also Herrera Guevara (1999; 2000, 61–85) and Quintana Paz (2000b).

## 2. History of a Loss: From Pythagoras, through Descartes, to Schopenhauer

### 2.1. The Salad Days of Europe, when we all were Pythagoreans

The general image of music as playing a structuring role of the reality, be it natural, human or divine, was acceptable while Europe considered such a reality to be rationally structured. Such a belief appears for the first time among Greek philosophers in the 6th century BC, and it essentially endures until the 17th century AD (as may be seen in examples such as the aforementioned ones). During this period, learning musical harmony was basically the same as learning about the harmony of Nature, Humankind and the Divinity. For centuries, Europe believed in the harmony of the Whole, teaching music to children and teenagers in order to introduce them to such harmony. We have labelled this stage of Western culture as its pre-modern epoch.

All Greek philosophers cared about reason because they thought it was the key to access reality: they considered all reality to be organised according to reason. But it was Pythagoras and his disciples, as we have mentioned before, who realised for the first time that the rationality of the Whole was in fact a kind of harmony, alike to musical harmony and to mathematical harmony. The ideological trend of thought underlying Lorenzo's images in *The Merchant of Venice* and Dorotea's opinions in *Don Quijote* originate from this school: both show that in the Post-classical Europe it was not necessary to be strictly Pythagorean in order to accept the link established by Pythagoras between the rational harmony of the world and the rational harmony of musical notes. In this sense, one can affirm that during two thousand years a Pythagorean atmosphere penetrated Western culture. Musical harmony would be considered interesting from the educational point of view as long as that Pythagorean atmosphere, according to which reality was equally harmonious, would last.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> See Brunschvicg (1937), on Pythagorism as one of the axes of European culture until the 17th century. And even in the 20th century, we can appreciate how that Pythagorean ambience survived in one of the most interesting Latin-American thinkers, José Vasconcelos (1921), as well as in the Italian philosopher Enrico Caporali (1914, 1915, 1916). In both, Pythagorism keeps on feeding the basis of their respective philosophies. More recently, this pre-modern Pythagorean trend is only present in thought imported from the East (Krishnamacharya, 1999), a fact that seems hardly surprising, since the ideas about music in other cultures have generally been more similar to pre-modern rather than to modern ideas (Watts, 1962, 193; Bébéy, 1969; Guettat, 1996). In some cases, as in China (Sachs, 1943, 112), they have taken it even a little further, not only making human music depend on the music of the cosmos, but also *vice versa*, considering



In fact, music gained a great deal from the fact that it was suddenly linked to rationality, given that rationality had turned out to be the touchstone (instead of religion, tradition or political authority) in order to understand the world, humankind and the gods as a Whole. Before the 6th century BC, the role of musicians simply consisted of entertaining people during the celebration of ludic or liturgical events and, therefore, learning music was the same as learning a common craft. But, from that century onwards, the great change occurred, and musicians assumed a new social role, that of educators: they began to teach not only the future virtuosos, but also all the other students, independently of their future profession, and music was finally recognised as one of the official compulsory subjects within their syllabi.<sup>22</sup> It can be held, thus, that the philosophers' craving for understanding reality in a rational way, which was influenced by the Pythagorean idea that such a craving was not so different from that of musicians, had a beneficial side-effect on Greek musicians. With the spread of philosophy, music, in symbiosis, achieved the relevant position that it would maintain throughout the pre-modern period of our civilisation. The metaphysics of philosophers favoured a metaphysics of harmony, and favoured music.<sup>23</sup>

Nowadays we can discriminate two types of harmony within that sole harmony which constituted a unitary educational project for the Pythagorean Greeks – a project that does not lack 'magnificence', as Kirk, Raven and Schofield (1987, 491) put it, given the variegated array of items it tries to conjoin. We distinguish, on the one hand,

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the order (or the disorder) of the cosmos as something dependent on the music played (either in an adequate or inadequate way) by humans.

<sup>22</sup> For further details on the transformation suffered by the role of music in the education of Greeks, see Robertson and Stevens (1972, 152–153) and Marrou (1948), or the justification provided by the Pseudo Plutarch (*De musica*, XLIII) back in the 3rd century AD. Curiously enough, the Greek term *mousiké* ('music') came to designate 'higher education', 'culture', 'science' and 'spiritual training' par excellence (Pabón and Echauri, 1963, 343; see also Pindare's *Olympian*, I, 15), and therefore, *mousikós* was used to refer both to musicians and to educated men in general (as attested in Aristophanes' *Vespae*, 1244).

<sup>23</sup> In this regard, Pythagorean ideas had to come to grips with a radically divergent view, which held initially a much more widespread scope in pre-Socratic Greece. This contrary outlook linked music with the dark, magical and irrational powers (Dodds, 1999, 83–85), as can be seen in the myth of Orpheus and, most of all, in the myth of Dionysos. Both mythical characters were opposed to Apollo and his 'rationalising' lyre. According to the Pythagorean – rationalising view (as repeatedly attested in *De musica*, by the Pseudo Plutarch, or in Plato's *Republic*, 399e; and Plato's *Symposium*, 215a–216a), Apollo managed to defeat them, much to Nietzsche's (1872) annoyance centuries later.

the harmony of nature and its laws, and on the other hand, the harmony that governs the inner self of human beings – call it mind, heart, spirit, soul or *psyche*. It should be noticed that for the Greeks, however, such 'magnificence' was not detectable, because the modern belief that there is a radical disparity between natural objects, on the one hand, and human issues on the other, was alien to them: it was utterly normal for them to believe in the harmony *between* natural objects and human issues *together*, which they deemed as fundamentally analogous matters. Hence, *from our perspective*, their attempt can be analysed into:

A) An educational component concerning physical and natural objects that teaches how the outer world works, and whose role equals that of Natural Sciences nowadays. In spite of being the main representative of the meagre opposition to the Pythagorean view that prevailed for centuries, it is Aristotle who best describes how the concept of harmony in synthesis with the concept of Nature came to form part of European imagery:

"The so-called Pythagoreans, who were the first to take up mathematics, not only advanced this study, but also, having been brought up in it, they thought its principles were the principles of all things. Since of these principles numbers are by nature the first, and in numbers they seemed to see many resemblances to the things that exist and come into being [...]; since, again, they saw that the modifications and the ratios of the musical scales were expressible in numbers; since, then, all other things seemed in their whole nature to be modelled on numbers, and numbers seemed to be the first things in the whole of nature, they supposed the elements of numbers to be the elements of all things, and the whole heaven to be a musical scale and a number. And all the properties of numbers and scales which they could show to agree with the attributes and parts and the whole arrangement of the heavens, they collected and fitted into their scheme; and if there was a gap anywhere, they readily made additions so as to make their whole theory coherent." (*Metaphysics*, A 5, 985b 23–986a 5)<sup>24</sup>

Here we have the very same view that, associating the harmony of mathematics with that of the universe, and these two kinds of harmony with the purely musical one, would last until Galileo's well-known metaphor, which described Nature as "the book of God written in numeric characters" (a metaphor that, like those by Striggio or Lorenzo, was not considered 'excessively metaphoric'). Moreover, Galileo reached the scientific conclusions that made him notorious from this standpoint. This is the way of thinking that propitiated the inclusion of music in the medieval *Quadrivium* as a compulsory

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<sup>24</sup> See Figure 1.

subject, and whose expression “can be found on countless occasions throughout the Middle Ages” (Fubini, 1990, 101). To sum up, this is the trend of thought that made Saint Augustine (in his *De musica*, I) condemn those who see in music nothing but a mere pleasure of the senses instead of a rational science; and this is the approach adopted by Boethius in his treaty *De institutione musica*,<sup>25</sup> the most influential work of the Middle Ages. If it is true that at that time “Pythagorean ideas and the new Christian religiousness blended together almost completely” (Fubini, 1990, 96), then, the belief that “nothing on heaven and earth [...] can remain outside this discipline [music]” (Cassiodorus, *Institutiones divinarum et saecularium litterarum*, V) could not but hold an enormous success.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, music was not only the most genuine password to the natural world, since, educating young Europeans in the art of sounds implied as well:

B) A second instructional component, both psychological and moral, that teaches how the human inner self works. This factor corresponds roughly to what we call Human-Social Sciences and Ethics nowadays. It was the reflection of the harmony governing Nature’s big *macrocosm* on both the individual’s small *microcosm* and the State’s intermediate *mesocosm*. F. M. Cornford (1950, 18–21) has provided one of the most vivid explanations of such mentality:

“If the power of music is felt by all living things, [...] there must be in the principle of life itself, in the soul of man and of universal nature, chords that can answer to the touch of harmonious sound. May it not be the most essential truth about the soul that it is, in some sort, an instrument of music? [...] Health – the virtue of the body – was interpreted as a proportion or equipoise of contending elements, which any excess might derange or finally destroy. And virtue – the health of the soul – likewise lay in the golden mean, imposing measure on the turbulence of passion, a temperance which excludes both excess and deficiency. [...] That the soul should be harmonised meant not only that its several parts should be in tune with one another, but, as one instrument in an orchestra must be in tune with all the rest, so the soul must reproduce the *harmonia* of the Cosmos. [...] The harmony of heaven is perfect; but its counterpart in human souls is marred with

<sup>25</sup> See chapter II. Boethius, with his pure Pythagorism, plays a decisive role because his work “will be a compendium of almost everything men knew about such issues during the Middle Ages” (Gilson, 1965, 141). See Figures 2 and 3.

<sup>26</sup> In the third of his *Etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, St. Isidore of Seville mentions this assumption of Christian mentality in Europe once more: “Without music no discipline can be perfect, because nothing can exist without music. It is said that the universe is put together by certain harmonious sounds, and that heaven itself keeps revolving thanks to certain harmonious modulations” (Gerbert, 1963, 20).

imperfection and discord. This is what we call vice or evil. The attainment of that purity which is to release the soul at last [...], may now be constructed as that reproduction, in the individual, of the cosmic harmony – the divine order of the world. Herein lies the secret of the power of music over the soul.”

This is a long quotation, but it may provide an idea of the peculiar way in which Psychology, Ethics, Politics and Medicine intertwined with natural-scientific disciplines such as Astronomy or Physics during the pre-modern phase, thanks to the harmonising role of music: a mixture which lasted without major problems until the times of Lorenzo<sup>27</sup> and Dorotea.

This approach had long been preparing the way for the sensible Greeks to leave the education of their sons, a delicate matter indeed, in the hands of musicians. Many stories or legends, half parables and half simple anecdotes, soon entered the Hellenic tradition and convinced the Greeks of the privileged power of music over individuals, of its ability to dominate both their will and feelings, directing them towards the most adequate ends. Thus, for instance, a quite successful story about Terpander spread: this zither player was said to have crushed a rebellion in Sparta, simply by singing and playing his instrument (Mikoletzky, 1966, 262). There was an even more picturesque history about Damon of Oa, a Pythagorean from the 5th century: According to Philodemos of Gadara and Aristoxenus, a few drunken young men encouraged by the music of a flute tried to break into the house of a honourable woman (let us not forget that the flute was considered the most Dionysian instrument ever since Marsyas, the satyr, used it to defy Apollo, whose attribute was the lyre<sup>28</sup>). But Damon, who was passing nearby, heard the fuss and stopped them from carrying out their deed by asking the flute player to interpret a Phrygian melody (which was a serious, solemn tune played during ritual libations). Thus, the young men, moved by the sublime respect that the music inspired in their hearts, gave up their lusty intentions and withdrew sober (Lasserre, 1954, 11).

During what we have called the pre-modern stage, all these narratives, and some others that the Christian tradition itself furnished,<sup>29</sup> supported the idea that music was

<sup>27</sup> See his speech in footnote 18.

<sup>28</sup> See footnote 23, Herodotus’ *History* VII, 26, 3, and Aristotle’s opinions in *Politics*, 1341a 17–1341b 9.

<sup>29</sup> Like the story by St. Isidore of Seville (Gerbert, 1963, 20), where he alludes to how David liberated Saul of ‘the evil spirit’ with the sole help of his melodies. St. Isidore follows 1 Sm 16, 14–23. But if we notice that,

the key to (and the bridle of) students' morality and passions. Such a high concept of music led Plato to devote many of his pedagogical essays to the analysis of the effects of musical harmony on the harmony of the soul.<sup>30</sup> It also propitiated the popularity in Pedagogy of Damon of Oa, who was reputed for having contributed to the fact that music was officially recognised as an educator of customs.

This pedagogical attitude lasted for a long time. As late as in the Musicology of the 15th century, we can find a good example of how little important musical instruction became for the simple education of future musicians, and, on the contrary, how deeply relevant it was deemed for the education of people in general. Thus, when Johannes Tinctoris, a Flemish scholar, listed the effects of music on individuals in his work *Complexus effectuum musices* (Coussemaeker, 1963, IV, 193), he mentioned twenty effects, most of which affect the religious faculties of the individual "Ecclesiam militantem triumphanti assimilare", "Ad susceptionem benedictiones divinare praeferare",<sup>31</sup> her feelings "Tristitiam depellere", "Duritiam cordis resolvere",<sup>32</sup> or even her physical faculties "Aegrotos sanare", "Labores temperare".<sup>33</sup> But the most remarkable fact for our contemporary mentality is that only one of these twenty effects of music (and it comes out as the penultimate one) has to do with music itself in a direct way: "Peritos in ea glorificare".<sup>34</sup>

However, this status quo did not last forever, and half a century later, most intellectuals would no longer seriously believe in the main part of the awe-inspiring effects that Tinctoris had attributed to the muse Euterpe. Pythagorean days in Europe were at an end.

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according to the biblical text, 'the evil spirit' to which he refers was 'sent by God' (1 Sm 16, 15), then it is reasonable to think that it was not a demon that would affect the soul (a righteous God could have never sent him), but rather a disease of the body. Thus, in fact, this anecdote would point out the medical benefits of music, rather than its psychological or moral ones (Núñez, 1992, 361).

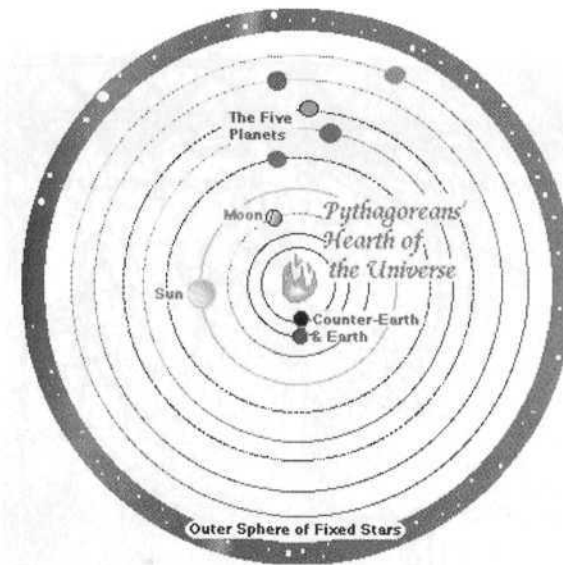
<sup>30</sup> See, for instance, *Republic* 376e, 398e-403c, 410a-412b, 475d-476b, 530d-535a, 591d; *Laws*, 658-659, 798a, 802; *Phaedo*, 60e-61b; *Timaeus*, 35b, 47c-e, 88b...

<sup>31</sup> "Looking like the militant, triumphant Church" and "Getting ready to receive God's blessings".

<sup>32</sup> "Pushing sadness away" and "Softening up one's heart".

<sup>33</sup> "Healing the ill" and "Mitigating [our] efforts".

<sup>34</sup> "Praising those who are experts in it (the musicians)".

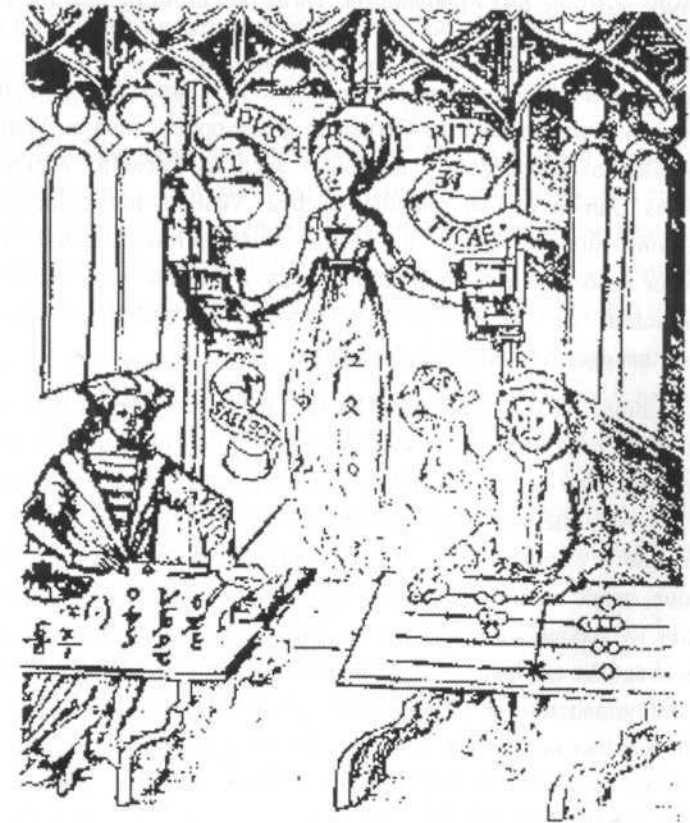


**FIGURE 1: The Pythagorean astronomical system.** We can graphically appreciate here how Pythagorean Cosmology was a mixture of mathematical, musical and observational notions. For Pythagoreans, the world was organised in concentric spheres that were embedded within each other like Russian Matrushka dolls. Each sphere contained one heavenly body (except for the last sphere, which was bigger and contained all the fixed stars), and made it move because each sphere revolved around the others. The friction caused by this rotation would produce the harmonic music of the spheres, which configured one of the Pythagoreans most solid beliefs: they believed it so firmly, that they had to admit the hypothesis of a 'counter-earth'. Indeed, for the sound of the spheres to be harmonic it had to be produced by ten spheres (ten was the perfect number) and they knew of only nine: the ones which contained the Sun, the Moon, the Earth, the five planets that could be seen at that time, and the one of the fixed stars. Thus, they put forward the hypothesis of the existence of a tenth sphere containing a tenth heavenly body that was equal to the Earth (the 'Counter-Earth'). That heavenly body would bring about the harmony of the whole or, putting it in a different way, would make the orchestra sound good. This way, music in Europe became exceedingly relevant in order to study the cosmos: it would come in as handy as mathematics or as the observation of the night sky in order to accept or reject any astronomical hypothesis, such as the one of the 'Counter-Earth'.





**FIGURE 2:** Picture of Pythagoras according to a medieval edition of Boethius. This picture displays iconographically a prized medieval conviction, of Pythagorean origin: that there is a link between the harmonic order of Heaven (the bells hanging above) and earthly order (the scales that Pythagoras is holding in his left hand). But it also represents the belief that such order was a musical one (the scales contain different musical instruments such as the one Pythagoras is using to play the heavenly bells in a harmonic way).



**FIGURE 3:** Drawing representing Boethius and Pythagoras competing in music and arithmetic (Margaista Philosophica, 1504). This image reflects two bonds that medieval Europe deemed as natural as heaven's blue: on the one hand, the link between arithmetic studies and music, and, on the other hand, the link between the two authors in the picture. This explains why the determinant role played by the first one during this era gave way to the Pythagorean trend that prevailed during the entire Middle Ages.

## 2.2. Modernity, Aristotle and Romanticism: Three odd allies against the old role of music in European culture

The pre-modern mentality described before shaped the frame of mind of poets such as Shakespeare, novel writers such as Cervantes, philosophers such as Plato, doctors such as Herophilos of Chalcedon,<sup>35</sup> musicians such as Gioseffo Zarlino (1558), educators such as Damon of Oa, scientists such as Galileo, musicologists such as Tinctoris and saints such as Isidore of Seville. Nevertheless, although it was the dominant view for approximately two thousand years, it was not at all unanimous. The leader of the tenacious few who were at cross purposes with such domination is one of the big names of that age: Aristotle, the philosopher.

Aristotle's opinions on the social role of music may seem very natural and sound nowadays, but at the time, they turned out to be a little too pedestrian or sceptical:<sup>36</sup> thus, only very few, like some Epicureans and Hedonists, subscribed them (Fubini, 1990, 65–67). For Aristotle, music was a mere 'hobby', another way to amuse oneself during leisure time (*Politics*, 1337b, 31–34). Thus, from the point of view of its educational value, music should be regarded as inferior to grammar, sciences, trade or even gymnastics, which at least keeps your body healthy (1338a, 10–24). He had explicit doubts about the existence of harmony either in heaven (*De Caelo*, B 9, 290 b 12) or within the human soul (*Politics*, 1340b, 17–20; *Historia animalium*, I 4, 407b 27–29)<sup>37</sup> and had serious misgivings, therefore, about the fact that learning music might serve to know more about the physical or the psychological worlds: Thus, musical arts must be taught only to those who were going to become professional musicians (1341b, 9–16), or to those who were going to judge the quality of the music played by these very professionals (1340b, 35–40). As a result, for Aristotle music was not an indispensable element within education (1338a, 15), and all that may remain of it is a straightforward way to provide individuals with aesthetic pleasure in their free time:

<sup>35</sup> See McDaniel and Hammond (1997), on the strange way in which this man from Alexandria mixed up medicine and music, having powerful later influences in Galen. Yet, the idea of harmony was essential for medicine at least since the appearance of the anonymous work *On Diet* I, 8; 9; 18.

<sup>36</sup> A radical (and well sustained) alternative to the reading of Aristotle rendered here is the one provided by Oñate (1989); we cannot, however, enter here a proper discussion of it.

<sup>37</sup> Lucretius denies such theory in a much more explicit way in his work *De rerum natura*, III, 94–135.

Why do those who suffer and those who rejoice resort to the music of the *aulos* [a double flute]? It is evident that in the first case, they resort to it in order to soothe their pain, and in the second case, they resort to it in order to rejoice even more (*Problemata Physica*, XIX, 1).<sup>38</sup>

Aristotle's aestheticism had some bearing on authors such as Aristoxenus or the Epicurean Philodemus. However, such notions did not put in danger the pre-modern high esteem of music as something more than a mere amusement, until Cartesian theories expanded throughout Europe. Curiously enough, Cartesian theories were, however, considered deeply anti-Aristotelian in almost all other areas of culture.

René Descartes opened a new period in Western mentality, a period that was altogether different from that described in the previous paragraphs: he marked the start of the modern world. It is common to define the features of this modern world by comparing them with those of a unitary world harmonically organised according to the musicality defended by Pythagorean emulators: From Descartes onwards, reality would no longer be a unity between nature and human beings; instead, there would emerge a sheer divergence between:

1) The so-called *res extensa*, or whatever the fashionable sciences of the time could analyse from a mathematical perspective. That is to say, the natural world or material space studied by physics, geometry and astronomy, all of them sciences which were progressing extraordinarily and exerting more and more control over their respective fields.

2) The different realities that fall outside the boundaries of the aforementioned sciences, and that human beings cannot control by means of these very sciences. These realities include most of the things that happen *in interiore homine* (within human beings), and that can only be accessed through individual introspection and philosophical reasoning. This second world is known as *res cogitans*.

These are two veritably different worlds, and not just two different parts of the world, since, during the modern era, trying to overcome the distance between both spheres is just as strenuous as if they were two different universes. From the

<sup>38</sup> It must be said that the fact that Aristotle is attributed the authorship of this text and of the previously mentioned work, *Historia animalium*, is not fully reliable; at all events, it must have been highly influenced by the ideas that he sustained (Ryan and Schmitt, 1982).

ontological, the epistemological and axiological points of view, the principles that rule Nature have nothing to do with those that govern Human Essence, and vice versa. Such dualism soon gives way to an increasing pluralism: specific laws are attributed to each plane of nature, which is studied now by a specific science (e.g., biology, chemistry, physics...); and the same crops up in the different planes of human essence (e.g., psychology, economics, art, sociology ...). Reality was progressively converted into a set of diverse unconnected areas.

All these features of the pluralistic modern world are very well known to everyone; descriptions of them have been provided in all shapes and sizes, from Max Weber or Paul Valéry, to H. Blumenberg or Ortega y Gasset. However, there is something which is not so well known: the fact that the dominating role that music had acquired during the unitary, pre-modern age was so alien to this new modern shape of mind, that it began to be questioned by the *very same leaders* of Modernity themselves since the very beginning of their careers – and since the beginning of Modernity. Could harmony still be an essential concept in education once the European spirit had been convinced that harmony did no longer preside over reality? Could it still be a fundamental concept in education after the *discordant* split between the Natural world and the Human world, and between these two and the Divinity? (Theology could less and less explain the organisation of the natural world, or human matters.) The answer to these two questions is a flat denial, as issued by Descartes himself (1650, I, 4–13):

“Musicae finis, ut delectet, variosque in nobis moveat affectus. Fieri autem possunt cantilenae simul tristes & delectabiles, nec mirum tam diversae [...]. Nam de ipsius soni qualitate, ex quo corpore & quo pacto gratior exeat, agant Physici.”<sup>39</sup>

Thus, at the very opening of his *Compendium musicae*, a work entirely devoted to music and probably written by 1617, before the renowned *Discours de la méthode*, the herald of the modern view of the world states that the sole aim of music is ‘to amuse’ (*delectet*), along the line that the isolated trend of Aristotle and his Hedonist or Epicurean followers had been pointing out for centuries. Music does not serve to understand the natural world any longer; and, besides, in order to understand music itself, the reasons why it pleases us, or how sound is generated, it will be necessary to

<sup>39</sup> “The aim of music is to amuse us and to make us experience different feelings. The chords can be sad and delightful at the same time and that without being different from each other, which is even more amazing [...]. Physicians are responsible for studying the nature of sound, the object that generates it and the conditions under which it concords.”

resort to the newcomer science that now does accomplish the explanation of the natural world: physics (*agant Physici*). The different systems that spread throughout Europe from the 17th century onwards do not explain Nature by means of music or harmony, but by means of laws such as ‘ $F=m \cdot a$ ’. The universe is not organised according to totalitarian, harmonic principles, but according to a set of successive and individual causes and effects. The world is no longer a magnificent symphony, but a large heavy machine, and things are not in harmony with each other; instead, they are simply set into motion by crashing into each other. There is neither a shared identity, nor a mutual belonging between Nature and the Human Being, whose relationship consists of a series of *mechanical* causes and effects between them (Lang, 1941, 711, 1020). In addition, music is not *what explains* things any longer: it is *what is explained*. Thus, the Pythagorean postulate recorded by Cornford about an ‘inner instrument of music’ will no longer be used in order to explain the influence of music on human sensibility: it will be no longer believed that an inner orderliness recognizes and orders itself in accordance with the exterior instrumental one. The effects of music on human feelings will enter the list of unconscious causes and effects that take place in the world: music *brings about* events but does not *illustrate* the events that occur in the world or in human beings. Music is, as a result, only another cog in the modern world’s great, impersonal machine. A little cog which sometimes provokes certain sensorial events (such as accelerating the heart’s rhythm, relaxing the muscles, or even crying in the case of sentimental individuals), and which is affected by certain physical events (such as plucking a string, setting the vocal chords into motion, or hitting certain objects). That is all.<sup>40</sup>

This new concept of music, which by and by affected European mentality, confined music to the educational role that Aristotle longed for, and is the image of music shared even now by teachers such as Rosa Q. Ñ. Music turns into a matter which is only interesting for those who want to produce or savour it; as it progressively ensues, by the way, with everything else within the capitalist system – as a matter of fact, the impersonal, mechanistic modern image of the world will precisely provide the adequate

<sup>40</sup> The theory about the affections provoked by music in human psychology, known as *Affektenlehre*, became relevant from the moment when this causal approach to music appeared. (According to the mechanism that we are describing, and not just to make a pun, this theory about ‘*Affekten*’ could also be called a theory about ‘*Effekten*’ or ‘effects’.) Hence, it is not a simple quirk that Athanasius Kircher (1650) issued the work that initiated such a mechanistic kind of approach to music in the very same year that the Cartesian *Compendium Musicae* was finally published. See the article by Alina Madry included in the present book, as well as Chierotti (1999).



conditions for capitalism to develop (Bell, 1974, 477). Of course, there were some timid opponents to this new hegemonic ideology, but their very failure contributed to reaffirm the position of those who supported the modern view that music and the study of the natural world should go separately. One of these opponents, Johannes Kepler, a contemporary of Descartes, carried out the last serious, meticulous attempt to put forward a scientific physical theory of the universe according to laws of music. Significantly enough, his 1619 treatise, the one where he presented his well-known third law<sup>41</sup> was entitled *Harmonices Mundi*. However, this title already sounded far too optimistic. In fact, Kepler had had to abandon his first efforts intended to organise, from a mathematical perspective, the observations of Tycho Brahe in a purely Pythagorean style; efforts which consisted of mixing certain features of the five regular polyhedrons with musical notions and Brahe's measurements, and efforts whose origin lay only in the apparent coincidences of both fields of study, which casually struck him as he came to research about the planets. It was not until he abandoned such hypotheses that he came up with his three laws on the movement of the planets around the sun.<sup>42</sup>

Something similar happened to another opponent of Cartesian theories, G. W. Leibniz. He defined music as "*exercitium arithmeticae occultum nescientis se numerare animi*"<sup>43</sup> (Leibniz, 1712, 132), trying to convince Western minds that the structure of music was really the same as that of mathematics, nature and the soul. According to him, when a soul enjoyed music, it was not self-aware in a Cartesian rationalistic sense ("*nescientis se animi*"), yet it could notice the arithmetic relation ("*arithmeticae*") between the music it perceived and the Whole, its harmony with the Whole, and feel moved hereby in a very distinctive way ("*exercitium*"). In fact, for Leibniz, the Whole was still something harmonious, with a harmony that had been pre-established<sup>44</sup> for the

<sup>41</sup> It states that the ratio of the cube of the semimajor axis of the ellipse (i.e., the average distance of the planet from the sun) to the square of the planet's period (the time it needs to complete one revolution around the sun) is the same for all the planets.

<sup>42</sup> See Figures 4, 5 and 6.

<sup>43</sup> "Hidden exercise in arithmetic carried out by the soul, which cannot calculate itself", or, to quote the translation provided by Jiří Fukač in his contribution to the present book, "unconscious computing of the mind".

<sup>44</sup> See Valverde (2000, 131). Jan Amos Komenský, also known as Comenius (1668), follows this line of thinking with his idea of *panharmonia*, but he, like Leibniz, entered the European spirit too late, when it was becoming almost completely modern.

whole creation: Was it not the most plausible to think that a perfect Creator should have created the best world possible, harmoniously interconnected and in tune?

Yet, Leibniz's project to create a science for the study of the sweet harmony between the basic components (the 'monads') of both the natural and the human universes did not triumph over the cold Cartesian mechanicism (neither over the Newtonian one). Nor could Kepler deny the fact that his final elaborations of the cosmic laws no longer bore any relation to music. Therefore, the new dominant modern mentality could gently settle in the *Weltanschauung* of Europeans for generations, with only but a few exceptions, as had been previously the case of the pre-modern view.<sup>45</sup> Of course, this did not mean that all modern men shared *exactly* the same opinion about music. It merely meant that, despite the differences, they all agreed that music did not reflect the existence of any previous harmony, be it physical or psychological (let alone any physical-psychological or physical-psychological-divine ones, as before the 17th century).

Thus, for instance, the philosophers J. J. Rousseau, J. D'Alembert and I. Kant represent, at first glance, three opinions at odds over the relevance of music. For Rousseau, music is highly valuable since it brings the individual back to the mythical state of the primitive man, a happy time when the human race could live unaware of all the complications entailed in modern civilisation; at that time, speech was more a mixture of words and melody, combining sense and sensibility, logical argumentation with feelings: speaking was like singing (Rousseau, 1781, XII). For D'Alembert, however, the reason why music is valuable is not that it can express feelings in the same way as back in those happy days, but that it can express human interiority in a more adequate way each time, progressing throughout history just like any other science (D'Alembert, 1752). Kant, on the contrary, places music in the lowest position with respect to the other Fine Arts.

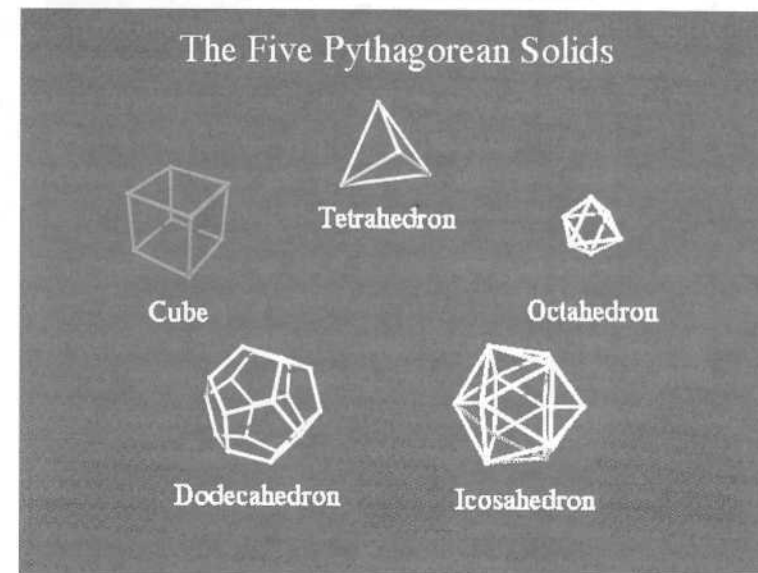
"Wenn man dagegen den Wert der schönen Künste nach der Kultur schätzt, die sie dem Gemüt verschaffen, und die Erweiterung der Vermögen, welche in der Urteilskraft zum Erkenntnisse zusammenkommen müssen, zum Maßstabe nimmt; so hat Musik unter den

<sup>45</sup> For example: Y. M. André, who claimed that "the human body had an absolutely harmonious structure" (1741, 81), and J. P. Rameau (1722), who wrote the first relevant treatise about harmony in Europe before starting his remarkably productive musical career, and then "found himself all alone before the world, when he was old" (Fubini, 1990, 203). See also other more recent cases mentioned in footnote 21.

schönen Künsten sofern den untersten [...] Platz, weil sie bloß mit Empfindungen spielt.”  
(Kant, 1790, § 53)<sup>46</sup>

And yet, Rousseau’s appreciation of music because of its primitive facet, D’Alembert’s respect for its historical progress, and Kant’s hardly dissembled contempt for the art of sounds, all sprang from the same ideological presuppositions: that music no longer transmits knowledge because there is no similar harmony within man or nature, and therefore, music is only of value to express the irrational part of individuals, that which cannot be conceptualised in knowledge. This is the part that the myths of Orpheus and Dionysus had vindicated before the success of Pythagorean postulates. This is the part in which Aristotle placed music, which only served to amuse us in leisure time. The part that Rousseau longed for, D’Alembert wanted to improve progressively and Kant undervalued. The part praised by Romanticism, the most important cultural movement at the beginning of the 19th century, which is dealt with in the next section, given the fact that it played the last relevant role in pinning down the modern musical ideas which we are describing.

<sup>46</sup> “If, on the other hand, we estimate the worth of the fine arts by the culture they supply to the mind, and adopt for our standard the expansion of the faculties whose confluence, in judgement, is necessary for cognition, music, then, has the lowest [...] place among the fine arts, since it plays merely with sensations.” The little appreciation that Professor Kant felt for music is explicitly expressed in the unexpected comments that he makes in this same paragraph, where he also shows a hardly dissembled disgust, which might seem somewhat quaint to us nowadays: “Over and above all this, music has a certain lack of urbanity about it. For owing chiefly to the character of its instruments, it scatters its influence abroad to an uncalled-for extent (through the neighbourhood), and thus, as it were, becomes obtrusive and deprives others, outside the musical circle, of their freedom. This is a thing that the arts that address themselves to the eye do not do, for if one is not disposed to give admittance to their impressions, one has only to look the other way. [...] Those who have recommended the singing of hymns at family prayers have forgotten the amount of annoyance which they give to the general public by such noisy (and, as a rule, for that very reason, pharisaical) worship, for they compel their neighbours either to join in the singing or else abandon their meditations.”



**FIGURE 4: The only five regular polyhedrons.** What attracted Kepler’s attention was the fact that only five objects with geometrically equal sides could be created (the ones in the picture), and the fact that five was precisely the number of planets known at his time (Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn). In a purely Pythagorean style, he concluded that this could not be due to mere chance, and that such a coincidence should mean something. His first hypothesis, then, was that each planet occupied a sphere (just as Greek Pythagoreans thought), although there was a distance between each sphere (not like in Figure 1, where each sphere touches the immediately bigger and smaller ones). Following this hypothesis, the distance between every two spheres would be caused by the insertion of a different regular polyhedron in the middle of them: The tetrahedron between the two smaller ones, the cube between the second and the third smaller ones, and so on. Thus, it would be possible to work out the distance between planets (between spheres), which was one of the calculi Kepler was looking for. The model for this hypothetical astronomic system appears next, in Figure 5.

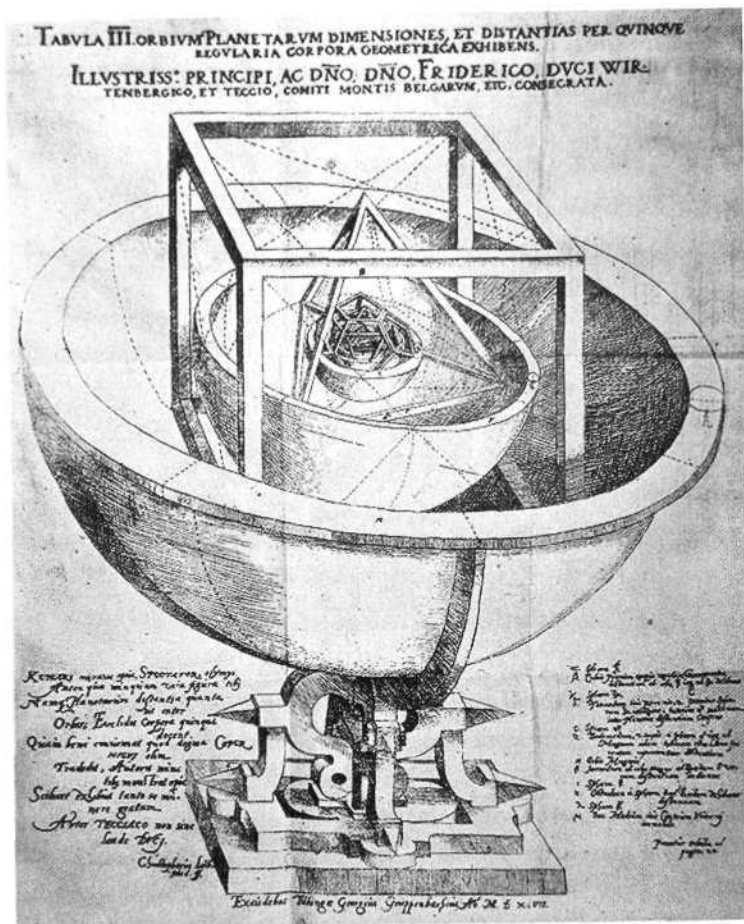


FIGURE 5: Kepler's model of embedded spheres between the nesting of the five regular solids. This figure reproduces the way Kepler imagined the organisation of the solar system when he initiated his research (*Mysterium Cosmographicum*, 1596): each concentric sphere between two polyhedrons would contain one of the five planets known at the time. He asked for funding from the Duke of Wurttemberg in order to continue studying this subject and to build a model like this one using jewels and precious metals. However, the Duke did not consider it such a good idea, and refused to support it. However, Kepler's main problem was not a financial one, but, rather, the fact that subsequent calculations made him realise that his previous image of 'spheres within polyhedrons' did not correspond to what existed in the sky (according to the

observations of Tycho Brahe). Therefore, he ended up by having to dismiss his initial Pythagorean idea of the five planets corresponding to the five polyhedrons. As a matter of fact, soon after he discovered his well-known three laws, which were a shock to the European vision of the world and a death blow to Pythagorism itself, since they proved that the movement of the planets was not circular but elliptical (therefore, there were no 'perfect' spheres). However, his nostalgia for the Pythagorean view he had contributed to demolish was the reason why he decided to entitle the book he published in 1619 *Harmonices Mundi*: even though, in the world (mundi) there described, there was no trace anymore of this 'harmony' (harmonices) presumed by Pythagoras.



FIGURE 6: Kepler's alleged specific series of tones for each planet. According to the recalcitrant Pythagorean Kepler, the velocities of the planets and their orbits are related to specific musical scales. He even thought to have discovered them: this is the way the sky sounds. Or, at least, the way it used to sound.



### 2.3 Schopenhauer, our Educator

During the Romantic period in Europe, the opposition between man and world, between soul and Nature, was at its highest, and manifested the greatest inscrutable gap ever existing between them, just as Kant had foreseen in his *Third Antinomy* (1781b). In the Western mind, the natural world had progressively been reckoned as the *realm* of those creatures which are *mechanically* determined by mathematical, Newtonian laws, especially since the Marquis Laplace (1799–1825) found an answer to the remaining questions posed by Sir Isaac in his project to explain the entire universe. And, complementarily, after the French Revolution, the human world had increasingly become the *realm of freedom*, a sphere full of undetermined elements (human beings), of creatures that can and want to build their own future both individually, from their particular ethical values (Kantian self-determination: Kant, 1788), and collectively, as a nation, by means of Politics (Kantian-Fichtean self-determination: Kedourie, 1960). These two realms, the absolutely determined one, slave to physical laws, and the absolutely undetermined one, free and liberating, had to be studied, therefore, following two radically dissimilar approaches. Thus, Natural Sciences, inspired in Newton, would only study the natural world, the world of objects, and the so-called *Geisteswissenschaften* or *Humaniora* – Humanities – would study human beings, their free inner self, the individual subject (Gadamer, 1960, I, I, 1).

Nevertheless, the rupture between these two realms could not be lived without an utter scandal for the most valuable European minds: how could the world be divided into two so different things: men on the one hand, and, on the other, all the rest? As a consequence, the Romantic era turned out to be an epoch in which the most (and last) highly elaborated conceptual constructs were developed, in order to try to unify what no one considered unitary any more: the unified world view that everyone considered almost impossible to restore. This was the aim of huge conceptual constructs such as the ambitious philosophies of German Dialectics put forward by Fichte, Schelling, Hegel and Marx. Bruno Latour was not completely off-centred when he defined their thinking as “philosophies that intend to cover up the new growing gap” (Latour, 1993, 88).<sup>47</sup> Yet, that world where the sphere of natural objects and the sphere of human beings

<sup>47</sup> They intend to cover it up, but they fail to do so (Latour, 1993, 90). See also Sacristán's analysis on Hegel and about how he could not prevent this *Zersetzung* of the modern world from taking place.

coexisted in harmony was already a lost world: it was the pre-modern world, and no cunning attempts to recover it appealed any more to hardly anyone.

Given this situation, music grew to be increasingly restricted to those undersized educational spheres that were exclusively devoted to musical purposes. Nevertheless, we must acknowledge, to be sure, that Romanticism carried out one last attempt to place art in general, and music in particular,<sup>48</sup> in a relevant position within the lives of Europeans at the beginning of the 19th century, by coining the notion of ‘artistic genius’ (Gadamer, 1960, I, I, 2, 2). The ‘genius’ and his artistic production were claimed to epitomize the secret way to access the most intimate ingredient of reality, and they were deemed even more powerful than reason or the sciences. Art could reveal the real essence of the world. It was in this context that, after listening to Johann Sebastian Bach's compositions, Goethe wrote a letter to Zelter on the 21st of June 1827, affirming that they represented “God's inner harmony before the creation of the Universe”.

But in fact, no scientist (not even Goethe), no engineer or politician would seriously charge artists with the task of studying that very Universe, and even less would they provide the artist with the resources or the money to achieve such objectives (Sacristán, 1967). Thus, eventually, art and music had to content themselves with occupying a privileged position to access one of the halves of Modernity, the domain of subjectivity and undetermined freedom within human beings, but not the other longed-for half, that is, the domain that comprises the rest of the universe. In this manner, artistic pedagogy had to specialise, no longer providing “a [general] education *through* art, but turning into solely an [artistic] education *for* art” (Gadamer, 1960, I, I, 3, 1). In spite of Romanticism's keen endeavour to increase the appreciation of art and music, both art and music were pushed away to a highly praised position, indeed, but a position so radically detached from the physical world and real life as strictly focussed on subjectivity and the artistic tiny moments that the modern world let us go through. Therefore, the musical education that was earnestly welcome by Western intellectuals had nothing to do with the remaining areas of education any more. “It was this way how

<sup>48</sup> “German Romanticism considered it [music] the universal language of mankind” (Gadamer, 1972a). In this vein, we can recall how F. W. J. Schelling revitalised certain drifts of the previous Pythagorean mentality (Pareyson, 1964, 145–152). We might also evoke how Hegel bailed music out, rescuing it from the last position among the Fine Arts, in which Kant had confined it, to place it in the second position, right after poetry (Fubini, 1990, 266–271).

a deep and indissoluble dualism settled" (Gadamer, 1960, I, I, 3, 1) and such dualism was even deeper and more unbreakable than that of the early Moderns.

Friedrich Schiller's letters, published in his *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (1795), illustrate the process whereby Romantics, paradoxically enough, commend and ill-treat musical education at the same time, by totally discriminating it from the kind of instruction which seeks the knowledge of the real world. However, the best milestone of this pervasive paradox of the European soul was the one produced by the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer in his *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (1819). This work includes the three features of Romanticism mentioned before: First, the natural world (which he labels *Vorstellung*, the world of representations) is radically detached from the world of human freedom (which he labels *Wille*, the human will). Secondly, there is a plea for music, which is for Schopenhauer the most important human endeavour, just because it is the only one that permits us to escape from our concerns in the illusory, fake world of objective representations (*Vorstellungen*), and compels us to find out that the true essence of reality rests on the subjective will (*Wille*). Finally, Schopenhauer does away with any chances that musical education may have of becoming of any practical use, in the purest Romantic mood. For him, the supreme value of music lies precisely in the fact that it takes us away from the natural and social world, the world that we share with each other, the world of the *Vorstellungen*. Music is the most worthwhile human activity just because it is useless, and the more it detaches us from the world described by Newton, and the less it links itself to reason and knowledge, the better music it turns out to be. Music is the most precious thing in the world because it enables us to escape from the world.

Schopenhauer proposed a bizarre metaphysics, where the only real thing was an anonymous Will, outside the world, which was what supposedly created the cognitive representations stated by Science. It can be avowed that he was not a too successful metaphysician, as attested by the fact that, after him, his conception of the world did not reach a minimal standing – there are even some who suspect that he did not believe in such a conception himself (Valverde, 2000, 211). But the rest of his message became very well known: music has nothing to do with the knowledge of the world, thus, musical education is only useful for music, and the aesthetical world of music is different from the real world. These ideas, as is usual in many other works by Schopenhauer, define the modern world so accurately that many of his texts seem to have a certain air of

"'ovvietà' che prova oggi il lettore di Schopenhauer; una ovvietà niente affatto svalutativa: Schopenhauer non ci dice cose banali, ma cose che ci paiono chiare perché ci sembra di saperle già: come si dice, ci riconosciamo in esse." (Vattimo, 1982, 61)<sup>49</sup>

This is how Schopenhauer has come to be our real 'educator' nowadays (Vattimo, 1982, 61; 1989a), taking upon himself the role that music used to play. He, as a teacher, has taught us to confine music to an aesthetical world apart, a world where learning about music is relevant only for this very aesthetical world of music. For the other, for the real world, music at its best is of worth only in order to fill it in with some colour (Marquard, 1989). Schopenhauer as a teacher has been so thriving that the spreading of his creed has grown to be the kind of 'obviousness' that Rosa Q. Ñ. (as well as many other contemporary, though unaware, disciples of Schopenhauer) admitted at the beginning of this article.

The first one to make us realise the importance of Schopenhauer as educator of the modern world was another philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, who reflected this in his essay of 1874 *Schopenhauer als Erzieher* ('Schopenhauer as educator'). According to this work, we can understand present-day mentality through Schopenhauer, especially in order to learn how to criticise it in an adequate way:

"nämlich zu erklären, wie wir Alle durch Schopenhauer uns gegen unsre Zeit erziehen können – weil wir den Vortheil haben, durch ihn diese Zeit wirklich zu kennen." (Nietzsche, 1874b, IV)<sup>50</sup>

With his usual clairvoyance, Nietzsche found out that Schopenhauer had proposed the only viable alternative to the four functions that education was to have by the end of the second millennium. We already know Schopenhauer's alternative, which consists of teaching something useless, such as music, in order to forget our daily worries and to enter an altogether different world where we can be more subjective and free, and at the same time less scientific and less rational. This fifth function of education, which might be called 'aesthetic', 'subjective' or 'escapist', has been among the functions of Western instructional systems from the Romantic age onwards, and thus music is still one of the optional subjects in the secondary school where Rosa Q. Ñ. works. The other

<sup>49</sup> 'Obviousness', which is savoured by those who read Schopenhauer today; but in this case, 'obvious' is not used to express contempt: Schopenhauer is not saying banalities, but things which seem clear to us just because it looks as if we already knew them; as some say, we can recognise ourselves in them."

<sup>50</sup> "Namely, to explain how we all can be educated through Schopenhauer against our time, since we are fortunate in so far as we can really get to know our time through him."

four functions of education were considered by Nietzsche as contrary to Schopenhauer's function, but (and this was not forecasted by Nietzsche, who thought them to be wholly incompatible) presently coexist peacefully in our schools with this fifth, supposedly contrary, one. They are stated next:

1) Education as coaching in the bourgeois business and economic capitalist system<sup>51</sup>, or in

“Die Selbstsucht der Erwerbenden [...]. Von dieser Seite kommt jener beliebte Satz und Kettenschluss her, der ungefähr so lautet: möglichst viel Erkenntniss und Bildung, daher möglichst viel Bedürfniss, daher möglichst viel Produktion, daher möglichst viel Gewinn und Glück – so klingt die verführerische Formel. Bildung würde von den Anhängern derselben als die Einsicht definirt werden, mit der man, in Bedürfnissen und deren Befriedigung, durch und durch zeitgemäss wird, mit der man aber zugleich am besten über alle Mittel und Wege gebietet, um so leicht wie möglich Geld zu gewinnen.” (Nietzsche, 1874b, VI)<sup>52</sup>

2) Education as nationalist indoctrination in order to favour

“[der] Selbstsucht des Staates [...]. Vorausgesetzt, dass er sich stark genug weiss, um nicht nur entfesseln, sondern zur rechten Zeit in's Joch spannen zu können, [...] so kommt die Ausbreitung der Bildung unter seinen Bürgern immer nur ihm selbst, im Wetteifer mit andern Staaten zu Gute. Überall, wo man jetzt vom ‘Kulturstaat’ redet, sieht man ihm die Aufgabe gestellt, die geistigen Kräfte einer Generation so weit zu entbinden, dass sie damit den bestehenden Institutionen dienen und nützen können: aber auch nur soweit.” (Nietzsche, 1874b, VI)<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> As Vattimo (1985a, 32) has observed, Nietzsche's criticism about this function, and his assessment of the one that we will discuss in the fourth place, derive from the influence of Jacob Burckhardt (1905).

<sup>52</sup> “The selfishness of business men [...]. They have created the well-liked principle or chain reasoning that goes as follows: let us search for as much knowledge and instruction as possible and therefore, as many necessities as possible and therefore, as much production as possible and therefore, as much profit and happiness as possible – this is what this tempting formula states. Those in charge of spreading education would define it as the ability to discern things whereby we become more similar to our contemporaries, both with regards to our necessities and to the way we satisfy them; the ability thanks to which we have all the different ways and means in order to earn money in the easiest way.”

<sup>53</sup> “The selfishness of the State [...]. Provided that it deems itself strong enough not only to set free, but also to subjugate people under its yoke if the time comes, [...] thus the spread of education among its citizens will finally enhance the affairs of this State in relation to other States. Nowadays, those places where they talk about the ‘State of culture’ prove that the State has been assigned the task of liberating the spiritual forces of a nation according to whether such forces can serve and benefit the existing institutions – but only in this case, and nothing more.”

3) Education as a means of teaching the good manners and civilised customs necessary for living within society:

“Da wird drittens die Kultur von allen denen gefördert, welche sich eines hässlichen oder langweiligen Inhaltes bewusst sind und über ihn durch die sogenannte ‘schöne Form’ täuschen wollen. Mit dem Äusserlichen, mit Wort, Gebärde, Verzierung, Gepränge, Manierlichkeit soll der Beschauer zu einem falschen Schlusse über den Inhalt genöthigt werden [...]. Mir scheint es bisweilen, dass die modernen Menschen sich grenzenlos an einander langweilen und dass sie es endlich nöthig finden, sich mit Hülfe aller Künste interessant zu machen.” (Nietzsche, 1874b, VI)<sup>54</sup>

4) And, finally, education as a way to learn about science and technology, the issues which allow us to dominate the world by means of objectivist research. Such technoscientific instruction does not deal at all with the human interiority, following what he called

“die Selbstsucht der Wissenschaft [...]. Die Wissenschaft verhält sich zur Weisheit, wie die Tugendhaftigkeit zur Heiligung: sie ist kalt und trocken, sie hat keine Liebe [...]. Sie ist sich selber eben so nützlich, als sie ihren Dienern schädlich ist, insofern sie auf dieselben ihren eignen Charakter überträgt und damit ihre Menschlichkeit gleichsam verknöchert. So lange unter Kultur wesentlich Förderung der Wissenschaft verstanden wird, geht sie an dem grossen leidenden Menschen mit unbarmherziger Kälte vorüber, weil die Wissenschaft überall nur Probleme der Erkenntniss sieht, und weil das Leiden eigentlich innerhalb ihrer Welt etwas Ungehöriges und Unverständliches, also höchstens wieder ein Problem ist.” (Nietzsche, 1874b, VI)<sup>55</sup>

We have quoted Nietzsche extensively in view of the fact that his considerations, though regarded by himself as ‘ill-timed’ or ‘unfashionable’ (*Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*) in his days, might proffer today a portrait not so far removed from our

<sup>54</sup> “In the third place, culture is promoted by those who regard themselves as having an ugly or boring inwardness, and wish to hide it beneath the so-called ‘charming manners’. The observer should be induced to draw wrong conclusions about that inwardness by means of external appearances, by means of words, of gestures, refinement, luxury and good breeding [...]. I have from time to time the impression that modern men bore each other a great deal, and, in the end, they need to make themselves more interesting by means of all arts.”

<sup>55</sup> “The egotism of science [...]. Science is to wisdom what morality is to holiness: it is cold and dry, devoid of all love [...]. As long as science seeks its own benefit, it harms its servants, because it transfers onto them its own character, fossilising their human features. As long as culture is understood as the promotion of science, science will pass aloof and unmoved before those men who suffer, because science sees only knowledge problems everywhere and because, in its world, suffering is inappropriate and incomprehensible, or just one more problem.”



present-day condition. Besides, they visibly delimit the sole remaining territory, where a fifth function can take place: the function of artistic disciplines, such as music. When, right before going away on her summer holidays, Rosa Q. Ñ. tries to make some room for music within the educational system, she never questions the obligatory presence of the other four functions of education at secondary schools. She only asks for students to be given the chance to learn how to escape from life's hurly-burly, from that reality, by means of all kind of musical compositions. The rest of education already deals with reality: as do economics<sup>56</sup> and foreign languages, which are taught because of their future potential within the work market<sup>57</sup> (first function signalled by Nietzsche). Reality is also treated by the State<sup>58</sup> through the design of instructional programmes that only study the geography, history, language and literature of its particular country: all that

<sup>56</sup> The pedagogical movement called 'Deschooling', which arrived on the scene around the 60's, offered already in its time a wide-ranging criticism of this kind of education that tames us lest we should fail to satisfy the economic needs of the 'real world' (Lister, 1974).

<sup>57</sup> Hermeneutical ethics, which we will comment on later, has defended the view that there is another educational function in learning foreign languages or in being acquainted with dead tongues. This consists in instructing us on how to open up to conceptual and vital worlds that may be radically different from ours, in order to educate us within tolerance and the ability to gain knowledge of what is different (Gadamer, 1960, III, 14, I; 1977a, 260; 1977b, 17; 1959, 64; 1986, 57, 174; 1990). This way, we would further what Carlos Thiebaut (1999, 56-63) calls active 'positive tolerance', as against the merely negative or passive one, which 'allows' the others to have a different culture without letting us come near them and get edified by their values. An example of the link between active tolerance and the fact of being open to foreign languages can be seen in the difference between Anglo-Saxon colonisation of America, which is the model of passive tolerance, and Hispanic colonisation of America, with its ideal of active tolerance (Rubert de Ventós, 1987). As all ideals, this ideal was not achieved every time, needless to say. But, by and large, it had decidedly estimable upshots: Thus, while Spain promoted the compilation and learning (even at university) of the native languages, as an active way to show respect ('hermeneutical' *avant la lettre*) for the diversity of their native speakers (Bustamante, 1992), England did naught in that sense. This contributed to convert Latin America into an experience of ethnic crossbreeding and cultural hybridisation, something that did not happen in the case of the English-speaking part of America. Hence, England would have been more 'modern' – if it is true that Modernity tends to exterminate linguistic and dialectal diversity (Derrida, 1990) – than the 'hermeneutical' genre of settlement carried out by Spain; and nowadays, the United States look forward to being 'modern' too, specially in cases such as the one which writers like Rodríguez (1982) represents.

<sup>58</sup> This has been dubbed 'State realism': see the alternative proposed by Beer and Hariman (1996).

fosters a narrow-minded jingoism,<sup>59</sup> and makes the State sure that its subjects will behave as obedient followers in the case of a conflict<sup>60</sup> (or simple commercial competitiveness) with a foreign power (second of Nietzsche's functions). The social reality is also present in schools, where pupils are taught the main and lesser social rules or ethical behaviour (third function);<sup>61</sup> and the natural and material reality is definitely at hand for students as they are trained in the different ways to dominate the world we live in through technology and Natural Science (fourth function).<sup>62</sup> The educational system is very demanding about this peremptory, real world, and overwhelms us with its realistic demands. Considering this, Rosa Q. Ñ., as well as other modern disciples of Schopenhauer, have contented themselves with vending music as a plane ticket which would take us on a brief (and well-deserved) vacation from 'reality' to a suitable holiday resort in an 'unreal' world, accompanied by Brahms, Gilles Binchois or Miles Davis.

Despite all this, and despite the fact that Schopenhauer's (and young Nietzsche's) successors accept this *cohabitation* with the four 'realistic' functions of education, such a *modus vivendi* has made them somewhat feebler: music is no longer offered as a global alternative to the other educational functions, but only as a sporadic, temporary one. The *bon pensant* 'pacifism' of these Schopenhauerian heirs towards the realistic spirit of the remaining four educational functions has made them, to some extent,

<sup>59</sup> Those who, like MacIntyre (1984), defend an education in this sense, relapse therefore into the modern outlook once more, in spite of their hopes to overcome it.

<sup>60</sup> Oscar Wilde (1891, 213) had already drawn attention to the fact that a serious knowledge of other countries is the best antidote against militarism: "The change will of course be slow, and people will not be conscious of it. They will not say, 'We will not war against France because her prose is perfect', but because the prose of France is perfect, they will not hate the land. Intellectual criticism will bind Europe together with bonds far closer than those that can be forged by shopman or sentimentalist. It will give us the peace that springs from understanding." We must underline that Wilde's reference to 'understanding' is concomitant to the *Verständigung* through the dialogue proposed by hermeneutical ethics, as we shall see in section 3.2.; and his reference to the 'shopman' clearly reflects the sort of anti-utilitarian assessment anticipated by Nietzsche as regards the first educational function of modern education mentioned above.

<sup>61</sup> Heidegger's criticism of this 'humanising' function is already a classic (Heidegger, 1947). See also Vattimo (1981).

<sup>62</sup> Heidegger (1957) provides another classic and influential analysis of this function of technology (and of the *Ge-Stell* world towards which it pushes us). See also Vattimo (1988b), and, on scientific education in general, see Quintana Paz (1998b, 2001a).

accomplices of the very Philistinism of those functions they wanted to fight or, at least, substitute (Adorno, 1973; Perniola, 1990, 58, 61). For, thanks to this fifth function of education, the other four are devoid every now and then of the eventual weariness caused by their realistic demands, and may grow to be more commanding (*Semel in anno licet insanire*). In this sense, as long as we consider Schopenhauer as our educator, there will always remain a certain feeling of 'defeat' (Perniola, 1990, 66) about the place of music as an educational instrument. A defeat that not only forces us to conform to the remaining small area that the four prevailing educational functions allow music to have, but also obliges us to act there in the sole interest of those four functions, acting as a 'relax zone' for them.

### 3. Hermeneutical Ethics: Looking for a Surrogate Educator after Schopenhauer

#### 3.1. The end of Modernity and the (all-too expected) nostalgia of pre-Modernity

In the previous sections we have contemplated the history of a loss: of how music ceased to be focal in European education, as it was at a time when the Western intelligentsia regarded it as the paradigm which best displayed the harmonious structure of both the world and human beings (and *between* world and human beings). We have also witnessed how music became a separate subject, detached from anything related to the order of the universe, since it started to assume the task of enabling people to escape from that universe, which began to be viewed as governed by a set of mechanical, impersonal laws. We have watched how music, about 350 years ago, became an affair exclusively designed for musicians and those who wanted to enjoy it (as had been yearned for by Aristotle 2300 years before). Finally, we have checked how such a seclusion of music was propitiated not merely by people like Kant, who did not feel much deference towards this kind of art, but equally by those, like Schiller or Schopenhauer, who revered musical sounds with the most unfathomable ardour. All of them willingly agreed that music, in the end, was exclusively helpful for musical activities, activities that were fully disengaged from everything that had to do with economy, politics, social relations or science. Nietzsche craved to make Western culture counter these four utilitarian ends of modern education, focussing on the sort of aesthetical education that Schiller and Schopenhauer had praised before. Yet, he simply encouraged the addition of a fifth function to the four existing ones, a fifth function that both supporters and detractors considered useless. This is the kind of function that,

nowadays, justifies the teaching of music at high schools amidst more useful subjects, such as second languages or computer science.

This is our situation as inheritors of Modernity. But, from the outset of the present article, we wondered whether we could still dub ourselves modern, that is to say, whether we could still consider Schopenhauer our educator – as stated by Nietzsche's title. May we, in exchange, return to the pre-modern age, when music had a more prominent role? Or should we, rather, devise a new behavioural pattern, a new 'ethics', in order to approach music and its function within education?

As to the first matter, it must be pointed out that there is no need to be exceptionally good interpreters of our own *Zeitgeist* in order to realise that, as time goes by, it is becoming harder and harder to sustain the orthodox creed of Modernity and Romanticism about reality – and about music. It would certainly be a Herculean challenge to attempt to recapitulate here all the good grounds for such a conviction, a conviction which Ortega y Gasset (1923) already labelled as "the main issue of our time."<sup>63</sup> However, we can try to succinctly enumerate the main leaks that initiated the sinking of the boat launched by Descartes, Newton and Kant. One of them is the fact that serious doubts have been arising, for the first time, about the cultural hegemony of science, which from the 17th century onwards had the privilege of stating the rational Truth about the physical, natural world. For scientific methods attested not to be so 'rational' as it was formerly believed. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), by Thomas S. Kuhn, is a classic reference about this discovery – so classic, that it has been the most quoted Humanities book in the last lustrums, according to recent inquiries. Kuhn and, some years later, P. K. Feyerabend (1974) proved that for science to work properly it must not merely follow rational-methodical rules, and thus its *modus operandi* does not differ so much from that of other disciplines such as Humanities or Art. These revelations had a fatal effect on the credibility of science as an instrument to monopolise the rational discourse about reality. But, at the same time, they contributed to deconstruct the modern-romantic image of a world divided into two antagonistic realms: that of things and that of human beings; since science, the queen of the domain of things, was no longer so dissimilar to the kinglets of the world of humans (like art, humanities, religion, politics and so on).

<sup>63</sup> As we can see, this main issue of 'our' (in fact, Ortega's) times has indeed been going on for several decades after Ortega, which contributes to make it even more complex for us to intend to present here a global appraisal of the topic.

At the same time that these foundations of the modern image of the world of objects commenced to crumble, the pillars that supported its image of the world of human subjects began to quake likewise. Humans, essentially *thinking* beings according to Descartes and distinctively *free* beings according to Kant, gradually lost this poise, and the suspicion arose of whether mankind had neither so much rationality nor a so deeply rooted liberty in its inner self, and thus, human beings were not so unlike the other creatures. Darwin set off this kind of misgiving, but it was chiefly Marx, Freud and Nietzsche himself who exhibited the soundest basis to suspect (Ricoeur, 1965) that humans are not so free as they supposed they were, nor do they grasp their inner, rational life so accurately: since countless social, psychological, moral and religious traps deceive the human mind relentlessly, making it extremely complicated for it to achieve such aims as real freedom or truthful thinking. Consequently, if we still desired to define human beings as that which is free and self-aware, like Moderns did, we should have to admit Foucault's sorrowful "death of the human being" (1966, 398): The only way to prevent this pitiful outcome would be to replace the modern concept of human beings with a less ambitious one.

Art also has been devoid of any ingenuous modern, romantic ideas concerning its role within society. The naïve belief that it is a completely detached discipline is no longer plausible, nor is it suitable to assume that it remains unbiased-by economy, politics or mundane concerns, as advocates of the notion of 'artistic genius' and 'Romantic creation' fancied, when they placed the arts beyond everyday life (Perniola, 1990). The artistic avant-garde movements, as well as all those who have seriously reflected upon the actual condition of art, have done a fruitful job in order to discard the credo that both art and music belong to a world that is radically separated from the rest of reality; a credo known (and criticised) under the term 'aesthetic conscience' (Gadamer, 1958; 1960, I, I, 3; I, II; Vattimo, 1992, 90–98).

After all these attacks on 'objectivity' and 'subjectivity', which were the two columns that supported the modern standpoint of reality, it seems a little too daring to remain in that position and keep the same perspective. And perhaps it is too bold not just from an intellectual but also from a practical point of view: Is it really convenient to leave the decisions concerning Nature to physics, which invented the atomic bomb, or maybe to technology, which helped to come by the *Konzentrationslager*, or to chemistry, which keeps polluting our spoiled planet? Is it unavoidable to leave the organisation of society to utilitarian economists and politicians? Are we allowed to continue to use art *only* as a way to escape (during the hour and a half of a film, or

during the forty minutes of a symphony) from the well-known lacerating realities of our joint 'Spaceship Earth', as K. E. Boulding called it?

It is a bone of contention whether the main motive for us to question Modernity is in fact its theoretical problems, as Ortega held (1941, 524); or whether it is due to practical worries, such as those we have just pointed out, that we mistrust the theory of the Moderns, as Vattimo pleads (1994, 37–39). In any case, either because of theoretical or pragmatic reasons, Modernity seems increasingly powerless to bail us out in our present-day and future concerns. And, as usual, such moments of crisis are prolific in prophets who intend to solve today's troubles by resorting to a happy golden past, where such troubles did not and *could not* even exist. They are the typical preachers who sermonize upholding the return to an idyllic past spirit, where everything was more stable, profiting from the palpable crumbling down of the present spirit. In this specific case, they propose to replace the decayed modern structures with the also decayed (at their time) and long-forgotten pre-modern ones. They miss pre-modern ages, and hope to take their revenge and make up for the defeat they suffered four hundred years ago, by taking advantage of the present weaknesses of Modernity (their enemy once upon a time). Throughout the 20th century, we have been spectators of the revival of assorted trends postulating the return to pre-Modernity, be it the Greek or the medieval species of it, or any of its still existing genus in those cultures which have not endured the consequences of Modernity.<sup>64</sup> The appeal of such a revival has tempted all the various areas of culture, from politics (MacIntyre, 1981; Rivera, 2000) to religion (the so-called 'New Age' was in this line); from abstract, academic ontological theories (Severino, 1982) to the frivolous passion of mobs of tourists towards the exoticism that they believe to discover in 'pre-modern' nations,<sup>65</sup> or in a shallow orientalism.

As to musical education, there have also been many attempts to overcome the problems posed by the model that suggested 'Schopenhauer as an educator' by regaining the old alternative that put forward 'Pythagoras as an educator' and which

<sup>64</sup> See footnote 21 for some examples of such revivals. From among the authors mentioned before, Small (1980) is the one who seems to most fervently subscribe to this solution, which consists of retrieving the traits of pre-modern ages or places.

<sup>65</sup> Sometimes, tourists are not the only ones to be bewitched by the conviction that they have found out a more 'authentic' vision of the world in other cultures, more authentic than the hesitant remains that we currently inherit from Modernity. Think, for instance, how the reputed anthropologist Lévy-Strauss (1955) was under the same delusion, as Derrida (1967) pointed out.



was so successful back in the times of Lorenzo and Dorotea. Let us simply bear in mind some well-known contemporary attempts to link, in the most literally Pythagorean *maniera*, music with mathematics, with the harmony of the universe and with the internal order of the human soul (although now 'human soul' is called 'brain', and its internal order is called 'mental rules'). It is a quite remarkable detail that such efforts frequently take Johann Sebastian Bach as their paradigm (a trend that Goethe pioneered when he referred to Bach's music the way we have seen he did, as a key to grasping God's organization of the natural world).<sup>66</sup> Even though such attempts pretend to bolster the role of 'Bach as an educator', it is not a hard task to notice that their real spirit aspires to recover 'Pythagoras as an educator': their goal is to convince people that the world is such, that brain, universe and music go together in full harmony within it.

Instead of all this, my aim is to provide a different possibility, neither a pre-modern nor a modern one, proposing music in general and Bach in particular as the adequate educators for us: passing from '*Schopenhauer als Erzieher*' (quoting Nietzsche) to '*Bach als Erzieher*' without going through '*Pythagoras als Erzieher*' over again. It is one of my most deep-rooted convictions that it proves to be utterly implausible to revisit Pythagoras as our main educator: who dares nowadays to back the faith of ancient Greeks in a harmonic and scientifically demonstrable accord between world, man and gods, and in the capability of music to paradigmatically represent such a union? Not even so sympathetic approaches to music as Lovelock's ecologist outlook (1979) share such a fierce optimism, and those who do, as for instance Thomas (1983) or the so-called 'New Age', may seem a mere 'dilettantism', as Jiří Fukač suspects in his contribution to this book. Is it possible to pour what we may call the new wine of our 'knowledge society' and our 'clash of civilisations' (Huntington, 1996) into the old wineskin of the belief that world, man and music are ruled by the same sort of harmony? Besides, I do not feel compelled to keep up a dying Modernity, where neither objects nor individuals, neither science nor art can be regarded in the same light as before, only for fear that whatever will come next could be 'even worse' (worse than

<sup>66</sup> In his article, which is included in this book, Jiří Fukač mentions similar examples such as those of the biologist Lewis Thomas (1983) or Hofstadter (1979), who tried to establish a link between music, artificial intelligence and logic. Some other articles of this volume, such as those by Jan Slovák or Petr Osolsobě, share to a certain extent this very bent to consider music as something helpful in order to understand the world, just like Pre-moderns did. As to the parallel belief in the influence of music on our morals, in a pure Damon of Oa's style, there are current authors, such as Umberto Eco (1963), who also look back on it nostalgically. Pythagoras does not lack disciples yet.

what? one feels tempted to ask). We simply need to assume the challenge of a world and of an education that may not be like the ones (modern and pre-modern) we used to have earlier.<sup>67</sup>

How should such an education for today be? What kind of role should music play in it, given that it ought to be different from the pre-modern one, where it would unveil the harmony of the Whole, but it must also be dissimilar to the modern one, where it would only help us to escape from the Whole? What we have formerly defined as 'hermeneutical ethics'<sup>68</sup> may give us a clue about these questions concerning our Babel-like knowledge society.

### 3.2. Hermeneutical ethics in education: An outline of a new role for music

In section 2, we reviewed the main differences between the Pre-modern and the Modern projects, paying only little attention to the similarities between these two mentalities. However, it is a matter of fact that such connections exist and are prominent; moreover, it could hardly be otherwise since both *Weltanschauungen* are genetically linked (one is the ancestor of the other) and both achieved success in the same geographical context – Europe. The most apparent of these resemblances is perhaps a shared misgiving towards the concept of historicity – what Heidegger referred to as '*Geschichtlichkeit*' (1927, § 6, §§ 72–77) and Ortega y Gasset (1935, 40) termed as '*razón histórica*'.

For Pre-moderns, the world had *always* been a harmonic unity (although, there was a hot-blooded underlying controversy, '*de aeternitate mundi*', based on whether 'always' meant 'for all eternity', as proposed by ancient Greeks and by the followers of

<sup>67</sup> Should it be 'post-modern', then? This term has been used by so many authors and in so many different ways that I believe that it has grown to be already more confusing than illuminating; thus, we had better not answer such a question, just by appealing to the fact that it does not make much sense anymore. Many authors who subscribed such a term at the beginning, back in the 80s (Rorty, 1983; Vattimo, 1984), have almost completely discarded it by now, at least in the late 90's. From now onwards, I will preferably use the term 'hermeneutics' in order to distinguish my proposal of 'Bach as an educator' from the pre-modern and the modern ones.

<sup>68</sup> See references in footnote 20.

Averroes,<sup>69</sup> or whether it meant 'from the moment when it was created by God', as Orthodox Jews, Muslims and Christians believed<sup>70</sup>). Consequently, history and time, change and corruption, had basically nothing to do with the world, nor with its essence (harmonic order), given that the world was perfect and musically harmonic *precisely* because time would never affect it; the Universe was immutable, and never ever was to show signs of ageing or lacking harmony. Pre-moderns found it unnecessary, therefore, to bring into play the concept of history in order to comprehend better the relevant features of reality.

Moderns agreed overall with Pre-moderns about this. Although they drove a wedge between subject and object, history was equally superfluous in order to understand both worlds, just as unnecessary as it was for Pre-modern mentality in order to come to terms with the one and only world. The world of objects would be studied by natural sciences and mathematics, whose laws were fixed and permanent, thus non-historical, just as the harmony proposed by Greeks and medieval men. It was not until the coining of the concept of 'entropy' (Carnot, 1824) in physics (at a time when history was also developing into a relevant issue for many other spheres of Western culture, such as Hegel's philosophy or J. L. David's paintings), that history could attract any interest from the point of view of scientific research – a kind of research which has always pretended to focus specifically on those *eternal* natural laws that never modify.<sup>71</sup>

Similarly, the world of subjectivity did not give way to any special interest in history. According to both Descartes and Kant, the most striking attribute of human inner life, the attribute that needed to be clarified, was its startling capacity to cope with

<sup>69</sup> See Plato's *Republic*, 608d, or Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, XII 6, 1071b 2–20. On Averroes, see Gilson (1965, 339).

<sup>70</sup> Saint Augustine, Saint Bonaventure and Étienne Tempier, archbishop of Paris, contributed to this view; the latter by condemning the alternative approach in 1270. Nonetheless, other believers, such as Saint Albertus Magnus, Saint Thomas Aquinas and Maimonides were less restrictive (Rohner, 1913).

<sup>71</sup> Soon after the concept of 'entropy' had opened a breach of 'historicity' in physics, more and more sciences (such as evolutionary biology, geology, cosmology and so on) began to be in daily need of history as a category for their research projects, contravening the orthodox Modern creed of the unavailability of the category 'history' for the study of the Universe. This disobedience of Modern commandments by the very natural sciences that were supposed to be the main allies of Modernity would finally add to the problems that we have already mentioned in 3.1. and which would cast serious doubts on the correctness of Modern mentality.

*immutable* (thus non-historical) cognitive principles, its astonishing ability to grasp the eternal laws that organized the also immutable physical world. According to Schopenhauer and the Romantics, the most noteworthy quality of art and music was their power to abduct us from the *historical* world, with its temporal duties and concerns, and to let us live out the experience (*Erlebnis*) of a reality beyond time and *history* (Gadamer, 1960, I, 1, 2, 2–3; I, 1, 3). As we have already seen in section 3.1., after Freud, Marx, Nietzsche,<sup>72</sup> Ortega y Gasset and the avant-garde movements, it is no longer satisfactory to have faith in an 'a-historical' individual.

Unlike the Pre-moderns and the Moderns, the project of hermeneutical ethics cannot persist in overlooking the concept of history in order to understand things and human beings. This means that neither the fact that everything is perishable, nor the passage of time can be disdained or considered a mere incident. On the contrary, it is necessary to break fresh ground and accept that any human plan to understand anything (world, gods or human beings) will be characterised by two unavoidable features, two features that define the historical dimension of human beings. The first one is that humans are finite, ephemeral, mortal beings (Heidegger, 1927, § 50–53); and the second one is that, being *transient*, they are conditioned and historically changed by the circumstances that they come to find in their *transit* through life, by their specific contexts (Ortega, 1935, 32–33). Any individual and the different situations they may face throughout their lives share a common feature: they cannot be understood in a plausible way without taking into account their historical dimension, their precariousness and their contextual conditioning. Thus, for instance, while carrying out a scientific study, we should keep in mind that the 'history of science' proves that science is not such an accumulative process or accurate progress as many scientific manuals pretend; and, by doing so, we could hinder the spreading of many innocent myths about the infallibility of science – and protect ourselves against the mystifying 'power' of those myths. It is not by chance that Thomas S. Kuhn (1962), being the philosopher who had done most to demythologise science, was himself a scholarly *historian* of science. Another good example of the availability of historicity in order to clear up a cultural sphere is the one

<sup>72</sup> We must bear in mind that, in spite of having written an anti-historical plea entitled "On the Use and Abuse of History for Life" in his second *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtung* (1874a), in fact Nietzsche addressed his criticisms in this work towards 'history' as 'historiography' (*Historie, rerum gestarum*), that is to say, towards the knowledge or awareness of history, but not towards history as the finite and mutable character of our life (*Geschichte, res gestae*). In addition, he even changed his derisive ideas about *Historie* later on (Vattimo, 1984, 173; 1985a, 28).

provided by politics: if we take into account our changing history, we will be able to place ourselves in a sceptical position and be suspicious of the absolutist affectation of certain political programmes, such as orthodox Marxism or neo-liberalism à la Fukuyama (1992). We could denounce such programmes for merely consisting in a contradictory attempt to find out the *immutable* and therefore a-historical laws<sup>73</sup> underlying the *mutable* reality of human history.

Taking history into account could have positive effects on musical education as well. It would help to change the idea that music serves musical purposes only. During the Pre-modern epoch, the aim of music was to establish some kind of link between humans and the eternal *order* of the universe and soul; during Modernity, it sought to connect us to an *order* that would differ from the mechanical order of physics – the *order* of inner feelings. Now, on the contrary, that same music is ready to be a privileged instrument so as to make us feel that we are in contact with the *absence* of eternal *orders*. How? Well, since music can no longer link us with any culturally accepted order, like the aforementioned and bygone ones, it can enable us to feel that the only ‘metaphysical’ connection one can experience today is the bond to other fellow beings (composers, players, listeners, dancers, amateurs) who are ephemeral as we are. In other words, it connects us with our ‘historical being’, with our historicity. Lacking the celestial harmony among the spheres and for want of Shopenhauer’s transcendental world of Will, music compels us to accept that all we have and all it may put us in relation with are immanent, temporal things. Immanent things such as the particular man and the particular moment in history that produced a particular composition;<sup>74</sup> or the different men and the different ages that have preserved and transmitted that

<sup>73</sup> Curiously enough, highlighting the historical dimension in the relativist sense that we defend will prevent us from being historicist in the sense of “believing that we have grasped the permanent essence of the laws of history”, which was the sense of ‘historicism’ that Karl R. Popper (1945, 1957) slated so often. Lukács (1923) and Kosík (1963) had already criticised orthodox Marxism before, because it had precisely overlooked the historical dimension (and, therefore, the mutability) of the very laws of history. Fukuyama’s neo-liberalism had also been rejected by neo-liberals since he believed in a historical determinism (the determinism that leads to the establishment of democratic regimes on the whole Earth), determinism that would contradict the undetermined freedom of the individual that should be the basis for all kinds of libertarianism (Jiménez Losantos, 1993, 50-61).

<sup>74</sup> This possibility of contacting past human beings with a different vision of the world is what Dilthey (1907–1910, 215–216) considers more relevant about artistic experience. See, more particularly on music, Dilthey (1907–1910, 220–224).

composition to us;<sup>75</sup> or those from among the human community who know how to judge and enjoy it nowadays.<sup>76</sup> In the process of learning how to appreciate music, we are unavoidably taught to evoke our radically historical dimension: Should we really want to comprehend a musical piece, we would have to bear in mind the specific historical perspective of those who lived in a different time and in a different place (and also composed in a different way). We would also have to make use of our historical and provisional methods, namely, the temporary existing community of those who are able to ‘understand’ the music that comes from afar, and of those who are able to ‘interpret’ it for us. All that becomes a weighty reminder of our ephemeral condition and of our limitations within our specific context. It turns into a hefty thrust towards the careful musing of the distance between us and the past, a distance which is not only chronological (due to the passage of years according to a calendar), but also conceptual, spiritual: in one word, it is a historical distance.<sup>77</sup>

Thus, musical education not only trains us to listen, compose and play music, but also, by noticing the absence of one of the previous orders which lay beyond music, it educates us according to a mentality of precariousness, of the ephemeral, of historicity; a mentality that, as we have already seen, is quite coherent with today’s world. It instructs us within a kind of ethics or way of life in which the only point that can be taken as a reference is the rest of human beings, those who might play or appreciate music, because there is no other fixed, a-historical reference point to judge from. It teaches us that the fixed and eternal order in the world of objects or in the world of individuals is no longer the only possible authority. Instead, authority springs from the circumstantial (historical) disorder of mortal beings, it moves and changes and it is subject to constant revision and refutation.

This takes us to the second function of musical education nowadays, apart from that of linking us to relativity and history. Somehow, music teaches us how to transcend our

<sup>75</sup> This is what Gadamer (1960, II, II, 9, 4; II, II, 11) has called *Wirkungsgeschichte* (‘history of effects’), or what has been called ‘reception aesthetics’ from the Constance School onwards (Warning, 1975).

<sup>76</sup> Vattimo (1989c) has defended this ability of art to ‘create communities’, starting from Kant’s suggestion, when he considered aesthetic judgement something typical of an intersubjectivity (1790), and following Gadamer’s paradigmatic developments (1960).

<sup>77</sup> See Vattimo’s reflections (1985b) on what he calls the relevance of ‘monuments’ (artistic works from the past) in order to transmit these experiences to us.



own historical context in order to establish a dialogue with other temporal and spatial contexts. The first reason for it is that, if absolute orders do not exist outside human beings anymore, it makes no sense to confine oneself to one's own circumstances, as if they were in fact the only absolute order. Fundamentalism stops making sense once it is proved that there are no fundamentals (Vattimo, 1988a).

But there is a second reason for this instruction on dialogue with other places and times that music conveys us. Apart from preventing absolutism and confinement in our narrow contexts, music can edify us in order to help us get in contact with what does not form part of ourselves, with what is outside these narrow circumstances of our own. It trains us in how to contact different cultures, either from the present or from the past, to which we can offer the best of ourselves, and from which we can receive the best of them. Indeed, every time we interpret something from a different period and a different place, we must receive the best that such period and such place *are offering* us, but we must at the same time *offer* our best skills in order to interpret it in a respectful way. Thus, music educates in this *quid pro quo*, whereby we allow what is different to converse with us (from the outside) and, at the same time, we try to integrate it in our specific context (because if it were to be left completely outside, no interaction would take place). Therefore (Dilthey 1907–1910, 225), we neither let ourselves be completely transported away to the world of the different (we would stop being ourselves, this would not be communication, but assimilation), nor remain impassive (for this would also attest a failure in communication: the difference would not have *spoken* to us). After the dialogue with someone else's composition, we are not the same person as the composer, but neither the same person as we were before listening to it or playing it. Coming into contact with that musical piece and understanding it changes us, but, at the same time, it changes that musical piece too, because the way we play it or listen to it brings forward its potential, which could not have been revealed before our getting in contact with it (Eco, 1962).

Such a dialogue with music, in which it *transforms* us and *is transformed* by us as well, calls for a special relevance in today's education, because it offers a model of a sort of dialogue in which no fixed rules are followed. No instruction booklet contains any exact explanation of how to interpret just a single musical composition, let alone all musical compositions from different times and different cultures. (In the hypothetical case that such a manual should come into existence, the question of "how to interpret the instructions in it" would come up immediately; and if there should be another manual to interpret the previous one, the question, and the problem, could repeat

themselves once more and *ad infinitum*.)<sup>78</sup> So, in order to interpret something different, it is necessary to approach it (in this case, music) in a wholly individualised way, without subsuming its difference to any general or abstract schema; we must try to adapt it to our own circumstances in a suitable specific way, without ignoring either its difference or our concrete context. This is the model of interpretative dialogue to which music accustoms us.

And, indeed, such a model can prove to be highly instructive nowadays: Is it not the soundest paradigm for us to approach our contemporary dialogues in general? Let us think about intercultural dialogue, for instance, which is essential in order to face those problems that can only be dealt with on a global level (e.g., ecology, hunger, AIDS, underdevelopment, etc.). Up to now, the West has followed the colonialist, authoritative model imposed by the Moderns in order to deal with such problems. (We must keep in mind that Modernity was at its height between the 17th and the 19th centuries,<sup>79</sup> at the time when European imperialist expansion was at its height too.) Such a modern model of problem solving from the West seemed to be simple in theory, but turned out to be an utter failure in actual practice: it intended to impose Western solutions and priorities as the only way to act towards the problems of others; solutions that only Westerners were able to find out and to carry through, due to their privileged access to scientist rationality. This was Modernity's model: if the West had already discovered the laws of reason, the only thing to do was apply them to humankind without asking its opinion.

<sup>78</sup> This well-known problem shows up in philosophers such as Kant (1781a; 1790, § 7) and Wittgenstein (1953, §§ 198–240): it is the problem of how to interpret any given rule in general. It is useless to provide new rules in order to interpret a first given rule, since these new ones would also stand in need of a certain interpretation, and the problem multiplies itself. But, then, do we simply interpret rules in an arbitrary way? Moreover, if it is so, why do we agree so often? See Gadamer (1960, I, I, 1, 2c).

<sup>79</sup> In fact, the adventure of European expansion did not start as late as the 17th century, for Columbus had already discovered America back in 1492, Hernán Cortés had wiped out the Aztec Empire back in 1521, and Francisco Pizarro had done the same with that of the Incas in 1532. Yet, we can exclude the Spanish conquest from what we call 'modern colonisation' precisely because of its being so premature: this might have been the reason why it was not a mere imposition or transfer of the European framework, as later came to pass on the Eastern coast of North America, but a fruitful mixture of Spanish and Indian features (see also Rubert de Ventós, 1987). Instead, the conquest of Northern America by the English and French, which took place from the 17th century onwards, and also the colonisation of Africa by the English, French, Belgians, Dutch, Portuguese, Germans, Italians and Spaniards in the 19th century have the two traits that we link here as correlated: they followed fully the modern frame of mind and, therefore, they did not favour crossing cultures, mongrel identities and mixed dialogues, but one-sided imposition.

Should any human refuse to accept these rational laws, it would only be because he/she was irrational and, therefore, his/her opinion would not be worthy of consideration; as everybody would finally have to admit these rational laws, why waste time asking for their explicit acceptance? Nowadays, though, this model proposed by Moderns is not helpful any more: there is an increasing number of non-Western cultures asking for their opinions to be taken into account, and also asking for Western priorities (like our capitalism, our model of family, our model of democracy, our religious secularisation) to stop being considered the most rational ones from the start (Huntington, 1996).

This is our condition, then: there is an urgent need for a dialogue among cultures, but we lack a set of previous common rules – such as that proposed by the Moderns – to decide which of the views defended through such dialogue has the right to prevail. In these circumstances, the hermeneutical model for a dialogue without previous standards, which integrates the best of each interlocutor, becomes not only appealing, but also extremely adequate... and necessary. And it is music, as we saw before, which gives us a fairly good illustration of how to carry out such dialogues. Music has always succeeded, and is constantly succeeding, in integrating elements from different times and cultures, blending them together, interpreting and reinterpreting, becoming influential and being influenced: and all that without previous, unanimously accepted standards (which would be so unimaginable as ‘the standards according to which all musical pieces must be composed’); but also without being merely arbitrary (‘anything goes’, ‘no matter how we compose, everything will have an equal value’). In short, music has become the scenery where a dialogue like the one we term as ‘hermeneutical’ has been taking place since time immemorial. Thus, why not profit from musical education in order to come up with an idea of how to implement those future inescapable intercultural dialogues, which lack fixed problem-solving standards? Would it not be beneficial if pupils were acquainted with a cultural sphere, like music, where pleasing things have been created without strict rules for centuries, but where not every whimsical desire is valid; a cultural sphere where the self is only a starting point in order to intermingle with the different?<sup>80</sup>

<sup>80</sup> An author so unlikely to develop a sentimental or aesthetic approach as the analytical philosopher Hilary Putnam (1992) has also been persuaded by the idea that music portrays a model of how to carry out a rational dialogue when there are no initial fixed rules. This idea had also captivated Wittgenstein (1967, 147) before. Within hermeneutical philosophy, Gadamer (1993) has explicitly mentioned music as the paradigm for the hermeneutical dialogue he proposed: “Each present has its own living space, its own tradition, which shows in the different customs and uses, in the different social institutions [...]. We need to

We have already spotted two new educational functions of music: The first one resides in bringing us to be on familiar terms with our historical dimension (and without considering historicity there is not much we can grasp about our present-day condition). The second one consists in letting us be acquainted with dialogues that do not possess prior rational rules, but nevertheless are able to integrate contributions from different cultures, building up on contingently shared understandings.<sup>81</sup> We may also put forward a third function which is closely related to the previous ones, and which could even be considered their consequence. If we gain knowledge through music about our finiteness, and, thanks to it, also *learn how to learn* from others (even if what we may learn could be thoroughly dissimilar from what we used to think, or from what we used to think we could learn); then, as a consequence, we can readily become skilled at *doubting about ourselves* as well. If we are historical, mortal beings, and if everything we do (even thinking) is conditioned by our life projects (Heidegger, 1927), it is entirely reasonable to cast a certain air of doubt on the circumstantial thoughts of the present, which might

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link our own absolutist aims [...] with the recognition of other different traditions, trying even to develop common solidarities [...]. Artistic experience can motivate humankind to carry out this task. In fact, we can also find in art certain highly demanding traditions and highly marked styles. At times, it is not easy for us to get in contact with artistic creations from different times and cultures. Yet, on the long term, [...] [art] can build a bridge beyond barriers and beyond places. Nowadays, this is amazingly evident for us in music. See, for instance, how the Far East has adopted Mozart, Schubert and all the European music in a few decades, and how those musicians from the Far East count among the main figures of our musical life. Besides, as we all know, Europe has also assimilated many elements from the musical language of Africa.” In the present book, readers will also be able to find other verifications of this in the articles by Detlef Felix (on the musical dialogue between cultures), Yveta Kajanová and Norbert Adamov (on the musical dialogue between styles), Widmar Hader (on the musical dialogue between different ages), Lenka Stránská (on the musical dialogue between music and other arts) and Jürgen Mahrenholz (on the dialogue between creeds by means of music).

<sup>81</sup> Throughout Modernity, people first tried to discover what they *should* have in common, in order to be able later to establish a dialogue upon those grounds (Kant’s apriori forms, Cartesian clear and distinct ideas, etc.). Nowadays, since all those ‘foundations’ to establish ‘a possible dialogue’ have failed, we can keep on looking for new foundations (like the philosophers K.O. Apel and J. Habermas do); but we can also do as we propose here and take our contingently and circumstantially common elements as a starting point in order to make new agreements. This option is the central point in Gadamer’s and Vattimo’s philosophies, and has also been defended by different means by Camps (1991), Brandom (1994) and Quintana Paz (1997, 1999, 2001b). It was, as well, the option chosen in order to carry out musical dialogues such as the one that gave way to the creation of jazz, and that originated in the incidental similarities that existed between black and European music (Schuller, 1968, 43).

change through contexts yet to come. And, in case we crave to integrate someone else's ideas in our own life, we cannot consider such life complete and perfect from the start. In both fashions, music smoothes the progress of relativizing our prior customs and certainties.

Moreover, there are other ways in which music does such self-relativization, ways that are not simply consequential of the two aforementioned functions of music, but more direct. For instance, when we listen to or play a musical piece from other periods or cultures (or just a piece composed by a different author), we realize in practice that different human beings may see things in an altogether diverse manner, but this does not mean that they (or we) are necessarily wrong. Not all people who compose differently from us do it incorrectly; instead, we listen or try to interpret people far away from our procedures knowing that paying attention to them is worth the effort. Here, thus, we are taught to overcome the modern dogma about truth (if two things are different, one of them is inevitably wrong), and relativize our means and opinions. Another example of relativization is the one produced when we devote part of our time to a musical experience: Even though this experience may not be so metaphysical as Schopenhauer desired, we are nevertheless learning through it to leave our daily concerns and priorities aside for a moment. We are, for a moment, relativizing ourselves, our society and our daily lives, and paying attention to another kind of reality and possibilities (Vattimo, 1986). We are, to sum up, detaching ourselves from 'real' values such as profitability and usefulness (think of the four types of selfishness denounced by Nietzsche) and leaving them in parentheses, at least from time to time, while a musical piece is gripping us. A third example of self-questioning through music: our inability to carry out a 'perfect' performance, or even to understand what 'perfect' would mean here, also helps us to suspect our own convictions.<sup>82</sup> And a last example: when we

<sup>82</sup> Alessandro Baricco (1992) faces overtly today's drawbacks in finding a value for music in our world, after the Modern-Romantic era: "The very idea of considering educated music a 'value', which has to be promoted and defended, is not legitimate in fact, in spite of its being supported by the slogans that we have inherited uncomplainingly. [...] Does anyone know how to explain why a young person who prefers Chopin to U2 should be a cause of comfort for society?" But, in the end, Baricco coincides with the proposal of hermeneutical ethics, and conjectures that the value of music might consist in its ability to show us how to be ironic about ourselves, how to be sceptical about our 'skills'. According to him, this comes, mainly, from the fact that every possible way to interpret music is relative, in the sense that we have proposed here. It must be noticed that the 'paradoxes' that Jaroslaw Mianowsky perspicuously uncovers about interpretations

intend to interpret someone else's work, we must adapt to what we know about it; we must get rid of our own free will or style in order to approach the one that suits it best – this is what Eco (1992) has labelled *intencio operis* –, and, therefore, we must walk away from our own self and relativize it once more.

Through all these means, music instructs us how to become strangers to ourselves (Kristeva, 1988), how to detach and question our own language (De Man, 1986, 83) and how to 'be able not to be right'.<sup>83</sup> An education promoting such values will undoubtedly prepare 21st century citizens to accept contact with other cultures, the openness of the knowledge society and future migratory movements. Such edification purports, in order to face similar challenges as these, incontrovertible advantages over the old 19th century education, with its economicist and nationalist values,<sup>84</sup> which Nietzsche denounced. Music, thus, undertakes the task of coaching us to live in multicultural societies, in the tolerance that springs from the knowledge that everyone (even oneself) is questionable and 'foreign' in a way. We are ready, through this, to achieve what the French and anthropologists call *dépaysement* (literally, 'decountryfying' oneself) and what Italians and postmodernists (Álvarez, 1992) call *spaesamento* ('bewilderment'); namely, the talent of seeing oneself from a relativist point of view and with a certain distance; the capacity to approach certainties and dogmas, specially our own ones, with gentle irony and some kind of detachment.<sup>85</sup> The

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in general (as he writes in the article included in the present volume) can also emphasize this penchant of music to teach us how to be a bit more sceptical about ourselves.

<sup>83</sup> This expression is taken from the deft title of A. Domingo Moratalla's book (1991) about philosophical hermeneutics. Gadamer himself (1991, 152) insists on this suggestion: "The soul of my hermeneutics is that I affirm that understanding the other means, to a certain extent, that the other is right. And this transforms our own self. Thus, in fact I imagine that since we have grown up in this world-wide civilisation we must [...] learn to see the possible truth of the reasons of the other and, therefore, learn to doubt about our own reasons."

<sup>84</sup> See Quintana Paz (2000a), on the problems of nationalist education within the challenges of the 21st century.

<sup>85</sup> The kind and well-tempered irony (Vattimo, 1984, 178–179; 2000) about which I am thinking is very similar to Cervantes' humane irony, or to the playful, creative one that F. Schlegel had already related to art (Allemann, 1956). It does not have anything to do with the sheer sarcasm of Francisco de Quevedo or with the tragic anguish of K. W. F. Solger. In fact, these last two models owe all their vitriolic ingredients to a long-lasting nostalgia for the stable and fixed world of Pre-modern days of yore, nostalgia without any self-irony. Their bitterness, therefore, is chiefly conservative, since it is unable to overcome the deceived desire



more 'foreign' music makes us (if, for instance, music comes from a distant subcommunity, time or space), the more it will educate us in the ethics of being self-ironic.<sup>86</sup> Should music keep on diluting our inertial principles and values, those hierarchies we presuppose without noticing, it would gradually help us to foster a non-hierarchical, non-authoritative society, where life would develop into something less and less oppressive for people who would differ more and more.<sup>87</sup>

#### 4. *Adagio Finale*

We could find out many other utilities of music once we make up our minds to disregard 'Schopenhauer as educator' for good, and acknowledge 'Bach and musicians in general as educators', in the way depicted previously. So far, we have only drawn attention to a few possible bases in order to accomplish that, but those ought not to be deemed as definitive, just as if we had disclosed the new definite 'order' of interrelation between music and the rest of things (the kind of order in which both Pre-moderns and Moderns believed). That would contradict the ideas we have tried to defend. Since we no longer have faith in immutable essences, the ideas we have just developed are historical, mutable, ephemeral and open to discussion, and should I be given a good reason for it, I would revise them myself ironically, considering them 'alien' and 'foreign' to me. Bach and musicians in general can educate us in new astounding ways that we cannot even imagine: and it is up to them, the musicians, to achieve in practice the sort of development they should contingently yearn for (a kind of historical longing that neither this nor any other essay can wholly, 'essentially', envisage – still less

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of a firm order, and, therefore, they attempt to find consolation by means of their sour laugh. See Ferrater Mora (1955), Rorty (1989) and Behler (1990), on the suggested non-vitriolic self-irony.

<sup>86</sup> For this reason, we do not agree with T. W. Adorno (whose view is commented on by Mikuláš Bek in the present book) when he says that ancient music is a symbol of authoritarianism. Instead, we believe that it is a symbol of anti-authoritarianism (like any remote music), a symbol of the incapacity of our current hierarchical criteria to reign over all time and space. This music can instruct us in how to doubt everything, even ourselves and our own present authority, when it forces us to change those criteria in order to 'be understood' in the distance. Within the School of Frankfurt, of which Adorno formed part, there are also authors such as Habermas who acknowledge that art in general has this critical and self-critical stance, similar to the one proposed here (Weber, 1976).

<sup>87</sup> In Quintana Paz (1998a), there is a more detailed elaboration of the kind of society favoured by the fact that music could make us more sceptical about our own principles.

decree). This article, thus, has just been an attempt to help some people to cease expecting from music what Pre-moderns and Moderns-Romantics expected, since, as we have sought to clarify, waiting for things like this to appear nowadays is like waiting for Godot. We have also intended to provide a few hints about the new things that Bach and musicians in general have been teaching us, since the moment when we stopped asking them to explain the Universe, our inner life or a metaphysical world, as we previously used to ask.

I would like to finish by telling a true short story about the person we have considered to epitomize this new way of inserting music in education: the musician Johann Sebastian Bach (although, certainly, we could have picked up many other masters for that function). According to reliable testimonies (Zeraschi, 1956), when Bach was 65 he suffered from the eye-illness currently known as cataracts, and he decided to be operated on by the reputed eye surgeon John Taylor, who was by coincidence spending some time near Leipzig in that very year, 1650. It must have been a hard decision for Bach to make. The operation itself was not too complicated: it consisted of making an incision in the middle of the eye using a scalpel in order to remove from the crystalline the opaque part which brought on his partial blindness. What made it hard was the fact that this incision in the most sensitive part of the eye had to be made without anaesthesia, as all surgical operations in those times. It was compulsory, at the same time, for the patient to keep still enough to allow the surgeon determine the exact points where the cuts would be made. In spite of all this, Bach accepted to undergo what we would describe as a veritable torture nowadays, and the removal of his cataract took place without major setbacks in March. After this, John Taylor covered the patient's eyes to facilitate his recovery. But, subsequently, problems began: recovery was not so straightforward as it was expected in the first place, and during four months, four long months of blindness, the surgeon did not allow Bach to take the bandage off his eyes. Yet, the musician must have got so tired of such a long period in the dark after such torment, that on the 18th of July he decided to take the risk and uncover his eyes by himself, in order to see what would happen. The surprise was breathtaking: He could see perfectly! However, such sudden joy was too much for a sick man of his age, and only a few hours later he suffered an attack of catalepsy from which he died ten days later.

The first time I heard this story I thought that what might have affected Bach so much was not only such sudden happiness. The mere thought that the previous long period of blindness could have been drastically abridged, if either he or the surgeon

would have dared to uncover his eyes sooner, must have also represented a violent blow to his exhausted spirit. And even the thought that, should no one have risked carrying out such an action, he would have continued to be in the dark for a long time, must have left him awestruck.

Nowadays, our Western education is still covered with the bandages of past mentalities which do not let us face the problems which are right in front of us, even though we believe that these bandages are protecting us against something or someone. We may keep such certainties, such protecting bandages on our face, just for fear of hurting our eyes if we take them off. But we can also remove them some happy day, and surprisingly realise that we could have lived in a culture without bandages since long ago, perceiving the world around us more clearly. Let us only hope that such a bright day does not come too late, as in the case of Bach.

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