Forthcoming in Garry Hagberg (ed.), *Wittgenstein on Aesthetic Understanding*

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CHAPTER 7: Wittgenstein on Musical Depth and Our Knowledge of Humankind

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Wittgenstein's later remarks on music, those written after his return to Cambridge in 1929 in increasing intensity, frequency and elaboration, occupy a unique place in the annals of the philosophy of music, which is rarely acknowledged or discussed in the scholarly literature. These remarks reflect and emulate the spirit and subject-matter of Romantic thinking about music, but also respond to it critically, while at the same time they interweave into Wittgenstein's forward thinking about the philosophic entanglements of language and the mind, and also his pervasive pessimism as a philosopher of culture. In this essay I would like to explore and explicate some of the major tenets of this unique position.

Let us begin our discussion with a beautiful passage, which Wittgenstein wrote in 1931:

> Music, with its few notes & rhythms, seems to some people a primitive art. But
> only its surface is simple, while the body which makes possible the interpretation
> of this manifest content has all the infinite complexity that is suggested in the
> external forms of other arts & which music conceals. In a certain sense it is the

most sophisticated art of all. (*CV* 11)[1]

To fully appreciate this passage, we need to consider it as a point of intersection of three distinct trajectories in the development of Wittgenstein's philosophic thinking. The first, which is the most apparent in this passage, carries over familiar themes in Romantic philosophy of music, in particular the quintessentially Romantic evocation of metaphors of depth, inwardness and interiority. As Bernd Sponheuer pointed out, depth is one of two ideal types of the "German" in music, which have reached full maturity and distinctiveness in the writings of philosophers, critics, music analysts and composers around mid-nineteenth-century, and can be traced back to the writings of Johan Gottfried Herder, Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, and E. T. A. Hoffmann. It persevered almost without change well into the mid-twentieth-century. The other ideal type, which both contrasts and complements the first, is the conception of the "German" in music as something "universal" that brings the "purely human" to its fullest expression.[2] Metaphors of depth were initially used to articulate an anti-French, anti-rationalist

[1] I use the following abbreviations for the standard print editions of Wittgenstein's work:

BT	*Big Typescript*
CV	*Culture and Value*, revised edition
LC	*Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*
LW I	*Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. I
PI	*Philosophical Investigations*
PG	*Philosophical Grammar*
PPO	*Public and Private Occasions*
PR	*Philosophical Remarks*
RPP I	*Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. I
RPP II	*Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. II
Z	*Zettel*

References to the *Nachlass* are by MS or TS number according to G. H. von Wright's catalogue followed by page number. The source for the *Nachlass* is Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Nachlass: The Bergen Electronic Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). Translations from the *Nachlass* are my own.

[2] See Bernd Sponheuer, "Reconstructing Ideal Types of the 'German' in Music" in Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter (eds.), *Music and German National Identity*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 36-58.

aesthetics of music, but also to expand the listener's sense of inner space beyond the limits prescribed by rationalism or by language, to convey the sense in which music differs from linguistic and visual modes of expression, and ultimately to create and transmit a distinctly Germanic cluster of idealized values pertaining to music, among them spirituality, inwardness, and seriousness.[3]

Romantic writers began to imagine an interiority to music similar in its uncanniness to the interiority of the listening subject. Holly Watkins singles out E. T. A. Hoffmann, who in his epoch-making Beethoven essays was the first to attempt to penetrate the "inner structure" of Beethoven's music by means of analytical language. She writes: "By suggesting the presence of a 'vertical' dimension to music complementing its axis of 'horizontal' or temporal unfolding, Hoffmann imported tensions endemic to Romantic metaphors of depth – tensions between the knowable and the unknowable, and between rationality and irrationality – into the musical work."[4] Ultimately, Romanticism exhibits what Charles Taylor called 'the expressivist turn', conceiving musical depth in terms of an inexhaustible inner domain whose contents are not reducible, not collectible, not calculable, hence could never be fully articulated.[5]

While it remains unclear how extensive was Wittgenstein's exposure to early Romantic writings, these ideas were positively transmitted to him through their later elaboration in the writings of Arthur Schopenhauer, for whom "the unutterable depth of all music … by which also it is so fully understood and yet so inexplicable, rests on the fact that it

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[3] See Holly Watkins, *Metaphors of Depth in German Musical Thought: From E. T. A. Hoffmann to Arnold Schoenberg* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 22-50.
[4] Ibid., p. 25.
[5] See Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 390; and also Isaiah Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, ed. H. Hardy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 104.

restores to us all the emotions of our inmost nature …"[6] Wittgenstein's interest in

Schopenhauer spanned his entire career. There is ample evidence for Wittgenstein's keen

interest in Schopenhauer's ideas in his early 1914-16 notebooks and in his diaries, and by

1931, in his middle period, he famously went as far as naming Schopenhauer one of the

thinkers whose line of thinking he seized on for his own work of clarification (*CV* 16).

There is some written evidence, and also a well-known testimony of Wittgenstein's

continued engagement and sympathy with Schopenhauer's ideas throughout his later

years.[7]

For Schopenhauer, music has an exceptional place in the system of the arts. It is

conceived to be radically different from, and superior to all other arts in two correlated

ways, metaphysical and aesthetic: it both expresses the Will itself, intimating knowledge

of ultimate reality in the most immediate, most vivid way, and speaks to us intensely

about human reality, intimating knowledge of what Schopenhauer calls the "inner nature"

of human emotion, or the "secret history" of the human will. Thus, the value of music lies

inter alia in its unique kinship to the phenomenological dynamics of the human emotions,

feelings and moods, to the peculiar 'feel' of their intensity, surge, waxing and waning.

This is a full-fledged philosophy of music in which the uncanny correspondence between

the inner space of music and the inner space of the listening subject is sought out. Yet, for

Schopenhauer, whatever music tells us with such intimacy and immediacy eludes

comprehension by reason. Thus, what music means, what it is about, cannot be translated

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[6] Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, vol. I, trans. R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), p. 341.

[7] See K. T. Fann (ed.), *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Man and His Philosophy* (New York: Dell, 1967), pp. 67-68. See a recent comprehensive discussion of Schopenhauer's influence on Wittgenstein in Severin Schroeder, "Schopenhauer's influence on Wittgenstein" in Bart Vandenabeele (ed.), *A Companion to Schopenhauer* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2012), pp. 367-384.

into other, particular languages.[8] It remains otherwise inexpressible, and understanding what music is *about* amounts to gaining access to this otherwise inexpressible knowledge. The distinctive Romantic themes of the specificity of musical meaning, its ineffability, and its relation to the human world of thoughts and feelings—all pertaining to musical depth—are nicely captured in Wittgenstein's 1931 remark on the ulterior sophistication of music (*CV* 11). These themes remained central to Wittgenstein's later thinking on music, as we shall below.

Another immediate source for Wittgenstein's employment of metaphors of depth in his thinking about music is Oswald Spengler, who was explicitly acknowledged by Wittgenstein as a major influence, alongside Schopenhauer and others (*CV* 16). With Spengler we encounter the second trajectory in the development of Wittgenstein's philosophic thinking, which introduces not only a significant methodological shift, but also a dimension of philosophy of culture into Wittgenstein's discussion. Wittgenstein read Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West* in the spring of 1930. He recorded his impression in his diary: "Reading Spengler Decline etc. & in spite of many irresponsibilities in the particulars, find <u>many</u> real, significant thoughts. Much, perhaps most of it, is completely in touch with what I have often thought myself" (*PPO* 25). It is by now an established fact that reading Spengler's *Decline of the West* during his middle period had a significant impact on the emergence and formulation of some of the most distinctive methodological aspects of Wittgenstein's later philosophy, most notably the notion of family resemblance.

 Furthermore, the equally pertinent Spenglerian shadow on Wittgenstein's own

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[8] See Günter Zöller, "Schopenhauer" in Stefan Lorenz Sorgner and Oliver Fürbeth (eds.), *Music in German Philosophy: An Introduction* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), pp. 121-140.

pessimistic attitude toward his times has also been considered to be profoundly important for a proper understanding of Wittgenstein's overarching philosophical thinking. According to Georg Henrik von Wright, "Wittgenstein … thought that the problems with which he was struggling were somehow connected with 'the way people live', that is, with features of our culture or civilization to which he and his pupils belonged."[9] There is now solid interpretive sense in believing that the kind of philosophical grappling, which is ubiquitous in his later work, exemplifies not only Wittgenstein's preoccupation with the very features of civilization that Spengler thought of as typical of cultural decline, but also an overall commitment to philosophize seriously and sincerely in, what Spengler called, a time of civilization.[10]

Spengler powerfully pursued the Romantic conception of artistic depth as a cultural characteristic of what he idiosyncratically dubbed "Impressionism", the mark of the late hours of the "phase of accomplishment" in Western culture, what Wittgenstein would call "a very high culture" (*LC* 7). For Spengler, music is a reflection of the Western soul, its prime symbol, the ideal medium for expressing the Faustian ideal of a striving toward infinite space. The following passage from *The Decline of the West* can readily be seen as a precursor of the 1931 passage from *Culture and Value*, which started our discussion:

> Impressionism is the inverse of the Euclidean world-feeling. It tries to get as far
> as possible from the language of plastic and as near as possible to that of music…

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[9] Georg Henrik von Wright, "Ludwig Wittgenstein in Relation to his Times," in Brian McGuinness (ed.) *Wittgenstein and his Times* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 118.

[10] See Georg Henrik von Wright, "Ludwig Wittgenstein in Relation to his Times," in Brian McGuinness (ed.) *Wittgenstein and his Times* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 108-120; Stanley Cavell, "Declining Decline: Wittgenstein as a Philosopher of Culture", *Inquiry* 31, 1988, 253-264; *This New Yet Unapproachable America: Lectures after Emerson after Wittgenstein* (Albuquerque: Living Batch Press, 1989); William James DeAngelis, *Ludwig Wittgenstein – A Cultural Point of View :Philosophy in the Darkness of this Time* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Yuval Lurie, *Wittgenstein on the Human Spirit* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012), pp. 89-152.

Impressionism is the comprehensive expression of a world-feeling, and it must obviously therefore permeate the whole physiognomy of our 'Late' Culture… Be the artist painter or musician, his art consists in creating with a few strokes or spots or tones an image of inexhaustible content, a microcosm meet for the eyes or ears of the Faustian man; that is, in laying the actuality of something objective which, so to say, forces that actuality to become phenomenal.[11]

In fact, Wittgenstein's text continues (the next day) with an extensive passage on Spengler, in which Wittgenstein refers to "Problems of the intellectual world of the West which Beethoven (& perhaps Goethe to a certain extent) tackled & wrestled with but which no philosopher has ever confronted (perhaps Nietzsche passed close to them)" (*CV* 11). As noted before, Beethoven has become the paradigm and symbol of musical depth for Romanticism ever since E. T. A. Hoffmann. These problems concern one's inability to experience, and hence to describe "the development of this culture as an epic." Wittgenstein's self-depreciating frustration in this passage ("I do not get to these problems at all") only marks the trajectory for these themes in his later writings. Spengler's influence imbued Wittgenstein's philosophic thinking with the urgency of cultural critique. Grafted on the impact of Spengler, we find also Wittgenstein's critical engagement with the music theory of Heinrich Schenker, which was facilitated by conversations with Felix Salzer, in particular between the years 1930-1933.[12] Schenker's

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[11] Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1939), vol. 1, pp. 285-286.

[12] This curious historical fact was first introduced and discussed in my doctoral dissertation and explored further in subsequent publication. See Eran Guter, "Where Languages End: Ludwig Wittgenstein at the Crossroads of Music, Language, and the World", Ph.D. thesis, Boston University (2004), pp. 109-152, at pp. 192-213; "'A surrogate for the soul': Wittgenstein and Schoenberg" in Enzo De Pellegrin (ed.), *Interactive Wittgenstein: Essays in Memory of Georg Henrik von Wright* (New York: Springer, 2011), pp.

theory represents the culmination of the Romantic notions of depth. According to Schenker all great masterworks possess a deep structure, or background, which lends them not only their coherence but also their cultural identity and value. As Watkins points out, "for all its apparent formalization, Schenker's notion of the background is emphatically not just a musical concept. Instead, the background delineates an imaginary space with abundant figurative overtones, including those of nature, God, origin, genius, the soul and Germanness – all by this point conventional associations of depth."[13] Schenker's theory affords powerful means for criticizing modern music for its lack of depth. The following passage from Schenker's book *Counterpoint* is telling, also because it evokes the notion of concealment, which we find also in Wittgenstein's 1931 passage (*CV* 11):

> Despite heaviest orchestration, despite noisy and pompous gestures, despite 'polyphony' and 'cacophony,' the proudest products of Richard Strauss are inferior – in terms of true musical spirit and authentic inner complexity of texture, form, and articulation – to a string quartet by Haydn, in which external grace hides the inner complexity, just as color and fragrance of a flower render mysterious to humans the undiscovered, great miracles of creation.[14]

I argue elsewhere at length that the combined influence of Spengler and Schenker on Wittgenstein resulted in what I call 'a hybrid conception of musical decline;' essentially, a rebounding of Wittgenstein's methodological critique of Spengler's idea of a

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117-128; "The Good, and bad, and the vacuous: Wittgenstein on modern and future musics", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 74:4 (2015), pp. 428-433.

[13] Watkins, *Metaphors of Depth in German Musical Thought*, p. 25; see also pp. 163-191.

[14] Heinrich Schenker, *Counterpoint: Volume II of New Musical Theories and Fantasies,* edited by John Rothge (New York: Schirmer, 1987), 1:xxi.

morphological comparison of cultures back onto the music theory Heinrich Schenker.[15] Indeed Wittgenstein's own attitude toward modern music was sympathetic to Schenker's firm belief that irreverence toward the laws of tonal effect reflects a loss of musical instinct for the inner complexities of the masterworks of Western music among performers and composers alike, which in turn hinders the musician's almost sacred mission to provide access to the world of human experience contained in such masterworks.[16] Wittgenstein's lament on the loss of genius and authenticity in music persisted until the end of his life.[17]

The third trajectory in the development of Wittgenstein's philosophic thinking that we need to consider here concerns a major philosophic shift, which characterizes Wittgenstein's middle period (1929-1936): his gradual moving away from the conception of language as a system of fixed rules (a calculus), which is prominent in the *Big Typescript* (TS213), and toward the "anthropological view," which characterizes his later work, from the *Philosophical Investigations* onwards. This transitional period, which saw Wittgenstein rapidly changing his mind concerning foundational issues and methodology, adapting and overcoming old conceptions by means of newly acquired or invented tools and methods, is still a relatively less studied phase in Wittgenstein's oeuvre.[18] David Stern usefully characterized Wittgenstein's course of development in this middle-period

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[15] Guter, "The good, the bad, and the vacuous".

[16] See Robert Snarrenberg, *Schenker's Interpretative Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 145–150.

[17] Consider for example Wittgenstein's last two remarks on Gustav Mahler (MS 120, 72v from 1937 and *CV* 76-77 from 1948). For a detailed discussion of these remarks see Eran Guter, "Wittgenstein on Mahler", in D. Moyal-Sharrock, A. Coliva and V. A. Munz (eds.), *Mind, Language and Action*, Contributions to the 36th International Wittgenstein Symposium (Kirchberg am Wechsel: Austrian Ludwig Wittgenstein Society, 2013), pp. 169-171; and also "The good, the bad, and the vacuous", pp. 433-435.

[18] See Anat Biletzki, "Ludwig Wittgenstein: Middle Works", in *Oxford Bibliographies* in Philosophy (Oxford, 2011), http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195396577/obo-9780195396577-0138.xml (accessed 8-Sep-2015). An excellent recent addition to the growing literature on this topic is Mauro Luiz Engelmann, *Wittgenstein's Philosophical Development: Phenomenology, Grammar, Method, and the Anthropological View* (Basingstoke, Hampshire, 2013).

as moving from logical *atomism* (the doctrine that all meaningful discourse can be analysed into logically independent elementary propositions) to logical *holism* (the thesis that analysis leads to systems of logically related propositions and that language is a formal system of rules), and from *logical* holism to *practical* holism (the view that our coping with things and people in, and through language can only be meaningful in specific contexts and against the background of shared practices).[19]

The final stage in this development is marked by a turning point: the introduction of the anthropological approach, which became a staple of Wittgenstein's methodology in his later philosophy, from the early version of *Philosophical Investigations* (1936) onwards. According to Mauro Engelmann, the anthropological approach brings into prominence the idea that "in order to fully what the role of signs in a language is, one should look at how those signs relate to the form of life of which they are part."[20] Wittgenstein's middle-period revelation, ultimately his reversal "back to the rough ground" (*PI* §107), was that a sign has a purpose, and a point only in human society. As Peter Hacker nicely put it, "[Wittgenstein] had thought that logic showed the scaffolding of the world, and that the essential nature of things *had to be* reflected in the forms of analysed propositions with a sense. It was only in the 1930s that he gradually came to realize that what had appeared to be the scaffolding *of* the world was actually the scaffolding *from which we describe the world.* "[21]

This turning point, which may have been prepped by Spengler's initial influence, was

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[19] David Stern, "The 'Middle Wittgenstein': From Logical Atomism to Practical Holism", *Synthese* 87 (1991), pp. 203-226.

[20] Engelmann, *Wittgenstein's Philosophical Development*, p. 162. For Wittgenstein, forms of life consist in taken-for-granted social and practical ways of action, which make language possible.

[21] P. M. S. Hacker, "Wittgenstein's Anthropological and Ethnological Approach", in *Wittgenstein: Comparisons and Context* (Oxford, 2013), *Oxford Scholarship Online*, 2014 http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199674824.001.0001/acprof-9780199674824-chapter-5 (accessed 10 Sep. 2015).

ultimately due to the stimulus of economist Piero Sraffa's criticism on Wittgenstein's

ideas in the so-called *Big Typescript* (TS 213), which Wittgenstein assembled between

the years 1932-1933.[22] It is noteworthy that Sraffa completes the list of major influences,

which Wittgenstein was willing to acknowledge in full voice in 1931 (*CV* 16).

Sraffa's criticism prompted Wittgenstein's to reconsider the philosophical import of

gestures, that is, signs, which (when taken in isolation) we could not give a grammar for

them. At the time of the *Big Typescript* (1932-3), Wittgenstein maintained a conception

of language as a calculus. Engelmann offers a helpful summery of this conception: "The

rules of 'grammar' provide the structure that determines the limits of what can be said.

When describing these rules, the causality of signs, the purpose of a language and the

learning process are not relevant; gestures, and a language of gestures, are signs as far as

they belong in a grammatical system. 'Thinking,' 'meaning,' 'intending,' and

'explaining' are sentential operations of the calculus."[23]

Ultimately, Sraffa's point was that languages of gestures, or "primitive languages," do

not fit Wittgenstein's generalized calculus conception. First and foremost, gestures

undermine Wittgenstein's (then) basic idea that "understanding correlates with

explanation" (*BT* 11). Wittgenstein realized that

> the failure to understanding isn't limited to sentences … We learn to
> understand these gestures the way we learned as children to understand the
> gestures and facial expressions of grown-ups – without explanation. And
> in this sense learning to understand does not mean learning to explain, and

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[22] See Mauro Luiz Engelmann, "Wittgenstein's 'most fruitful ideas' and Sraffa", *Philosophical Investigations* 36 (2013), pp. 155-178.
[23] Engelmann, "Wittgenstein's 'Most Fruitful Ideas' and Sraffa," p. 162.

so we understand the facial expression, but can't explain it by any other

means. [*BT* 10; handwritten remark]

The upshot here, as Engelmann puts it, is that "in primitive languages, it is not calculus, a

game with fixed rules that is the determining aspect to be looked at; we have to look at

the environment, the surroundings, where the language functions (the form of life). The

understanding of a gesture in our language may come before the capacity to explain

according to a calculus with fixed rules of 'grammar'."[24] This eventually led Wittgenstein

to broaden his notion of use beyond the position of words in a calculus. The use of words

meshes with life. His new idea was to consider the purpose and the point of languages

and language-games as part of a form of life.

The broad context of this third trajectory in the development of Wittgenstein's

philosophic thinking complements the contexts of the previous two. For one, it affords a

concrete philosophical reason for the increasing prominence of thinking about musical

gestures in Wittgenstein's later writings. Musical gestures—consider Wittgenstein's

favorite examples: questions and answers—are prime examples for the kind of

understanding which come before the capacity to explain according to a calculus with

fixed rules of 'grammar'. And while it is true that in the middle period Wittgenstein used

the theory of harmony (*Harmonielehre*) as a standard example for 'grammar' in the

constitutive sense, that is, as a kind of structure of language that determines the

conditions of sense and understanding, a necessary condition for language, this was not a

good example, as he might have realized himself upon criticizing the music theory of

Heinrich Schenker around the same time.[25] In any case, by 1936 his thinking about the

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[24] Ibid., p. 166.
[25] See Guter, "The good, the bad, and the vacuous", pp. 430-433.

theory of harmony was already fully entrenched in his newly developed anthropological
view:

> Could *one* reason be given at all, why the theory of harmony is the way it is? And,
> first and foremost, *must* such a reason be given? *It is here and it is part of our
> entire life*. (MS157a, 24-26; my emphasis)

The third trajectory also coincides with Wittgenstein's interest in, and emphasis on the
notion of physiognomy, which was kindled by both Schopenhauer and Spengler, as can
be seen clearly in the hand-written remark which Wittgenstein added to *BT* 10.
Combined, the three trajectories reinforced later on the idea that understanding a sentence
in language is akin to understanding a melody, which Wittgenstein drafted in various
subsequent texts leading to paragraph 527 in *Philosophical Investigations*. This
paragraph begins a train of thoughts concerning experiencing the meaning of words,
which amounts to a complete reversal of Wittgenstein's erstwhile calculus conception of
language.

We may now return to the 1931 passage from *Culture and Value* (*CV* 11), which started
our discussion, and view it as a focal point for this threefold context. It readily asserts the
status of music as a "primitive language" (in the aforementioned sense), hence the need
to look further into its enmeshment with human life. It presents the challenge in terms of
an unfathomable complexity, and it configures the challenge in Hoffmannesque fashion
as a horizontal plane (a surface), which calls for vertical probing. Meeting this challenge
requires traversing the tension between the knowable and the unknowable, between
concealment and revelation. To reveal the unknowable would be to assert the primacy of
music in a given culture; in other words, to know ourselves in the broadest sense.

The complex image, which Wittgenstein draws in this passage, is actually a moving image. A thought captured on paper in midflight. If one reads it out of context, as so often happens with some of Wittgenstein's remarks, it does not seem to lead anywhere. But the relevant context has now been laid out, all three trajectories are now charted, so it becomes genuinely interesting to inquire: where does it lead?

It is seldom noted that the bulk of Wittgenstein's most elaborate passages on music belongs to his post-*PI* writings. This very late vintage, sometimes dubbed 'the third Wittgenstein', from 1946 to his premature death in 1951, includes, among other things, *Zettel*, and all his various writings on the philosophy of psychology, including the so-called Part II of *PI*. Many of Wittgenstein's most important passages on music are found almost exclusively in these writings. The philosophical significance of the peculiar fact that Wittgenstein's discussion of music thrived in this particular context, in this late phase of his philosophical development, has yet to be fully acknowledged and explicated. According to Georg Henrik von Wright, "Wittgenstein's writings from 1946 onwards represent in certain ways departures in *new* directions."[26] In philosophical psychology, Wittgenstein made unprecedented forays in these late writings, either introducing or otherwise substantially re-inspecting concepts, which are crucial to a proper understanding of Wittgenstein's remarks on music, such as aspect dawning, experiencing meaning and psychological indeterminacy. Still, as Danièle Moyal-Sharrock pointed out in her introduction to the volume, which inaugurated the notion of 'the third Wittgenstein,' "to say, as von Wright does, that … Wittgenstein took 'new directions' is not to say that he had never before broached the subjects that were to occupy him in his

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[26] Georg Henrik von Wright, *Wittgenstein* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), p. 136.

last years … but that he was now to take them on *fully*."[27] We may take for instance the notion of aspect dawning: it actually haunted the early Wittgenstein in the context of his thinking about mathematics, and possibly even earlier, in his 1912-13 experiments on rhythm perception, that is, even more importantly, at the very outset of his lifelong devotion to thinking about music.[28] Yet there can be no question that this concept is genuine late-vintage.

My general point is this: against the backdrop of the three trajectories, which I considered in the first half of this essay, a proper understanding of Wittgenstein's mature philosophy of music should gravitate toward the context, method and tendentious character of his post-*PI* writings. I will now turn to consider this philosophic context more closely. Jaakko and Merrill Hintikka, Michel ter Hark and Stephen Mulhall suggested that there is a distinction in Wittgenstein's late work between two intersecting notions of relations of concepts to language-games: we may speak of 'horizontal' moves pertaining to a certain concept within a given language-game, but also of 'vertical' moves, pertaining to interrelations between different language-games.[29] Horizontal moves presuppose

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[27] Danièle Moyal-Sharrock (ed.), *The Third Wittgenstein: The Post-Investigations Works* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p. 2.

[28] For Wittgenstein's early treatment of aspect dawning in mathematics and the evolution of as- and aspect-phrasing in his work see Juliet Floyd, "On being surprised: Wittgenstein on aspect perception, logic and mathematics" in William Day & Victor J. Krebs (eds.), *Seeing Wittgenstein Anew* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 314-337; and also "Aspects of aspects" in H. Sluga and D. Stern (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming). For Wittgenstein's early treatment of aspect dawning in music see Eran Guter, *Where languages end: Ludwig Wittgenstein at the crossroads of music, language and the world*, pp. 29-36; and also "Wittgenstein on Musical Experience and Knowledge" in Johann Christian Marek and Maria Elisabeth Reicher (eds.), *Experience and Analysis*, Contributions to the 27th International Wittgenstein Symposium (Kirchberg am Wechsel: Austrian Ludwig Wittgenstein Society, 2004), http://wab.uib.no/ojs/agora-alws/article/view/1336 [accessed 21/1/2013].

[29] I follow here an important distinction, suggested originally by Jaakko and Merrill Hintikka, between 'primary' and 'secondary' language-games in Wittgenstein. See in particular Merrill B. Hintikka and Jaakko Hintikka, *Investigating Wittgenstein* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), Ch. 11, pp. 272-304; and "Different Language Games in Wittgenstein," reprinted in Jaakko Hintikka, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Half-Truths and One-and-a-Half-Truths*. Jaakko Hintikka Selected Papers, vol. 1 (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1996), pp. 335-343. A similar observation is found in Michel Ter Hark, *Beyond the Inner and*

familiarity with a rule-guided praxis, a skill. "To understand a sentence means to understand a language," writes Wittgenstein, "To understand a language means to be master of a technique" (*PI* §199). This skill is learned, it enables us to give reasons and justifications for our actions, and it implies criteria for their correctness. Thus when we speak of horizontal moves within a language-game we speak of a normative standard on the basis of which we can determine what counts as a correct or as an incorrect execution or continuation of a certain rule.

In this sense, all concepts are horizontally embedded in their respective language-games, and perhaps, most language-games constitute the meaning of concepts primarily in this horizontal sense. Meaning is use, Wittgenstein reminded us. However, according to Wittgenstein, not all language-games function on the same logical level: some language-games presuppose familiarity with other language-games. It is noteworthy that vertical-interrelatedness, as I call it, marks Wittgenstein's distinctive move, in his post-*PI* writings, beyond the "meaning as use" scheme toward the idea that at least in certain contexts we experience fine-shades of meaning. That this basic notion of interrelations between language-games is absolutely crucial to Wittgenstein's thinking on aesthetics, in particular concerning musical expression, is undeniable. Already in his 1938 lectures on aesthetics, Wittgenstein stressed the enormously complicated situation in which our aesthetic expressions have a place (*LC* 2). They must be seen against the background of certain activities, and ultimately of certain ways of living (*LC* 8; 11). By 1946, Wittgenstein has become very explicit in stating that the meaning of concepts that pertain

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the Outer: Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1990), pp. 33-42; and also in Stephen Mulhall, *On Being in the World: Wittgenstein and Heidegger on Seeing Aspects* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 45-52. Mulhall speaks of a "parasitic relationship between linguistic techniques". I opt for Ter Hark's terminology of 'horizontal' vs. 'vertical' relations.

to the expressive range of music is constituted not only horizontally, but also vertically by language-games that are logically prior:

> Doesn't the theme point to anything beyond itself? Oh yes! But this means: the impression it makes on me is connected with things in its environment – for example, with the existence of the German language and its intonation, but that means with the whole range of our language-games. If I say for instance: here it's as though a conclusion were being drawn, here as though someone were expressing agreement, or as though *this* were a reply to what came before, – my understanding of it presupposes my familiarity with conclusions, expressions of agreement, replies.

The theme, no less than a face, wears an expression. (*CV* 85)

Importantly, the last sentence in this passage patently binds the idea of vertically-interrelated language-games with another recurrent theme throughout Wittgenstein's career: gesture and physiognomy.[30] He wrote around the same time:

> Soulful expression in music. It is not to be described in terms of degrees of loudness & of tempo. Any more than is a soulful facial expression describable in terms of the distribution of matter in space. Indeed it is not

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[30] The importance of these foundational themes already in the early Wittgenstein has been underplayed by scholars for the most part. For that, see Juliet Floyd's groundbreaking evolutionary account in Floyd, "Aspects of aspects". Floyd argues that as part of his attempt to refashion Russell's notion of acquaintance, Wittgenstein developed early on a simile likening the notion of an "aspect" in logic to the "look" or "character" of a face, a facial expression or feature. This "master simile", which returned Russellian acquaintance to its everyday home, the sense in which we may be acquainted with a person, has propelled and shaped the evolution of Wittgenstein's philosophy ever since.

even to be explained by means of a paradigm, since the same piece can be

played with genuine expression in innumerable way (*CV* 94).

Juliet Floyd offers a novel way to address this issue in Wittgenstein.[31] According to

Floyd, a face is a dense field of significance, but in order to be acquainted with it, some

mode of characterization—verbal or gestural or otherwise—must go on, the entering of a

field of valence and possibility and contrast. Characterization draws in significance,

reveals something, in a specific way using what Floyd calls "charactery" (e.g., letters of

the alphabet, musical notes, facial features, expressions, gestures, colors of costumes, or

elements of a formal system of logic). Every characterization involves a specific putting-

together-into-a-specific-dimension-of possibility by charactery.

The important point for our present concern is Wittgenstein's growing awareness that

getting to the particularity of that which is characterized, that is, rendering a

physiognomy distinct, requires attending carefully to the specific way and manner of its

characterization, and in particular, to the relevant system(s) of possibilities in which it

inheres. In other words, reflecting on the passage in *CV* 85 (quoted above) the specificity

of the expression that a musical passage wears is dues to our deepening attention to its

manner of characterization within the whole range of our language-games, which is its

relevant (highly complex, indeed indeterminate) system of possibilities. Wittgenstein

continues the passage in *CV* 85 by saying that "the theme is also in its turn a *new* bit of

our language, it is incorporated in it; we learn a new *gesture*. The theme and the language

are in reciprocal action". This is the measure of success. According to Floyd, this means

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[31] Ibid. The following is a precis of Floyd's suggestion.

that "we were given ways to see likenesses and differences, and ways to go on discussing and drawing out from the articulations further aspects of what is characterized that are there to be seen in and by means of it."[32]

Wittgenstein's most sustained discussion of vertically-interrelated language-games concerns what he calls the 'secondary sense' or the 'soul', indeed the physiognomy of words, most notably in section 11 of *PI* II, and also in the last third of *PI* itself, where his discussion significantly broaches also musical understanding (*PI* II xi, 216; *LW* I §§795-796). By this late period in his philosophy, Wittgenstein has become increasingly interested in cases where meaning is experienced: "The familiar face of a word, the feeling that it has taken up its meaning into itself, that it is an actual image of its meaning—" (*PI* II xi, 218).

Let us pursue further the intertwining of the ideas of physiognomy, characterization and vertical interrelations between language-games, for therein we shall find Wittgenstein's refashioning of the Romantic idea concerning the specificity of the musical gesture.

A vertically-interrelated move in a language-game can only be understood against the backdrop of the correlate move in a logically prior game. A secondary meaning of a given word is not a new meaning. According to Wittgenstein, one could not explain the meaning of the words 'fat' or 'lean' by pointing to the examples of Tuesday and Wednesday; similarly, one could not explain or teach the meaning of 'introduction' or 'question and answer' by pointing to examples of musical passages. One could do that only the usual way, by employing moves—verbal definitions or paradigmatic examples—in the language-game that is being presupposed. The secondary meaning of a

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[32] Ibid.

word is its primary meaning used in "new surroundings", as Wittgenstein put it.

Following Ter Hark, I maintain that these "new surroundings" consist of other horizontal

relations hence of another language-game, to wit, the language-game of aesthetic

expression.[33] This sits very well with Wittgenstein's remark regarding "the way music

speaks":

> Don't forget that even though a poem is composed in the language of information
> [or communication, in German: Mitteilung], it is not employed in the language-
> game of informing. (*RPP* I §888; *Z* §§160-161)[34]

A failure to understand this vertical-interrelatedness of the language-game of

expression—that is, a failure to appreciate that what is primarily a description of a

perception is used now on a different horizontal plane as the finely-nuanced image, or

physiognomy of an experience—leads to something like Wittgenstein's example of the

visitor who thinks that the playing of a reflective piece by Chopin actually conveys

information, which is kept secret from him.

According to Wittgenstein, a game of aesthetic expression would proceed very differently

from a game of information. It would be a piece of characterization (in Floyd's sense),[35]

which would enable one to come to notice and appreciate a necessity one hadn't seen

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[33] See Hark, *Beyond the Inner and the Outer*, p. 187.

[34] In light of my discussion of the three trajectories in the first part of my essay, it is noteworthy that a distinction between expression-language (*Ausdruckssprache*) and communication-language (*Mitteilungssprache*) is already found in Spengler's *Decline of the West*. According to Spengler, we are engaged either in a language "which is only an *expression for the world*, an inward necessity springing from the longing inherent in all life to actualize itself before witnesses, to display its own presence to itself" or else in a language "that is meant to be *understood by definite beings*." Expression-language is an "active transformation" of physiognomic expression, which, strictly speaking, cannot be learned, yet it is the precondition for all forms of language learning. All art, according to Spengler, is expression-language; however, he concludes that it is impossible to demarcate an exact boundary between artistic expression-language and pure communication-language. See Spengler, *Decline of the West*, Vol. 1, p. 115.

[35] Floyd, "Aspects of aspects".

before. Here is a description of such a game from Wittgenstein's 1938 lectures on aesthetics:

> You may read a stanza. I let you all read it. Everyone reads it slightly differently. I get the definite impression that "None of them has got hold of it." Suppose then I read it out to you and say: "Look, this is how it ought to be". The four of you read this stanza, no one exactly like the other, but in such a way that I say: "Each one is exactly certain of himself." This is a phenomenon, being certain of yourself, reading it in *one way only*. He is absolutely exact as to what pause to make. I might say in this case that you four have got hold of it. I would have conveyed something to you. I would perfectly correctly say, that I have exactly conveyed to you the exact experience I had. (*LC* 40)

Wittgenstein's emphasis in the passage just quoted on the phenomenon of "being certain of oneself, reading it in *one way only*" leads to the idea that it is constitutive of the secondary use of words that "I want to use *these* words (with their familiar meanings) *here*". That is, expression is something unique, specific to the particular case. This strikes an immediate kinship with our language-games with aspects: in both cases there is an apt expression of the experiences involved—we reach for a certain word, or a certain gesture as the only possible way in which to give expression to our perception, inclinations and feelings. The particular expression is criterially related to the experience involved.

The phenomenon of psychological certainty—a unique case of what we might call 'hinge certainties'—which Wittgenstein describes in *LC* 40 extends our discussion far into his

very late philosophic output.[36] This is where we find Wittgenstein rounding up his reimagining of musical depth with a direct intervention in the Romantic ideas concerning the specificity of musical meaning, its ineffability, and its relation to the human world of thoughts and feelings.

The second volume of Wittgenstein's *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* (TS 232; dictated by Wittgenstein in 1948) is replete with passages in which he fleshes out the great complexity pertaining to our recognition and description of human physiognomy, and ultimately, to what Wittgenstein calls our *Menschenkenntnis*, our acquaintance with, and knowing of humankind. For Wittgenstein, *Menschenkenntnis* is not a body of theoretical knowledge like psychology. Rather, it is a skill which some people have a more intuitive grasp of than others.

According to Wittgenstein, enormous variability, irregularity, and unpredictability are an essential part of human physiognomy and the concepts of the 'inner' for which human physiognomy serves as a basis (*RPP* II §§614-615, 617, 627). Two important claims are intertwined here. First, human physiognomy is fundamentally non-mechanical; that is, it cannot be recognized or described by means of rules, and it introduces an indefiniteness, a certain insufficiency of evidence, into our physiognomic recognition that is constitutional hence not indicative of any deficiency of knowledge. Second, such indeterminate "fine shades of behavior" constitute our concepts of the "inner," which we use occasionally also in aesthetic contexts (*Z* §505); that is, while these concepts are horizontally embedded in their respective language-games (hence their use is rule-guided), they are grounded in "patterns of life," as Wittgenstein put it, which confers

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[36] See Danièle Moyal-Sharrock, "Wittgenstein on psychological certainty" in Danièle Moyal-Sharrock (ed.), *Perspicuous Presentations: Essays on Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 211-235.

upon them indefiniteness in a logical sense. In Wittgenstein's words: "if a pattern of life

is the basis for the use of a word then the word must contain some amount of

indeterminacy. The pattern of life, after all, is not one of exact regularity" (*LW* I, 211).

According to Wittgenstein, our recognition and description of human physiognomy

occurs while "sufficient evidence passes over into insufficient without a borderline"

(*RPP* II §614). Yet Wittgenstein stresses, this uncertainty is constitutional; it is not a

shortcoming, and it has no bearing on the practicality or impracticality of our concepts

(*RPP* II §657). This indefiniteness is in the nature of the language-game played, a mark

of its "admissible evidence" (*LW* I §888; *RPP* II §683; *Z* §374), which, according to

Wittgenstein, is significantly unlike the kind of evidence used to establish scientific

knowledge—it is what he calls "imponderable evidence". In the words of Michel ter

Hark, "imponderable evidence is evidence which can make us certain about someone's

psychological state, without our being able to specify what it is in their behavior that

makes us so sure."[37]

Wittgenstein's discussion of the "imponderable evidence" underlying our recognition and

appreciation of genuine expression concludes section eleven of the second part of the

Philosophical Investigations (*PI* II xi, 227-229; cf. *RPP* II §§915-938). According to

Wittgenstein, imponderable evidence includes "subtleties of glance, of gesture, of tone"

that serve as the basis of our acquaintance with human nature —a kind of knowledge that

can be learned by some, taught by some, yet only through experience or varied

observation and by exchanging "tips" (*Winken*). The imponderability of this kind of

evidence is significantly reflected in the way we attempt to communicate our

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[37] Michel ter Hark, "'Patterns on life': A Third Wittgenstein concept" in Moyal-Sharrock (ed.), *The Third Wittgenstein*, p. 140.

acquaintance with human nature, and in the measure for the success of our justifications. If our interlocutor is convinced, it is in a way very different from being convinced by a formal proof or by an argument—rather, if we are successful, then our interlocutor shows a willingness to follow the rules of the game that we are playing, that is, to use concepts based on indefinite evidence (*LW* I §927). Such knowledge—intimated by gestures or by "tips"—evades general formulations and carries consequences "of a diffuse kind." Since in such language-games "sufficient evidence passes over into insufficient without a borderline" (*RPP* II §614), our acquaintance with human nature—essentially, a skill or an ability—cannot be learned via fixed rules. Indeed "there are also rules, but they do not form a system, and only experienced people can apply them right. Unlike calculating-rules" (*PI* II xi, 227; cf. *LW* I §921). Thus in becoming acquainted with humankind, one acquires not a technique, but correct judgments through particular instances (*LW* I §925). Bearing these ideas in mind, it would be instructive to recall Wittgenstein's example of reading a poem with understanding (*LC* 40). His expressive reading of a poem (a gesture, a "tip") was reciprocated by four different manifestations of "correct judgment", that is, by showing a willingness to play a language-game which admits concepts based on imponderable evidence.

In the context of Wittgenstein's final writings, musical expression is grounded in imponderable evidence; evidence that cannot be recognized or explained by reference to rules, yet accepted by those who are experienced with the infinite variation of human physiognomy, that is, by those acquainted with humankind (see *CV*, 83; 94; cf. *PI* §285). Thus the concept of musical expression, like the concept of 'the soul of words' in Wittgenstein's final work, is diametrically opposed to the concept of a mechanism (cf.

RPP I §324). Exact, definite calculation and prediction is conceptually detrimental to what we normally regard as expression.

In his familiar manner, Wittgenstein suggests that we try to imagine "other beings" that might recognize soulful expression in music by rules (*RPP* II §695; *Z* §157). This thought experiment is designed to show that musical expression is constituted in such a way that an encounter with such a mechanical surrogate for expression would have a petrifying effect:

> It would make a strange and strong impression on us were we to discover people who knew only the music of music boxes. We would perhaps expect gestures of an incomprehensible kind, to which we wouldn't know how to react. (*RPP* II §696)

The problem described here has nothing to do with the mechanism of music boxes—the fact that one can predict exactly what they play and how they play it—but with the possibility that such music is grammatically related to a rigid, fixed, definite physiognomy recognized by exact rules (cf. *RPP* II §§610-611). In such imagined music, indeterminacy implies a deficiency in knowledge. The point is that this is *not* the case of musical expression as we know it, even in the case of music boxes.

Wittgenstein encapsulated this conceptual nexus of ideas—interrelations between language-games, indeterminacy, and human life—in the following passage on musical expression from 1948:

> This musical phrase is a gesture for me. It creeps into my life. I make it my own.
>
> Life's infinite variations are an essential part of our life. And so precisely of the

habitual character of life. Expression consists for us <in> incalculability. If I knew exactly how he would grimace, move, there would be no facial expression, no gesture.--But is that true?--I can after all listen again & again to a piece of music that I know (completely) by heart; & it could even be played on a musical box. Its gestures would still remain gestures for me although I know all the time, what comes next. Indeed I may even be surprised afresh again & again. (In a certain sense.) (*CV* 83-84; cf. *PI* §285)

Here, as well as in other extensive passages from that final period, it all comes together. Wittgenstein coaches the notion of gesture in terms of the melody and language being in reciprocal action (*CV* 85). The specificity of the musical expression, embodied in gesture, marks a vertical shift in the language-game played. The melody becomes "a *new* bit of our language", in Wittgenstein's words, because the moment of getting it right consists in a vertically-interrelated move in a language-game, which can only be understood against the backdrop of correlate, logically-prior moves in "the whole range of our language games", hence constituted indeterminately, *and* because it is internally related to the experience involved. The one who hears music with understanding "resonates in harmony," as it were, with the thing understood (cf. *PG* 79).

Consider again Wittgenstein's example of reading a poem, or better yet, the ways in which a conductor draws a magical moment from his players.

Wittgenstein wrote about such gesture that it is used "not in order to inform the other person;[38] rather, this is a reaction in which people find one another" (*RPP* I, 874).

A final, quite striking piece this philosophical puzzle is an implied phenomenology of

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[38] Note that he uses the word *Mitteilung* here.

musical understanding. It is instructive to compare vertically-interrelated physiognomic language-games, like those involved in understanding music, with what Jaakko Hintikka calls "primary physiognomic language-games,"[39] like those involved in pain behavior. In fact, Wittgenstein does that, albeit all too sketchily, right at the end of section 11 of *PI*, part II.

As the example of a child in pain shows (*PI* §244), the natural expression of pain, and the sensation language based on it, which involves also the reaction of other people to these expressions (*PI* §§289, 310), are grammatically inseparable from the experience of pain. So there is no way of doubting what happens in such language-games without transgressing them.[40] One cannot drive a wedge between the experience of pain and the expression of pain (*PI* §§250, 288; *LW* I §203). As Hintikka pointed out:

> There is not, and cannot be, any way of challenging what happens in such language-games. For such a challenge would presuppose an independent link between one's language and the world, a link that would by-pass these language-games.[41]

Thus such games are patently incorrigible. Now the important question for our purposes is this: Is musical understanding incorrigible in the same sense? I believe that, from what

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[39] Hintikka suggested that a "framework of spontaneous expressive behaviour (including facial expressions, gestures, and other bodily movements), will be called a physiognomic framework and a psychological language (or language fragment) based on it will be called a physiognomic language" (Hintikka and Hintikka, *Investigating Wittgenstein*, p. 258).

[40] It is crucial to observe that doubt is something completely different from the kind of uncertainty that is constitutional of these language-games. As I pointed out, this uncertainty is not a deficiency in our knowledge of an "inner" that hides behind the "outer"; Wittgenstein certainly does not adopt an epistemological stance regarding a purported causal relation between such realms. Rather, doubt enters these language-games by presupposing, that is, by virtue of being vertically related to the relevant "imponderable evidence"; and it takes a kind of sensitivity, conditioned through experience—namely, Wittgenstein's notion of *Menschenkenntnis*—to fully appreciate this verticality.

[41] J. Hintikka and M. B. Hintikka, *Investigating Wittgenstein*, p. 279.

we've gathered so far, the answer must be negative. Contrary to the case of (genuine) pain, in music—as well as in other arts—there is also a question of 'getting it right'. When a brain-splitting toothache strikes, there is no sense in speaking of such a phenomenon—there is simply no way of 'getting it wrong'. This difference does not mean that expressive gesture could be separated from the music played; this wouldn't make sense. Wittgenstein explicitly maintained that one could repeat the expression 'accompanied' to a tune without singing it with no more success than one could repeat the understanding 'accompanied' to a sentence without saying it (*PI* §332; *LC* 29). Of course, in musical performance there is always a possibility of getting it wrong, and the corresponding quick-witted but fitting solution on part of the musician to the problem, which Lydia Goehr calls "improvisation impromptu".[42] Goehr points out that Wittgenstein used the notion of "fitting" to capture the final relation between a term and a particular use that at first seems unexpected, incongruous, or unrecognizable. Thus, we may say that, in the case of music, the game could be rendered incorrigible insofar as the performer 'gets the expression right', and that this 'getting it right' is part of the game; that is, it is not a transgression of the game as would have been the case with genuine pain behavior. Such perpendicular incorrigibility conjoins understanding music and *Meschenkenntnis*: understanding music indeed becomes an expression or an avowal of the life of humankind.

So an element of misunderstanding (in the sense of 'not yet understanding', hence in need of exploring), and with it also an element of choice, is built into these vertically-

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[42] Lydia Goehr, "Improvising *Impromptu* Or, What to Do with a Broken String" in George Lewis and Ben Piekut (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies*, Vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

interrelated physiognomic language-games. This sort of misunderstanding actually serves as the opening move in such games. Of course, misunderstanding is prevalent in such language-games precisely because of the nature of the concepts admitted in them—concepts based on imponderable evidence, namely, *Menschenkenntnis* concepts. In effect, Wittgenstein suggested that understanding music belongs to *Menschenkenntnis*, you strive toward it by way of becoming acquainted with our ways of life. In 1948 he explicitly wrote: "Understanding music is a manifestation of human life" (*CV* 80).[43] This is actually the upshot of my essay.

Remarkably, Wittgenstein offered a precursory account of such a phenomenology of musical understanding in a private letter to his Viennese friend Rudolf Koder, written late in the year 1930:

> The only possibility for getting to know a piece of music is indeed this: you play it and thereby notice distinctly that you play this or that passage still without understanding. You can then either not listen any further to the voice (inside you) and play the piece with no understanding as before, or listen to the voice, and then you will be prompted to play that passage again and again and, as it were, investigate. The less indolent you are, the further this will go, that is to say, the more passages will emerge for you as still not really felt. For the inner voice will be encouraged to speak by listening to it, and more or less brought to silence by ignoring it. The more you listen the more you will hear, and voices that would have been hardly audible at first will then speak more and more distinctly and new ones will turn up. Thus, the indolence of *every* man shies one away and one

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[43] I modified the translation.

has a sort of feeling: as soon as I'm willing to let these voices in, who knows where they could eventually bring me. And yet one can only say: listen carefully and follow what it says to you, and you will see, you will then hear more and more distinctly, and *you will know more and more about yourself*.[44]

This is surely not a polished philosophical text; yet for that same reason it states the upshot in a clear voice. In fact, it is revelatory, prefiguring some of the major tenets of Wittgenstein's mature philosophy.

One of the most striking features of this passage is the fact that Wittgenstein's entertains a new conception of understanding, which outruns his own philosophical beliefs at the time. Understanding music is always *in mediis rebus*, enmeshed with human life, and that is why we begin by misunderstanding, that is, by noticing that there is something concealed, or somehow hidden or held back. Wittgenstein is very explicit that there is a choice to be made, that an effort is required; indeed even courage is called for. According to Floyd, "characterization requires a choice, an effort to get the initial steps right, to find the right level and combination of charactery so as to succeed in illuminating something definite within the space of possibility that is there to be seen and developed".[45] Only thus we move toward understanding through practice, which involves increasingly nuanced harking to what Wittgenstein calls here "inner voices".

The very choice of the simile "voice" here is telling, because a voice can have character, no less than a face; it involves listening and responding. A voice calls out for characterization. Floyd puts it succinctly:

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[44] Martin Alber (ed.), *Wittgenstein und die Musik: Ludwig Wittgenstein und Rudolf Koder Briefwechsel* (Innsbruck: Haymon Verlag, 2000) pp. 37-38 (my translation; my emphasis). I am grateful to Alexander Wilfing for advising me concerning this translation.

[45] Floyd, "Aspects of aspects".

The alternative "phrasing" of a musical passage, in musical performance, counts as a piece of characterization. In re-phrasing, one can reveal a possibility (a point) *in* the score that may never have been seen before. In one sense this changes the score not a whit; in another sense, it may change the score—and me—forever (if it's compelling enough). … Seeing a new possibility for phrasing a passage in the score … requires one to *figure*, characterize, phrase—in short, become *acquainted* with an aspect through the *specific* way and manner in which we phrase charactery *in* the characterization (cf. *PI* §536).[46]

These "inner voices", which call out for characterization, would later become what Wittgenstein opted to call "comparisons within a system" in his lectures in Cambridge in the early 1930s,[47] and ultimately the multifarious comparisons, alluded to in *PI* §527, which we use to make someone see in a piece of music "what it's all about". Understanding music has displaced musical meaning (in the transitive sense). Concealment turns into revelation as we submit to the deepening of our attention to the emerging fine-shaded, interrelated comparisons which pertain to our ways of life. This middle period passage envisions and encapsulates Wittgenstein's later, sophisticated intervention in the Romantic sentiments concerning musical depth by evoking, in the most concrete terms, the idea that (in the words of Wackenroder) "the human heart becomes acquainted with itself in the mirror of musical sounds."[48]

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[46] Ibid.

[47] See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Wittgenstein: Lectures, Cambridge 1930–1933: From the Notes of G. E. Moore*, ed. David Stern, Brian Rogers, and Gabriel Citron (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

[48] Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, *Confessions and Fantasies*, tr. Mary Hurst Schubert (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971), p. 191.