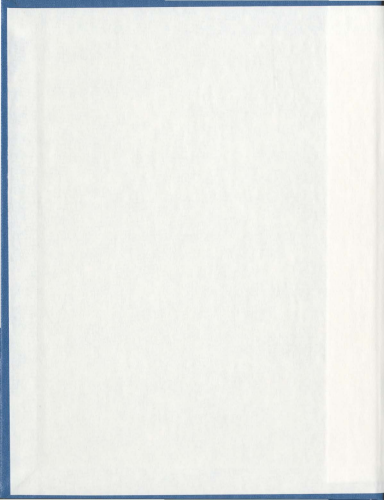


MUSIC AND ETHICS:
PYTHAGORAS, SCHOPENHAUER, AND IRIS MURDOCH

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Music and Ethics: Pythagoras, Schopenhauer, and Iris Murdoch

by

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Abstract

This thesis develops a historical and conceptual framework for a future consideration of the question of the ethical effect of music, in relation to metaphysical accounts of music in the thought of Pythagoras and Schopenhauer, and through careful examination of Iris Murdoch's ethics of attention. First, I describe the Pythagorean rationalist ontology and discuss its influence on Greek musical practise and ethical life. Music is here explained as a sensuous, practical encounter with abstract laws governing the whole cosmos. Second, I lay out the voluntarist ontology of Arthur Schopenhauer and discuss how he privileges music, over the other arts, as a direct manifestation of the inner nature of the world. The link between Pythagoras and Schopenhauer is that they both conceive of music as a mimetic art form which represents deep ontological structure. They both consider music to provide a vision of the ontological structure of the world. Since this envisioning is what Iris Murdoch calls attention, I am able to move from Pythagoras and Schopenhauer to situate music within Murdoch's claim we are initiated into the good life when art, i.e., any envisioning process, interrupts self-attention thus promotes attention toward others. Finally, using Lewis Rowell's more recent theory of ontology and mimetic music, I clarify how to approach music from a Murdochian standpoint, i.e., how to consider music as a mode of attention. I claim that music orients us towards others in a way which corresponds to the ontological vision represented in the music, and that the ethical effect of music must be further studied by outlining how music shapes our understanding of the structure of the world.

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Introduction

Music occupies a curious place in the philosophy of art. Its transience and, compared to speech, its inarticulateness, seem disproportionate to its universally acknowledged ability to exert a lasting, meaningful effect on its audience. Music can, without words and without a durable medium, create enduring movement in a person. The ontological status of the work of music is a kind of three-part puzzle. First, it can be identified with the idea which the composer has in mind while notating the score. The beauty of the composer's idea may or may not end up adequately represented in musical notation, and, interestingly, its status as a work of music does not depend upon its ever being heard. Secondly, the work of music can be said to subsist in the notated score, the blueprint, as it were, of the sounds which the composer intends. From this perspective, the score is given primary status as the guarantor of the work's progeny. Thirdly, from yet another view, it can be argued that, since the work of music is intended to be audible, its only ontologically complete or actual instant is the moment of performance. This view prizes the rapture which the phenomenon can produce in the hearer, but, since each performance is different, this view cannot account for any shared identity between spatially and temporally disparate performances of the same work. In light of these theories, it seems reasonable to say that the work of music is some kind of interaction between the three elements: the idea in the composer's mind, the notated score, and the performance.

In this thesis I will avoid the particularities of this debate and stipulate a certain definition of music. For my purposes, music is ordered sound. Of course, speech is also ordered sound, and indeed speech and music can be very near to each other. Once we begin to stretch out vowel sounds, we begin to hear pitched sounds. The line between speaking and singing is too fine for me to draw here. Therefore, I want to limit my definition in another respect. I will be discussing music which does not feature the elongation of words, with the exception of when I am describing the Ancient Greek mixture of melody, dance, and words. Barring this exception, when I say 'music', I mean neither accompanied nor unaccompanied singing, unless such singing is non-verbal; for instance, some vocal music develops pitch relations through the use of vowels and articulations which do not form words. In sum, by the term 'music', I refer to ordered sound which does not employ words. I stipulate this limited definition of music because I wish solely to explore the ethical effect of ordered sound in particular, rather than to become entangled in debates about the ethical effect of song texts.

In addition, I assume, along with two of the West's significant philosophers of music, Pythagoras and Schopenhauer, that music is mimetic. I do not mean that music is necessarily programmatic in the sense of representing extra-musical phenomena. Certainly, some music sets out to use its elements to signify extra-musical objects in the world, such as mythical characters, terrains and vistas, or emotions. But of course there is also music which does not evoke extra-musical objects. I will limit my discussion to this latter kind of music: that which does not explicitly signify extra-musical phenomena.

Yet I still say that even this kind of music is mimetic. How can it be mimetic yet not representative of phenomena? This seems like a contradiction.

The way in which Pythagoras and Schopenhauer answer this question is the subject of Chapters One and Two of this thesis, and, in Chapter Three, Murdoch's philosophy of art, ethics, and attention becomes applicable to music via the mimetic conceptions of music provided by Pythagoras and Schopenhauer, and via the more recent research done by the musicologist and philosopher Lewis Rowell.

Allow me to be explicit about what each chapter accomplishes. In Chapter One, I describe the Pythagorean rationalist ontology and discuss its influence on Greek musical practise and ethical life. Music is here explained as a sensuous, practical encounter with abstract laws governing the whole cosmos. In Chapter Two, I lay out the voluntarist ontology of Arthur Schopenhauer and discuss how he privileges music, over the other arts, as a direct manifestation of the inner nature of the world. Music flows directly out of Will, the inner principle of movement behind the world. As we will see, this leads Schopenhauer to a difficulty in explaining how music becomes structured, since its source, Will, is absolutely unstructured. The connection between Pythagoras and Schopenhauer is that they both conceive of music as a mimetic art form which represents ontological structure. The sound of music is phenomenal, but the object it represents is, for Pythagoras, abstract rational laws, and for Schopenhauer, pre-phenomenal energy.

In short, Chapters One and Two give two contrasting conceptions of music as an expression of ontology, Pythagorean rationalism and Schopenhauerian voluntarism. These two theories of how music expresses ontological structure set the stage for a consideration of how music can give us a particular apprehension of the world, one which is implicitly characterized by the ontological significance of a particular kind of music. In other words, music which represents rationalist ontology gives us a different apprehension of the world than music which represents voluntarist ontology.

In Chapter Three my focus is Iris Murdoch's claim that art initiates the good life when it disrupts our egocentric, fantastic conception of the world. Ethically effective art, she says, displays the world in such a way that we are encouraged to question our own conception of things. Faced with the work of art, we are drawn out of ourselves and into increasingly harmonious relationships with others. At the end of Chapter Three, with reference to Lewis Rowell's discussion of how Western and Eastern musics are manifestations of their respective ontologies, I argue that Western music is a sound image of Western ontology. It is my claim that music gives us a non-conceptual or sensuous encounter with ontological principles, and therefore, in order to map the ethical effect of music, we must ask how music orients its hearer toward a particular apprehension of the structure of the world and of one's ethical role therein.

Chapter One

Pythagorean Harmonics and the Ethical Force of Music

Pythagorean thought is the foundation of Western music theory and, arguably, of Western philosophy, given that Plato was a devout Pythagorean. Tradition holds that Pythagoras (c. 570-490 B.C.E.) was the first to map the mathematical structure of resonance and to give numerological significance to various intervals. In Pythagoras' studies of resonance, he explained not simply the mathematics of consonance but also the numerological significance of consonant intervals. In this way, a numerology which explained the genesis and structure of the cosmos, a vastly speculative endeavour, became married with the sensible pleasure of consonant, co-sounding pitches.

This meant that the mathematical and rational structure of the cosmos could be imagined more accurately by observing sensible phenomena such as properties of resonating strings. Both the resonant properties of objects and the mathematical structure of sensibly pleasing sound were important to Pythagorean speculative cosmology. Perhaps the most shining example of this mixture of ideas is Plato's *Timaeus*, in which the dialogue's namesake, who is intended by Plato to represent Pythagorean thought (Taylor 436), outlines a cosmology of spinning planets that produce a harmonious concord.

This chapter is concerned with how sound and speculative cosmology became intertwined in the Pythagorean thought. We begin with an overview of Pythagorean

numerology, then examine Pythagoras' discovery of the harmonic series, before concluding with a discussion of how Pythagorean numerology allows for his observations of sensible resonance, sound, to translate into principles of rational, cosmological harmony. Pythagorean doctrine of music is thus the first example in this thesis of how music is taken to represent ontological structure. The rational principles which order the cosmos also order the sounds that we hear. Thus the sounds orient us towards a rational apprehension of the world.

1.1 Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans

It is virtually impossible to know for certain what Pythagoras himself accomplished (Hermann 11). We know roughly the dates of his life and the places where he lived, and we know that he began a religious/political/intellectual brotherhood, the members of which held him in very high regard. What we know about Pythagoras' life and contributions to philosophy and science has been passed down to us by his early and later followers. We have no writings from Pythagoras himself, and it was common amongst the Pythagoreans, given their devotion to their leader, to attribute all their scientific advances to Pythagoras himself. As a result, ideas from Egyptian or Babylonian sources, as well as particular scientific discoveries made long after Pythagoras' death, were attributed to Pythagoras. In fact, more recent historical scholarship has demonstrated that many supposed discoveries of Pythagoras, for example, the so-called Pythagorean Theorem, were well-known in Babylon prior to Pythagoras' lifetime (Gill 315-6; Huffman, "Pythagoras," 469).

Given the historical difficulties of this scenario, it would be difficult to give an account of Pythagoras' musical thought. However, as a philosophical endeavour, this chapter will aim to distil the Pythagorean position on music without becoming entangled in the historical problems. Anyone who wishes to deal with Pythagoras' thought must turn to the writings of the vast number of the Pythagoreans. Therefore, at the outset, I make a simple distinction between, on the one hand, Pythagoras' thought *per se* and on the other hand, Pythagorean thought; I aim to examine the latter.¹

1.2 Pythagorean Cosmology and Numerology

The Pythagoreans, like all early Greek philosophers, sought to know and articulate the one true reality that all things have in common—in other words, Being itself or the Real. The Pythagoreans believed that either all things were composed of numbers, or that all things were numbers (Hermann 16). The workings of numbers in mathematics seemed to the early Greek thinkers to be a shining example of eternal truth. When compared to truth claims made about other subjects, a numerical sentence such as $2 + 1 = 3$ has a particular epistemological strength such that it appeared indubitable to these early truth-seekers (Hermann 15). It seemed that their minds were communing with universal truth. Interestingly, the ancient Greek word *mathematis* simply meant 'educated' or 'learned', and it is the adjectival form of the noun which means 'a subject of study'. With Pythagoras, however, the term *mathema* loses its generality and begins to be used solely in reference to numbers and their logical

¹ This will become relevant later when I turn to a Scholastic philosopher and Pythagorean, Boethius, for my prime source on Pythagorean music theory.

relations. Number was seen as the one true and worthy area of study because it held the most clear and demonstrable truths which could replace doubt and ignorance with the light of absolute knowledge (Gill 315). We see in Book VII of the *Republic* that, by the time of Plato, the codified list of five *mathemata* ("disciplines") included subjects which all study the logic of numerical relationships: arithmetic, plane geometry, solid geometry, astronomy, and harmonics (Gill 315). All these *mathemata* demonstrate the eternal truth of numbers. For example, in geometry a triangle could be constructed and studied and shown to possess the property that all its angles add to up 180°. Next, the triangle could be destroyed and another constructed, only to reveal that its angles also added up to 180°. Faced with the fact that such numerical properties of geometrical shapes persistently hold true regardless of the changes suffered by the material object, the Pythagoreans were lead to conclude that numbers were the unchanging, eternal reality underlying the physical world of change. Number was taken to be the Being or Reality that all things held in common.

It is important to note that the Pythagorean conception of number differs from our conceptions today. Strangely, Aristotle gives two conflicting accounts of the Pythagorean theory of number. In one instance he explains that the Pythagoreans considered numbers to have spatial magnitude. He writes, "[T]he Pythagoreans [...] believe in one kind of number—the mathematical; only they say it is not separate but sensible substances are formed out of it" (*Metaphysics* 1080b16-21). Numbers in this sense were viewed as the principle building blocks of the material world, the most basic

units of which spatial objects are composed. But elsewhere in the *Metaphysics*, while discussing the “physical philosophers”—those who claim that the basic principles and elements have magnitude—Aristotle says, “The ‘Pythagoreans’ treat of principles and elements stranger than those of the physical philosophers (the reason is that they got the principles from non-sensible things, for the objects of mathematics, except those of astronomy, are of the class of things without movement)” (998b29-30). Here Aristotle is saying that the Pythagorean principles are motionless, non-physical objects. Although Aristotle expresses an ambiguity about whether the Pythagoreans thought of numbers as having magnitude or not, he remains confident that the Pythagoreans considered the study of numbers to also be the study of physical reality (*Metaphysics* 998b33-990a4). This seems strange given that they considered mathematics to be eternally true as opposed to the deceptive changes in the physical realm. But we must remember that to understand the numerical properties of a physical object was to grasp its truth more clearly. Therefore, although the Pythagoreans sought the abstract numerological truth of the world, they did not shy away from empirical investigations of a certain kind. Yet some scholars claim that the supreme contribution of Pythagoreanism to philosophy and mathematics was its priority in thinking of mathematical objects as abstract entities (Kline 29).² Generally speaking, however, we can be confident that they considered numbers to be some kind of constituent element of the physical world.

² On the question of the Pythagorean number, Lippman writes, “Unfortunately it is impossible to determine the precise form of this belief; whether all things were held to be numbers literally, or simply to be numerical in their form and properties, we do not know, but in either case the conception remains important and fruitful” (?). It is beyond the scope of this chapter to resolve this dispute.

in the 5th and 6th centuries B.C.E., the Pythagoreans extended the explanatory strength of this theory by proposing that numbers were geometrical points which could be organized and combined with lines to form the basic two- and three-dimensional figures (Kline 29). If two numbers, i.e., two points, were related to each other, the relation would form a line, a continuous magnitude. Now if three points were arranged in relation and two more lines were added, a triangle was formed. If they then added a fourth point above the triangle and allowed for three more connecting lines, a tetrahedron (i.e. a pyramid) was formed. And the tetrahedron was thought to be a constituent of fire, the element which "was situated in the centre of the world and drew upon the unlimited surrounding it to complete the cosmological process" (Lippman 9). Thus with one number, one point, they began, then added two, then three, then four points, before arriving at a three-dimensional figure which could generate the cosmos. This simple demonstration impressed the Pythagoreans because they could construct from the single numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4, all the necessary geometry for three-dimensional space (Hermann 96-7). Moreover, the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 all add up to the perfect number 10. The Pythagoreans saw great beauty in the properties of a triangular shape made of four rows, having 4 points along the bottom row, 3 points above that, then 2 points, and finally 1 point at the top. This shape was called the *tetractys*, which means "group of four". The total number of points in this figure was 10, a number which for the Pythagoreans "comprised the whole nature of numbers", wrote Aristotle in the *Metaphysics* (985a9). Even in astronomy, when they observed that only nine bodies

moved through the heavens, the Pythagoreans believed that there was a tenth, invisible planet called the "counter earth" which completed the system. Aristotle says that in this way they preserved at all cost the completeness of their numerology.

The important philosophical notion within this theory of number is that of the Unit, One, or Monad. Though we do not know for certain if a Pythagorean number had spatial magnitude or not, we do know that it was considered to be a single, incorruptible unit that could be used as the starting point for all reasoning. It formed the foundation for all thinking because the ordered cosmos, the object of Pythagorean thought, was viewed as a vast relationship between infinitely many units. The unit was a kind of perfect premise because it seemed self-evident that the cosmos was an ordered conglomerate of some kind of basic units. When the Pythagoreans proposed that numbers were the basic constituent units, suddenly all relationships between sensible entities could be thought of as, at the fundamental level, relationships between numbers. A horse, its food, and its master, for example, were in fact reducible to numbers relating together in logical patterns. And mathematics, the study of such logical patterns, could therefore give insight into the truth of any such kind of relationship. This novel philosophical move gave birth to the first rigorous methodology for allowing finite human thought to make universal generalizations about the world; and this of course this was equally the birth of Western science in its primitive form (Bigelow and Butchart 670). Again, it would most likely be incorrect to pin this philosophical development on Pythagoras the man, but it is certain that those

Pythagoreans who furthered this kind of thinking and became known as the *Mathematikoi*—meaning ‘the learned ones’—had a tremendous influence on Plato and the Academy (Hermann 17).

1.3 The Pythagorean Conception of Harmony

As is so often the case when philosophy progresses, the clarification of a new way of thinking results in a new obfuscation: in this case, the problem of the one and the many. By rights this was not a new problem for the ancient Greeks. Their mythology is teeming with rich treatments of dualism in various forms, and philosophers from Thales onwards theorized about unity amongst difference. But the notion of the Pythagorean unit provided fresh terminology for tackling the question of whether all is one or many. Specifically, the notion of a unit raised the question of how these units participate in each other.⁵ The units are indeed separate from one another, and in that sense they differ from each other. If they differ in any respect, then in order for them to work in concert to form the cosmos, some kind of harmony must overcome the conflict between them. The logic of this problem is given by Eryximachus in Plato’s *Symposium*:

Of course it is absurd to speak of harmony as being in conflict, or as arising out of elements which are still conflicting [...]. There can certainly be no harmony of treble and bass while they are still in conflict, for harmony is concord, and concord is a kind of sympathy, and sympathy between things which are in conflict is impossible so long as that conflict last. (187 a-c)

⁵ Here we clearly see the link between Pythagorean thought and the rest of Western philosophy in that the problem of the one and the many energizes philosophical enquiry all the way through the Middle Ages and into the Modern Era, most notably in the standoff between Spinoza and Leibnitz, but also in later important domains such as Hegelian dialectics and contemporary materialist theory. Also, A. E. Taylor points out that the Pythagorean unit is a distant precursor to Newton’s infinitesimal, i.e., a point which is smaller than the most basic of units, but larger than nothing, or “a nothing in the act of turning into something” (506).

This is a clear articulation of the philosophical dilemma. When two contraries are harmonized, are they still contrary after they are harmonized? And, if they are still contrary, how then can we say that they are truly harmonized? Or, on the other hand, if two contraries become similar when they are harmonized, how then can they be said truly to be two contraries? In other words, if two numbers come together, are they then two numbers or one? Eryximachus is actually here arguing that Love as harmony is only possible if contraries are in truth similar rather than different. But in the same dialogue Plato goes on to show that this solution is unsatisfactory because it merely asserts one side of the paradox. The problem of the one and the many, which became central to Pythagorean philosophy, makes for fertile soil for the growth of their rigorous conception of harmony.

The Pythagorean solution to the problem involves a nuanced theory of harmonics in which ratios become the vocabulary for speaking of and studying the properties of conjoined numbers. In classical Greek literature, that of Homer specifically, the verb *harmozo* meant 'fit together'. It had a much more restricted use than its noun form *harmonia*, which referred not only to the fitting together of stones and wood, as in carpentry, but also to the fitting together of qualitative properties. Its meaning might perhaps be rendered in English as 'agreement' (Lipmann 3). Duality is presupposed in this meaning. The use of the noun *harmonia* implies "two or more distinguishable entities somehow capable of mutual adjustment" (Lipmann 2). The most likely foundation for dualistic thought is the natural polarities of heaven and earth, night

and day, and male and female. The mythological solutions to these polarities involved theogonies and postulations about the elements earth, fire, water, and air, which were equally the qualities dry, hot, wet, and cold. These eventually gave rise to such philosophical abstract binaries as sameness and otherness, limited and unlimited, and the one and the many. Each philosophical position proposed a different way to explain the mixing of these elements. Generally, the various theories imagined the elements to be large, physically located masses which came in and out of existence much like gods in a theogony. All this is to say that paired opposites were a major component to myth and theogony, as well as in early philosophy. But they were treated very differently in Pythagorean scientific cosmology. In contrast to myth and to the earliest philosophers, the study of harmonics, as understood through Pythagorean number theory, constituted of a rigorous investigation of the properties of ratios. (Lipmann 4-5)

As we will see, this conception of harmony began as an abstract solution to the speculative problem of the one and the many, but it became successively more charged with musical and therefore practical meaning with the discovery of the harmonic series. The rational, numerical properties of sound were a powerful link between the principles of cosmic harmony and the practise of music with all its educational, ethical, and cultural functions. But this is to anticipate the discussion below.

1.4 The Meaning of a Ratio

Let us turn and consider exactly how ratios and harmony were conceived. In the Book I of *De institutione musica*, Boethius relates a well-known old story in which

Pythagoras discovers the rational structure of the resonance of physical objects. It is said that Pythagoras happened upon a smithy where several men were pounding with hammers of various weights. Pythagoras noticed that the sound of each hammer was pitched according to its weight. Heavier hammers sounded low pitches, while lighter hammers sounded higher pitches. By comparing the different weights of each hammer, he found that certain ratios produced consonant (i.e. harmonious or sympathetic) pitches. For example, if the relationship between two hammers was 2:1, meaning, if one hammer was twice the weight of another, the pitches which they produce would be consonant. The same was true of hammers related in the ratios of 4:3 and 3:2. In this way, Pythagoras used ratios to describe the intervals between the pitches of pairs of hammers. As the story goes, when Pythagoras arrived home he discovered that a single tensed string, referred to as a monochord, possessed the same resonant properties. The monochord, when plucked, produced what is called its fundamental pitch. If the chord was divided in half, and one side plucked, it produced a pitch which was consonant with the chord's fundamental pitch; the operative ratio here is again 2:1. And if the chord was divided according to the ratio 4:3 or 3:2, once again, pitches consonant with the fundamental pitch were produced.

Of course, each ratio describes a different interval above the fundamental pitch, but they all describe pitches which are audibly consonant with the fundamental. Boethius defines consonance as "a mixture of high and low sound falling pleasantly and uniformly on the ears" (16). He explains that although consonance is an audible

property, its structure cannot be known except by reason, i.e. mathematics. The ear recognizes the mutual suitability of two consonant pitches but mathematics gives the precise definition of the size of the interval. The Pythagoreans, he explains, took the middle ground in this respect. That is to say, they recognized the role of the senses in perceiving harmony, but they rejected the senses as a means to understanding harmony: "They delegate the determination of distances to rules and reason—as though the senses were something submissive and a servant, while reason is a judge and carries authority" (Boethius 17).

In *De institutione musica*, Boethius explains exactly why the ratios 2:1, 4:3, and 3:2 produce consonant intervals. There is a precise numerological and cosmological reason. As we have said, the Pythagoreans understood that the one and the many were related according to ratios. A ratio is a number, a unit, which describes an inequality. The two terms of a ratio are different, yet together they express the single continuous distance between themselves. This general understanding of ratios made them appropriate tools for measuring and describing the cosmos, since the cosmos is a certain harmony, a unity among difference. Hence the cosmos *per se* can be seen as the ratio of all ratios. According to Boethius, the Pythagoreans laid out the exact species of ratios which preserve the harmony between discrete numbers (the many) and continuous quantities (the one).

There are five types of inequalities or ratios, not all of which qualify as expressions of consonance. They are named as follows: the multiple, the

superparticular, the superpartient, the combination of the multiple and the superparticular, and the combination of the multiple and the superpartient. Of these, the last two do not need to be defined because they are combinations of the first three types. Let us define the first three types. In the multiple class, the larger number contains the smaller number two times, three times, four times, etc. (e.g. 2:1, 9:3, or 36:9). In the superparticular class, the larger number contains the smaller number plus some single part (e.g. a half, as in 3:2, a third, as in 4:3, a fourth, as in 5:4, and so on). Finally, the superpartient is a class of ratios in which the larger number contains the smaller plus several parts (e.g. in 5:3, 5 contains 3 plus 2 parts; or in 7:4, 7 contains 4 plus 3 parts). The multiple and the superparticular best capture the mutuality of the one and the many because the series of multiples can express an infinite aggregation of discrete units, while the superparticular, since it divides its smaller part infinitely, can imitate the continuous quantity found in a line. In other words, the multiple class expresses an infinite aggregate of points, while the superparticular class expresses the infinite divisions of a line.⁴ In both, therefore, we see the harmony of the one and the many. The superpartient does not express consonance because, since it cannot divide its smaller number into discrete parts, it cannot express oneness; rather it expresses the incommensurability of the one and the many, irrationality, and is thus discordant.

(Boethius 12-6)

⁴ For a good discussion of the logical relationship between points and lines, as conceived by Aristotle and Plato, see Taylor, 506.

To review, the consonant ratios that Pythagoras heard at the smithy fall within the classes of consonant inequalities, i.e., consonant ratios, which we have discussed: 2:1 is of the multiple class, and 4:3 and 3:2 are both of the superparticular class. 2:1 measures what Boethius called a *diapason* (octave), 4:3 measures a *diatessaron* (fourth), and 3:2 measures a *diapente* (fifth) (Groult & Palisca 7; Boethius 23). The Pre-Socratic thinker named Philolaus or Corton (c. 470-385 B.C.E.), the first of the Pythagoreans to have written a book, explained that the octave was a span of continuous sound moving from the low pitch, the fundamental, up to the high pitch. We can think of the high pitch as existing in diametric opposition to the fundamental.⁵ He referred to the octave as a *harmonia*, meaning in this case 'an ordered system', because (1) the polarities were in a real sense structurally related in that the fundamental generated its higher octave pitch, and (2) because the continuous span of sound was divided into articulate units, i.e., the 8 pitches between the two poles. These 8 divisions were discovered first by determining the distance between the fourth and the fifth, and then dividing the entire octave by that distance. Indeed, the terms 'octave' (meaning 8 pitches), 'fourth' (meaning the fourth pitch above the fundamental) and 'fifth' (meaning the fifth pitch above the fundamental) were not used until after this division process had been mapped out. At first these intervals were found to be audibly pleasing, then

⁵ I call the opposition 'diametric' because the octave can be understood along the analogy of a circle, the high note being opposed to the low note in the same way that two points which are across from each other along the diameter of a circle are absolutely different with respect to each other, yet absolutely the same with respect to their relation to the broader system of the circle. An octave relation preserves this same paradox in that a fundamental pitch and its octave pitch, though tonally and audibly disparate, have the same harmonic function in the broader tonal system.

numerologically pleasing. The ordered nature of the octave system was further demonstrated by the fact that the fourth and the fifth were also consonant with the fundamental and could be fitted into the octave not at random but according to whole-number ratios (Huffman, "Philolaus," 383). That the governing ratios were whole numbers was of central importance because it further indicated that the continuous span of sound was a rationally ordered space wherein Pythagorean numerology, predicated on the existence of indestructible units, whole numbers, could accurately measure intelligible distances and relations.

That these intelligible distances were also audibly distinct and pleasing is perhaps the keystone of this entire discussion, for we can now see how the Pythagorean study of numerical properties, a strictly theoretical and speculative project, becomes, via the study of audible harmonics, influential in the realm of culture and ethics. Let us consider this point further.

Before philosophical and scientific thought developed, early classical culture often spoke about the magical properties of music, its power to control the human will and emotions. Various sects and cults developed practises in which music had magical powers akin to wine and were suitable for orgiastic and other kinds of rites. In distinction, developments in the Orphic religion toward the pursuit of knowledge and clear perception culminated with Plato's Ideas as objects of purified vision. This clear thinking or seeing became associated in Greek thought with the lyre (Lipmann 47). The lyre—a set of tensed stings coupled with a resonating body of some kind—was the

instrument of Apollo because, according to myth, it was invented through the speculative consideration of a hollow tortoise shells. The vibrating strings were thought to animate the hollow body like the world-soul animates the cosmos, or, like the logos moves invisibly though powerfully (Lipmann 86).⁶ With Orphism, then, as it pursued increasingly clear doctrinal conceptions of the soul and the cosmos, music, specifically that of the lyre, became more closely associated with clear thought rather than with a flood of inarticulate emotions, as in earlier religious musics.

This is significant when we realize that the Pythagoreans were likely the most influential Orphic sect (Lipmann 48). With the Pythagoreans, cosmogony became less and less about the generation of the gods, and more about the logical interaction of abstract concepts. It is in this way that mythology evolved into philosophy. Asceticism and a general disdain for the sensible went hand in hand with this new way of thought, as the goal was proper knowledge of abstract truths. The term *harmonia*, early on at least, referred only to the abstract order and fitting together of the cosmos. But with the discovery of the harmonic relations in sound, the science of abstract harmonics came to rest powerfully in the sensible realm.

All this is to say that before Pythagoras mapped out the numerological significance of the resonant properties of tensed strings and smithy hammers, music had little to do with philosophy and more to do with ancient theories of magic. But with the

⁶ Contrast this with the *aulos*—a reed instrument played with the breath—which according to myth was invented by trying to imitate the sounds of human suffering. The *aulos* is consequently Dionysian, associated with tragedy.

Pythagoreans and the rise of philosophical thinking proper, coupled with their discovery of the rational structure governing sound, music became (1) a supremely important philosophical yet sensible model of the symmetry and order of the cosmos, and (2) a philosophically valid link between numbers, i.e., abstract units, and sensible phenomena. Moreover, since audible resonance was now considered to imitate the very order of the cosmos, and since the soul was thought to be structured in the same way as the cosmos, music was thought to give the structure of the cosmos direct influence upon the soul. Plato's Pythagorean character, Timaeus, explains how this works:

Moreover, so much of music as is adapted to the sound of the voice and to the sense of hearing is granted to us for the sake of harmony. And harmony, which has motions akin to the revolutions of our soul, is not regarded by the intelligent votary of the Muses as given by them with a view to irrational pleasure, which is deemed to be the purpose of it in our day, but as meant to correct any discord which may have arisen in the courses of the soul, and to be our ally in bringing her into harmony and agreement with herself, and rhythm too was given by them for the same reason, on account of the irregular and graceless ways which prevail among mankind generally, and to help us against them. (*Timaeus* 47c-e)

Music could bring the soul into conformity with the cosmos. That is to say, the soul could be re-organized, 'straightened out', by the hearing of music which imitated the cosmos in its proper or harmonious state.

1.5 The Ethical Power of Music

And with this 'ought' we arrive at the ethical power of music. According to Lipmann, the ethical force of music was predicated on, first, its imitative function and, second, its inherent relationship with poetry and dance (56-7). The various scales,

tempos and rhythms were thought to imitate virtue by representing the character of exemplary people, their deeds and motivations. The belief that music could imitate virtue in this respect resulted in the belief that it could promote ethically good character in others. But of further significance is the fact that in all practical instances, music was allied with poetry and dance through the recognition that rhythm was common to each of them. Words, melody, and bodily gesture all occur in time, and thus were each viewed as having a respective rhythmic sequence that could be matched and interwoven. As well, poetry gave verbal meaning to melody while the mathematical structure of a melody, its pitch relations considered according to their numerological significance, imitated the essential logos of the poetry. As for dance, it took its rhythm from speech and its meaning was also heightened by the quality of the accompanying melody. All these elements wrapped together ensured that music was a very concrete cultural entity with a broad influence on individuals and society. Not only was the poetry of the Greeks synonymous with music, but it also served to gather up and present the virtuous deeds of heroes. As a consequence of the fact that poetry musically gathered the memories of virtuous deeds, the ancient Greek could conceptualize heroic achievement as a musical glory, since the reward for a heroic deed was to have it enshrined forever in poetry. In this way, music both served as the medium through which virtues were established and reinforced, and it represented the valour and reward of acting virtuously. Lipmann writes:

Thus in the Homeric world, music and poetry have their highest function in the glorification of the hero and in an education that is based on this. (57)

From these observations we can conclude that music had a unique ethical force in Ancient Greek culture.

Because of its ethical sway, music had always gone hand in hand with Greek education. Practical training in music was seen as equal to any other subject. However, with Socrates and Plato, the philosopher replaced the poet, along with the practice music and dance, as the prime teacher of virtue. With this, audible harmony was thought to prepare the mind for its study of intelligible harmony (Lipmann 62). But this did not mean that music lost its ethical force and import. Ideas about the harmonic, rational, mathematical order of the cosmos remained central to theories of ethics. The Good was indeed achieved through balanced and proportioned individuals participating in society in appropriate ways. Society was taken to be a kind of ratio amongst people, whereby each class of citizens was to exist in proper proportion to the whole. The analogy of the music scale, sound flowing from the fundamental up to the octave pitch, with its ordered units balanced according to whole number ratios, remained a powerful model for the cosmos and, in turn, for ethics.

This entire discussion reveals that for the Greeks harmony was in fact a far grander concept than music. It was a vast cosmological principle of order that profited from the notion of ratio in order to demonstrate the way different units could relate and remain different and express both manyness and oneness in a single term. The classes of ratios which best accomplished this, the *multiple* and the *superparticular*, were discovered to be operative in resonant objects, thus linking music to harmony. This is

why the terms music and harmony have become synonymous. Practical, audible music, wrapped intimately with dance and poetry, was understood to gain ethical force from its capacity to imitate the proper balance and proportion of the cosmos and the ethos of virtue. In a real sense, it prepared the soul for communion with the Good. Of course Plato's well-known hesitation and anxiety about imitative arts applied to music as well; hence he has Socrates recommend that certain musical modes, because they imitated weakness or irrational passions, should not be used in the education of the guardians of the state (*Republic* 398e—399c). But in this same section it is clear that Socrates reveres musical modes for their power to imitate and therefore evoke virtuous behaviour in the hearer.

Though this has been a cursory overview of Pythagorean musical thought, and many stones are left unturned, we have distilled the basic Greek, philosophical position on music. The ancient Greeks understood music to be an imitative art that had the capacity to prepare the soul for rational, virtuous participation in the ordered cosmos. The Pythagorean approach to music gives us a model of how to think of music as mimetic. In the next chapter we will see that Schopenhauer also considers music to be imitative of ontological structure; however, in distinction from Pythagorean doctrine, he argues that music imitates the irrational Will rather than the rational order of the cosmos. Before looking at how such thinking of music can be analyzed in Iris Murdoch's terms, we turn to examine Schopenhauer's philosophy of music in order to have set

before us a counterpoint to the Pythagorean model, and in order to see to what extent the thesis can be sustained that music imitates the ontological structure of the world.

Chapter Two

Music and Madness in Schopenhauer's Aesthetics

In this chapter I situate Schopenhauer's theory of aesthetics within his broader system, and I explain the remarkably privileged place he gives to music. I then refer to Schopenhauer's discussion of madness in order to shed light on how exactly the music composer directly envisions (without the mediating Idea) will-in-itself. It is my claim that if music copies will-in-itself, as Schopenhauer claims it does, then the music composer's creative process becomes impossible to explain. Given that Schopenhauer stipulates the mediating Idea is the condition of the possibility of an object being for consciousness, his removal of the Idea from the music composer's creative process also removes any account of how music is intuited by consciousness. I will argue that if the mediating Idea is absent from the music composer's creative process, then there is no possibility for music to be an object for consciousness. I take up this problem in this chapter because it shows at least one weakness in a purely voluntarist conception of musical ontology. Allow me to give a brief overview of the Schopenhauer's system so that the problem of musical composition can be clearly stated before we begin our detailed discussion.

Schopenhauer claims that a groundless, irrational energy lies masked behind the rational structure of the world, and that artists glimpse and channel this energy into their works of art. This claim resonates with many artists who sense the presence and movement of an indeterminate cause within their own works. Artists and philosophers

commonly say that the work of art is an exceptional object in the world for the following reason. Like other objects, it stands within a causal network which determines the adhesion of its parts and its spatiotemporal location, yet, a complete account of this causal network cannot fully describe the meaning of the work. The work of art somehow means more than the sum of its parts or the description of how the parts came together. It is said that the work of art seems to transcend its determinate constitution such that even the artist may feel a certain surprise or even shock when encountering her own creation. The work says infinitely more than the artists intends. It takes on a life of its own.

Schopenhauer's account of how the creative process gives rise to such works is found in his well-known work of systematic philosophy called *The World as Will and Representation*. This title refers to the world as it is in-itself, which he calls Will,⁷ and the world as it appears, which he calls representation. Whereas consciousness normally only knows the world of representation, Schopenhauer claims that artistic beauty is the direct flashing of the Will upon consciousness. This flashing of the Will upon consciousness is the direct manifestation of the irrational (the indeterminate or groundless) within the sphere of the rational (the determinate or necessary).

⁷ By capitalizing 'Will' I indicate that I am talking about the cosmic, pre-phenomenal principle of movement in Schopenhauer's system. When referring to Will apart from any phenomenal instantiation, I use the term 'will-in-itself'. When talking about how this principle operates in the phenomenal world, I use the term 'will-to-live' or 'will' (without capitalizing). This convention for dealing with Schopenhauer's concepts in English is explained by Dale Jacquette in his work *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer* (xi-xii). However, E. F. J. Payne's translation of *The World as Will and Representation*, which I quote in this chapter, only uses 'will', without any capitalization.

In the Third Book of *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer's distinction between genius and madness helps to establish a clear notion of the creative process. The creative process is a mode of contemplation during which the genius artist first attends to an object with such intensity that she makes the object become her entire world, thus raising herself and the object to the level of the universal; second, she gains a vision of the object's Idea, which is a vision of will-in-itself under its first and immediate form, that of representation; and third, she descends to reproduce, in a work of art, her vision of the Idea. (I explain this process in detail later.) The beauty of the produced work of art rests in the fact it has an exceptionally direct relation to will-in-itself achieved by the genius' penetrating imagination. While in this mode of contemplation, the artist behaves and feels as though she is temporarily detached from the causal world because she has so closely approached the indeterminate Will wherein causality does not apply. Madness, on the other hand, occurs when the subject experiences this detachment from the causal world because of a trauma or pathology. Both the genius and the mad person become detached from the causal world, the former for creative reasons and the latter for pathological reasons.

Schopenhauer claims that music is unlike the other arts because it does not copy Ideas (i.e. Will under the form of representation) but rather will-in-itself (i.e. Will under no form whatsoever). Here we arrive at a clear statement of the problem that will be treated in this chapter: How the does the genius music composer manage to produce structured music when the object of contemplation is the absolutely unstructured will-

in-itself. We must ask: What object does the composer contemplate in order to gain a vision of will-in-itself, and under what form does this vision come to the composer (since will-in-itself is formless, irrational and unintelligible)? The Idea, which normally mediates between consciousness and will-in-itself, is absent in the process of musical composition; how then does musical composition occur and, more importantly, how does the composition come to be structured? Let us move on to consider this problem in more detail.

2.1 Schopenhauer's World

Schopenhauer begins from a Kantian premise. Kant's distinction between the noumenal and phenomenal and his conclusion that all objectivity is conditioned by subjectivity are for Schopenhauer the two fundamental truths for philosophy. The empirical reality, i.e., matter, is the entirety of the world, but this exists only for consciousness and we can have no experience of it other than by way of our faculty of knowledge. Schopenhauer explains that Berkeley teaches us that the object exists only for the subject. Even if we think the object alone, this thought itself is within the subject. Therefore, there can be no object without subject. This "Berkeleyan idealism," Schopenhauer argues, is the general form of objectivity. What is needed in addition is "Kantian idealism", the recognition of the "mode and manner" of the subject's conditioning of the object. From Kant we understand that the subject supplies the spatial, temporal, and causal structure of the object (WWR, Vol. 2, p. 8). These two kinds of idealism, the general (Berkeleyan) and the specific (Kantian), combine to give a

proper refutation of realism, the naïve assumption that matter is real, and of spiritualism, the reactionary counter to realism which claims that some immaterial substance stands opposed to matter (WWR. Vol 2, p. 13). Schopenhauer, at first glance, seems to join with other post-Kantian idealists who unify subject and object through various attempts dialectically to collapse one into the other and so do away altogether with the noumenal. He does collapse object, or matter, into subject; he states that they are both one (WWR. Vol 2, p. 17). But he goes on to say that this dialectic between subject and object is still only the world as representation. The in-itself of the world remains unknown. In distinction from the post-Kantian idealists, then, he charts a new way out of Kant which retains the Kantian distinction between noumenal and phenomenal but which takes the testimony of inner sense as a clue to the nature of the noumenal. By this clue he postulates a real substratum, a thing-which-appears, and thus guards against solipsism while also maintaining the gap between knowledge and reality which he thinks the post-Kantian idealists have mistakenly overcome.

Schopenhauer's consideration of inner sense as a clue to our knowledge of the thing-which-appears is his key difference from Kant. In *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer*, Bryan Magee explains that Kant's critical philosophy leaves material objects available to us only as conditioned by our intellectual apparatus and that this implies that we only know material objects from the standpoint of an external observer (119-20). For Schopenhauer, however, Kant has overlooked the fact that we experience our body from an inner and immediate standpoint. We of course see our body move, and in this

way we experience it from an external standpoint. This experience as external observer constitutes, strictly speaking, our knowledge of our body. But we also immediately *feel* our body move. This inner feeling of our body's movement is unique because, in contradistinction from our experience of other objects, we are inside the object which moves.

Schopenhauer asks us to take a close look at the movement of our body and see if, by giving a complete account of the causes which lead to a simple movement, we can understand the inner nature of the movement. Were we to give a complete account of the biological and chemical interactions which causally link the movement of a finger to activity in the brain or to stimuli in the external world, we would not have thereby completely studied the inner nature of the movement, for we would have simply made the causes, the biological and chemical interactions, into objects external to our intellectual apparatus. As external objects, the causes would be conditioned by our intellect and their inner nature would remain hidden from us. The more profoundly we refine our knowledge of the causal network which determines the movement of the body, the further we come from understanding the inner nature of the movement. We notice that the inner nature of the body's movement is impossible to describe as a part of a determined causal sequences. The further we push causal explanation, the further we come from finding the ground or inner nature of the movement *per se*. The inner nature of the body's movement seems to lie persistently outside the scope of our capacity to reason about determinate causes. Therefore we can qualify the body's

movement as essentially indeterminate. It cannot be fully reduced to a cause in a rationally ordered causal chain. With reference to causal explanations given by science (i.e., etiology) and the different aim of his philosophy, Schopenhauer explains:

What is the use of explanations that ultimately lead back to something just as unknown as the first problem? [...] [W]e, who are here aiming not at etiology but at philosophy, that is to say, not at relative but at unconditioned knowledge of the nature of the world, take the opposite course, and start from what is immediately and most completely known and absolutely familiar to us, from what lies nearest to us, in order to understand what is known to us only from a distance, one-sidedly, and indirectly. [...] Knowledge of the cause of this inner nature's manifestation tells me only the rule of its appearance in time and space, and nothing more. (WWR, Vol. I, 125)

We know our body not merely as a rule-governed appearance in time and space, but as this indeterminate activity which he calls will. Thus through the body we have insight into the 'second side' of the world, the side opposed to world as determinate representation. Since in the body this 'second side' is will, Schopenhauer generalizes the principle and concludes that behind all appearance, behind all representation, is Will. This is how Schopenhauer gets beyond Kant. Whereas Kant leaves us with no knowledge whatsoever of the noumenal, Schopenhauer is able use inner sense to deduce that the noumenal is Will.⁸

⁸ There is dispute over whether Schopenhauer in fact succeeds in moving beyond Kant. Magee agrees that Schopenhauer cannot have conscious knowledge of the noumenal, for "Such willing as we are conscious of cannot be noumenal but must, despite the unique character of our knowledge of it, be phenomenon of something else" (*The Philosophy of Schopenhauer* 137). But Magee goes on to say that Schopenhauer is justified in identifying the noumenal as Will because willing is also primarily unconscious, as must be the noumenal by definition (*ibid.* 138). Copleston, on the other hand, is not so charitable: "[Schopenhauer] insists that [Will in itself] is known, even if only partially, in its manifestation or objectification, and that our own volition is for us its most distinct manifestation. In this case, however, the metaphysical will seems to disintegrate, as it were, into a phenomena, as far as our knowledge is concerned. [...] [T]his intuitive perception [of our own volition seems] to belong to the phenomenal

The world exists first as Will, then becomes objectified as representation, and is further objectified, through the medium of body, as phenomena for consciousness. Representation is Will come under the form of object for subject. But at its first grade of objectivity, Will is not yet knowledge for individual subjects. Individual subjects are individual by virtue of their embodiment, and for this reason representation can only be knowledge for individuals according to the forms by which a body knows. These forms are space, time, and causality. For Schopenhauer, space, time, and causality, combine give the determinate coordinates for all phenomena, i.e., matter. Each phenomenon has a cause for being where it is in space and time. This, in short, is the principle of sufficient reason. Without saying too much about Schopenhauer's interests in the principle of sufficient reason, it is enough to know that he claims that the universal rule of the principle of sufficient reason is the defining characteristic of the world as representation, i.e. the phenomenal world. Equally, we can say that the principle of sufficient reason is the form of perception and the rule by which the understanding creates its world in opposition to the world as Will (wherein the principle of sufficient reason is absolutely inapplicable). It is by the principle of sufficient reason that the body knows itself in relation to all other individuals—thereby knowing itself as an individual—and perceives a causal network within which survival is won in competition with all other individuals. The body, being the seat of will in the individual, seeks to live (Schopenhauer argues that life is the only goal for Will). In this way, the body seeks,

sphere [...] of subject-object relationship" (275-6). If Coplinton is correct, Schopenhauer has not moved beyond Kant.

using the principle of sufficient reason, to gain knowledge of all phenomena in order to bend them to the purpose of its own survival.

To understand Schopenhauer's theory of aesthetic contemplation we must take a closer look at the function and logical form of the Idea within his system. For Schopenhauer, the Idea is that which mediates between the will-in-itself and representation. Mediation is needed because will-in-itself is formless, or unconditioned, while phenomena, by virtue of their being perceived by a subject, are formed, or conditioned; which is to say, phenomena appear according to the rule of the principle of sufficient reason. The formless and the formed meet through the Idea. As the will-in-itself proceeds out of itself into further and further levels of determination, culminating in a conscious perception that understands everything as determinate, it passes through grades of objectivity. These grades are moments in which will-in-itself takes on more form, i.e., becomes more determinate in space and time. The Idea is the first form under which will-in-itself manifests itself. More specifically, Schopenhauer writes:

In these grades we recognized the Platonic Ideas once more, namely in so far as such grades are just the definite species, or the original unchanging forms and properties of all natural bodies, whether organic or inorganic, as well as the universal forces that reveal themselves according to natural laws. (WWR, Vol. 1, 169)

He means here that the world as representation has certain primary properties which are universal and unchanging. For example, consider how the definite species of a thing, a 'rock', a 'plant', or a 'human', is a term which signifies a group of particulars. Such terms are 'ideas'. In addition, the unchanging forms and properties of natural bodies,

such as rigidity, fluidity, colour, geometry, are also Ideas. As for universal forces, he often mentions gravity as an example. With gravity, as with all the other examples mentioned, individuals do not experience it in-itself but only as it adheres to particular phenomena. We see the effect but not the essence. Thus, an Idea functions in the phenomenal world as a universal attribute which individuals do not know in-itself but only through the particulars which it unifies.

One further thing to understand about Schopenhauer's account of Idea is its logical form. Logically, Schopenhauer explains, the Idea is analyzed as "object-for-a-subject" (WWR Vol. 1, 175). The most original and universal form applying to all phenomena is that of object-for-subject. In fact, Schopenhauer says, this is the most general meaning of representation. Ideas function as universal properties adhering to all phenomena, but their logical form is simply object-for-subject. They cannot be directly known through experience because they are universal in form, while experience always conditions its content as particular. Therefore Ideas are not objects of knowledge, but they are inferred as the first grade of objectivity, given the logical constraint that in order for representation to come out of pure formlessness and be perceived by individual consciousness, it must first in all respects, universally, become object-for-subject. Schopenhauer writes:

The particular thing, appearing in accordance with the principle of sufficient reason, is therefore only an indirect objectification of the thing-in-itself (which is the will). Between it and the thing-in-itself the Idea stands as the only direct objectivity of the will, since it has not assumed any other form peculiar to knowledge as such, except that of representation in general, i.e., that of being object for a subject. Therefore, [the Idea] alone is the most adequate objectivity

possible of the will or of the thing-in-itself; indeed it is even the whole thing-in-itself, only under the form of the representation. (WWR Vol. 1, 175)

From Schopenhauer's mention here of the principle of sufficient reason, we can, for clarity's sake, arrive at the logical meaning of the Idea from the opposite direction. If we take a particular phenomenon and abstract it from its conditioning under the principle of sufficient reason—that is, if we remove space, time and causality from a particular object of knowledge—we find that the only logical form remaining is pure representation, pure object-for-a-subject. For this reason, Schopenhauer says that Ideas mediate between the formlessness of the will-in-itself and the particularity of objects known by subjects.

But the aesthetic experience constitutes an exception to this scenario. In the aesthetic mode of contemplation, the subject fixes its gaze upon one object alone. The intensity of this gaze results in the object becoming, for the subject, the only representation with which the subject's will is concerned. The causal network surrounding the object and relating it to the individual's will-to-live fades away for the subject. Schopenhauer explains: "[The subject] no longer consider[s] the where, the when, the why, and the whither in things, but simply and solely the what" (WWR Vol. 1, 178). Space, time, and causality are no longer important to the subject who maintains a fixed gaze upon one object, for here the subject's will is no longer considering the object as among other objects competing for survival. The what of the object fills the subject and becomes for the subject the entirety of the world. In a sense, the subject forgets itself in the object. Once the subject's concern for the causal network in the external

world is lost, the subject, in a real sense, falls out from under the form of the principle of sufficient reason. In this way, the subject loses its form inherent in its embodiment, and since embodiment is equal to individuality and to having an individual will, the subject forgets these also. The subject has lost all its formal, phenomenal particularity and has thus become a pure subject, an Ideal subject. We said earlier that an individual cannot know Ideas, but here, in the mode of aesthetic contemplation, the subject has lost its individuality. "[The subject] is a pure will-less, painless, timeless *subject of knowledge*" says Schopenhauer (WWR. Vol. 1, 179). The object has also lost its particularity and has become an Idea. Hence the subject comes to know the Idea of the object, i.e., the object's universal form. Moreover, as a pure subject, it acts as a mirror of the Idea of the object and both become equal to each other (WWR Vol. 1, 180). Knowledge here is no longer subordinate to will because both subject and object have become will; but this final point needs further explanation.

Schopenhauer takes pains to explain how in the aesthetic mode of contemplation the subject and object both become will. To see how this identification of subject and object occurs in will we must reiterate and clarify the exact process by which will-in-itself becomes a particular known to an individual. As mentioned above, Idea is the adequate objectification of the in-itself of Will, or, as we said, Idea fully contains will-in-itself. However, Idea is Will under the form of its first grade of objectivity, representation. Representation has the form of subject and object in equal proportion to each other, for that is the logical meaning of representation. This is why

Schopenhauer says then that subject and object are "of entirely equal weight" (WWR Vol. 1, 180) in the Idea. Now recall that Idea becomes further objectified as it becomes particularized and pluralized under the form of the principle of sufficient reason, and these particulars are knowledge for individuals as such. Idea inadequately objectifies the in-itself of Will, but the principle of sufficient reason distorts the pure objectivity of Idea in that both the particular and the individual inadequately objectify the in-itself of Will. It is important to recognize that the in-itself of Will is at all these stages equally present but differentially formed. Will is one and the same in both the contemplated object and in the individual contemplator. Schopenhauer states: "Therefore in themselves these two [contemplated and contemplator] are not different; for in themselves they are will that here knows itself" (WWR Vol. 1, 180). Now, if we recall that when the subject attends to just one object, both become for each other released from the principle of sufficient reason, then we see how they both rise to the level of Idea where the in-itself of Will is completely present in the form of the equality of subject and object. The subject and object are thus released from their individuality and, in a sense, released from will as embodiment (hence Schopenhauer's claim that the aesthetic contemplator is "will-less"), but they are also unified in the in-itself of Will at its grade of pure objectivity. The important thing to remember, as we proceed to consider Schopenhauer's claims about music, is that the aesthetically contemplated object gives to the subject the in-itself of Will under the form of representation.

2.2 The Difference between Genius and Madness

Genius and madness must be distinguished for Schopenhauer. The artistic genius is the individual whose imagination has the power to soar above the level of knowledge governed by the principle of sufficient reason. With the imagination the genius takes up the object—"plucks [it] from the stream of the world's course" (WWR, Vol.1, 185)—and observes it with extraordinary intensity such that he sees through its particularity and raises it to the level of its Idea. Schopenhauer writes: "Thus the imagination extends the mental horizon of the genius beyond the objects that actually present themselves to his person" (WWR, Vol.1, 186-7). The extension of the genius' mental horizon brings the subject and object, i.e., artist and phenomenon, beyond the realm of the principle of sufficient reason and gives a vision of the Idea to the artist (WWR, Vol.1, 184-5). The work of art is the genius' reproduction of his knowledge of the Idea. This knowledge is not in service to Will since it is attained when the genius is beyond his corporeal, Will-driven enslavement to the principle of sufficient reason. Instead, the knowledge displayed in the work of art is divested of the genius' concern. He is disinterested in it because he is momentarily free from will, the originator of his interests. But this is not to say that the work of art is of no value. It gives to the genius an interval of respite, a moment of peace, in the midst of his frantic, practical fight for survival.

However, the imagination can serve another lesser function in this respect; it is not necessarily part of the genius' encounter with Ideas. Schopenhauer explains that when faced with the burden of survival we can use the imagination to construct

congenial, selfish fantasies in order to hide from the external world (WWR. Vol.1, 187). A person who too often practises such habits will become unfit for real life because he knows only the relations of phantasms rather than the relations of particular representations of Ideas. Such a person can indeed record the travels of his imagination, and the products appear novel and creative, but this is not the peace-conferring knowledge of Idea, rather it is mere a illusion which detaches the subject from particular representations and thus further distances him from knowledge of Ideas. The work of art produced by this lesser imagination fails to be insightful and creative because it does not reveal the Will surging behind all phenomena. Instead of helping us get free from our individuality by bringing us closer to the absolute anti-individual will-in-itself, as does good art, this egocentric art affirms the idiosyncrasy our individuality and therefore increases our suffering.

The madman is distinct from this egocentric use of the imagination. To prepare for his discussion of madness, Schopenhauer first clarifies a manner in which people confuse genius with madness. When the genius is performing an act of pure perception, he is in ever closer contact with the formless, irrational will-in-itself. For this reason, "men of genius are often subject to violent emotion and irrational passions" (WWR. Vol.1, 190) explains Schopenhauer. But this does not mean that the genius somehow possesses a weak faculty of reason, and neither can we say that he has an extraordinary faculty of reason; it is his imagination which is extraordinary, as we have said. The genius appears mad because of the irrational nature of the pure object which he grasps.

The impression of the Idea is so volatile, being immediately related to formless will-in-itself, that it carries the genius away into irrational behaviour. Schopenhauer tells of how he has indeed encountered, in lunatic asylums, madmen who were also men of genius; but in each case, the genius quality is present in spite of the madness rather than as a result of it (WWR. Vol.1, 191). Men of genius are recognized because they "have furnished works that have retained through all time an enduring value for mankind" (WWR. Vol.1,191). Their works have given us glimpses of Ideas so that we can bypass the torment of life through recognizing the nothingness of our individuality in face of will-in-itself.

As for madness, Schopenhauer says that it is a pathology wherein one's thoughts are distorted. Many of the madman's faculties, such as perception, reason and understanding, function more or less correctly, but it is his organization of thought which is crimped in one way or another. For example, the madman can often talk, understand, and draw very accurate conclusions about the immediately present, but with respect to the distant past, he is in error. Madness especially concerns memory, says Schopenhauer. The madman's memory is not completely failed, but it has gaps and fixations which do not correspond to his actual history. Time and again his perception, though accurate, becomes falsely mixed with memories which suddenly take on the veneer of present reality. Generally, the madman's conception of the passage of time is disorganized.

Schopenhauer proposes that nature brings about madness in some cases because a person suffers from a terrible event of such shock that the memory of it cannot be passed over. The impact of the shocking memory exerts itself such that the sufferer's conception of history becomes tethered to the past, though the trauma itself may remain cloaked in a memory gap. Nature allows the person a certain gap in his or her memory so that the pain of the trauma is relieved. For this reason we see that the madman cannot always grasp the causal connection between objects in the world. In this sense he operates without the principle of sufficient reason. And in this sense he may appear like the genius. But the genius has moved beyond the principle of sufficient reason by a virtuous exercise of his imagination, whereas the madman has lost touch with the world because of a traumatic experience of such intensity that it cannot be dealt with in a normal healing process.

2.3 Music Copies Will-in-itself

We now have before us a sketch of (1) Schopenhauer's system, (2) of his theory of aesthetic contemplation, and (3) of his distinction between the madness and genius. We move now to look at how music stands out among the arts.

Whereas most works of art objectify Ideas, which are in turn the objectification of will-in-itself, music directly objectifies will-in-itself. This is to say, both music and Idea stand in a direct relation to the will-in-itself. Painting, poetry, architecture, sculpture, literature, dance—all of these are phenomena intended by the artist as reproductions of Ideas. They take an object and try to display its universal truth. For example, painting

unveils the universal truths of light governing the appearance of physical objects; poetry and literature lay bare the universal nature of human action and thought; architecture deals with inorganic matter locked in the universal struggle between rigidity and gravity; sculpture exhibits the shape of matter in vegetable and animal bodies; and dance unfurls the universal movements of bodies in space and time. But when we think of music, it becomes very difficult to imagine what phenomena it reproduces in ideal form. There does not seem to be a particular object, the idea of which music displays. "In [music] we do not recognize the copy, the repetition, of any idea of the inner nature of the world" (WWR. Vol.1, 256). However, everyone recognizes the effect of music and understands its meaning in his innermost being. Music is a universal language in this respect, "whose distinctness surpasses even that of the world of perception itself" (WWR. Vol.1, 256). Yet its relation to the phenomenal world is very obscure, for it does not seem to attend to any particular perceived object.

In view of this, Schopenhauer explains that music must somehow copy the in-itself of Will, but he admits that there is a difficulty in this:

I recognize [...] that it is impossible to demonstrate this explanation, for it assumes and establishes a relation of music as a representation to that of which its essence can never be representation, and claims to regard music as the copy of an original that can itself never be represented. (WWR. Vol.1, 257)

Ideas hold the in-itself of Will under the form of object for subject, of representation, and are thus able to mediate between the absolutely irrational and the conscious, rational reception of phenomena. But music is here explained as a phenomenon available to consciousness without the mediating form of representation. The difficulty

for Schopenhauer is how to account for the structure of music when that which music represents is unstructured.

Schopenhauer says that, although we cannot explain how music represents the in-itself of Will, we can see a kind of evidence of this if we consider the analogous relationship between the structure of the world and the structure of music. His idea is that, since Will gives rise to both music and the world as representation, then we should expect to see a convergence between the structure of the two. Each grade of objectivity in Will's passage from in-itself through to particular visible phenomena has a certain character and structure, and music seems to display these same characters and structures in its own make up. For example, "in the deepest tones of harmony, in the ground-bass," Schopenhauer sees "the lowest grades of will's objectification, inorganic nature and the mass of the planet" (WWR. Vol. 1, 258). The high notes are intoned in flourishes, runs, and sustained notes, none of which lasts for long but quickly transitions into new flourishes, runs, and sustained notes. In this way, high notes seem to be analogous to the transience of particular visible phenomena moving in and out of existence in the world of perception though remaining in constant dependence on deep ideas in order to be intelligible.

To see Schopenhauer's point it will be helpful know something about the harmonic series. The bass note actually sounds, within itself, a certain stack, so to speak, of pitches which extends upward in a pattern of mathematical ratios known as the harmonic series. Schopenhauer remarks that this pattern necessarily flows out of

the bass note and determines a specific set of pitches which can harmonize with the bass note. The higher harmonizing pitches are in a very real sense determined by the resonant properties of the bass note. Schopenhauer likens this to the way Ideas determine the structure of visible phenomena which make up the world. Further, he mentions that departure from the arithmetical perfection of the harmonic series, that is, the use of a temperament (i.e., a tuning system) which cannot reproduce mathematically pure intervals, is analogous to the "departure of an individual from the type of the species" (WWR. Vol. 1, 258-9). The harmonic series produced by a particular bass note is like a species of individuals. But when many bass notes are held together in one tuning system, the members of their respective harmonic series overlap and/or conflict. This is similar to how two species of animals have similarities (both fish and dogs have eyes and tails) but are yet different (they do not share gills or fur).

Schopenhauer draws countless more parallels between the structure of music and the structure of the world as representation (WWR Vol. 1. 258-61). He is able to describe how nearly every aspect of the structure of music has an analogue in the various grades of Will's objectification. But, importantly, we are not to understand that music represents the world as representation. These are structural analogues and not idea-copy relationships. Schopenhauer explains:

But we must never forget when referring to all the analogies [...] that music has no direct relation to them, but only an indirect one; for it never expresses the phenomenon, but only the inner nature, the in-itself, of every phenomenon, the will itself. (WWR Vol. 1. 261)

The distinction he is making here is nuanced and draws upon everything we have said so far. The world as representation is the direct object of all other arts, but it is not at all the object of music. The other arts express the idea of their object, but the inner nature of the Idea remains hidden, for it is the unintelligible in-itself of Will. Art does indeed display Will in the Idea, but this is Will, as we have said, under the form of representation. The inner nature of the Idea, the absolute irrational, remains hidden. But music bypasses the Idea and directly mirrors the in-itself of Will. Therefore, in the same way that Ideas, according to Will, unfold an arrangement of particulars, so too music unfolds its various elements. If we consider one analogous part of the structure of both music and the world, for example the bass notes compared to the mass of the planet, we see that the musical part contains the in-itself of the world's part, since music is flowing directly out of Will, which is the in-itself of the world. So music does not express "this or that particular and definite pleasure, this or that affliction, pain, sorrow, horror, gaiety, merriment, or peace of mind, but joy, pain, sorrow, horror, gaiety merriment, peace of mind themselves [...]" (WWR Vol. 1, 261).

2.4 The Composer and the Somnambulist

In a curious passage Schopenhauer seems to suggest that, within the overall structure of music, the composer can be shown to have an analogue in the world (in the same way that he discusses all the other structural analogues). The magnetic somnambulist has slipped out of consciousness and into connection with the irrational essence of the world, such that she can give information about things that, once awake,

her faculty of reason cannot understand. Likewise, the composer encounters the irrational and receives his inspiration. Typically, when artists approach the Idea, their individuality fades away. Schopenhauer says that the man, the individual, is in a certain sense other than the artist he becomes. Just as the somnambulist is entirely separate from her conscious life, so too, Schopenhauer says that "in the composer, more than in any other artist, the man is entirely separate and distinct from the artist" (WWR Vol. 1, 260). We see that there is a worldly analogue, the somnambulist, but we do not see any better what Schopenhauer thinks is the source of the structure of the musical work. He gives us an analogy without an explanation. It remains a mystery how the irrational Will translates through the composer into rationally structured music, that is, music which is intelligible in the world of perception. The creative process of the composer results in a novel particular knowledge for the individual, but where does the structure come from?

From all that Schopenhauer has said, we see that music, and no less the genius music composer, occupy a very strange place in the world. Music is said to copy the will-in-itself, but what then can we conclude about the composer? Most artists, as we learned from Schopenhauer, copy the Idea. And this seems, though difficult to achieve, a reasonable goal given that the Idea is representable. But the object of musical contemplation is wholly unrepresentable. How, then, does the composer channel the raw, unformed Will?

Schopenhauer is aware of this conundrum associated with his claim that music copies will-in-itself. The problem is either with his metaphysics or with his theory of

music. We can ask whether in fact Will is behind all phenomena, or, we can ask whether in fact music imitates the ontological substratum. Schopenhauer is committed to his claim that music imitates Will and that Will is the ontological principle, even though this theory does not ground the articulate distinctions in the structure of music. Moreover, it could be argued that postulating Will also fails to ground the articulate distinctions in the world. (I speak more to this in the following chapter.)

In the next chapter it becomes clear Murdoch's ethics of attention, because it describes art as a process of drawing limited visions of the world, allows us to think of music as a limited vision of the ontological structure of the world. This way of thinking about music is further corroborated by Lewis Rowell's argument for how music is bound up with the ontological vision of its particular culture. Rowell presents evidence that suggests that a particular culture's ontology shapes its music theory. From Rowell's conclusion I argue that Pythagoras and Schopenhauer were indeed accurate when they remarked how music and ontology are closely related; however, we cannot, as they do, assume that a given musical representation of ontological structure is absolute or, if you will, True. In the following chapter, then, I will argue that music represents an ontological vision of the world but not the ontological structure of the world per se. As we will see, in Iris Murdoch's terms, music produces a limited whole, that is, a limited vision of the world.

Chapter Three

Schopenhauer, Iris Murdoch, and the Sovereignty of Music

In this chapter I work with Iris Murdoch's moral philosophy to establish a framework for discussing the ethical significance of Western music. First, in light of Murdoch's special interest in Schopenhauer, I discuss how the work of art encourages selfless attention to the real by confronting us with a conception of the world which differs from our own. The different conception which art affords indicates to us that our thinking is limited and that it ought to be stretched to contain more awareness of others. Not only art, but philosophy and religious practise also give conceptions of the world which challenge our ego-centric tendencies and promote outward attention. Next, I argue that Murdoch's *The Sovereignty of Good* can be understood as a corrective work on the notion of prayer as petition to a personal God. Her ethical philosophy is atheistic but it retains a God-like object, the real, and a prayer-like practise, attention. I present these aspects of Murdoch's thought in order to point out the ontological structure of her ethics of attention, namely that there is a mind-independent real to which thought aspires and against which ego-centric tendencies are interrupted. I conclude with a discussion of how music functions as a mode of attention. That is, music, as Pythagoras and Schopenhauer thought, envisions what the world is like, but, as we learn from Murdoch, this envisioning is limited and, for that reason, it is capable of promoting the kind of self-limitation or selflessness necessary for ethical goodness.

3.1 Murdoch's Ethics of Attention and Schopenhauer's Metaphysics

In the *Sovereignty of Good* (hereafter, *Sovereignty*), Murdoch argues that art teaches us how to be good because it trains us to pay attention not so much to our self as to the world in which our self participates. (She presupposes that selflessness is good.) She uses the concept of attention, borrowed from Simone Weil, to indicate a striving to see the mind-independent real as it is rather than as it appears in our selfish, reassuring, fantastic re-constructions of the world. The work of art, when it gives us a conception of the world which differs from our own, causes us to wonder what the world is truly like. Our wondering what the world is truly like (1) assumes that there is a real which is independent of, yet related to, our thinking, and (2) admits that we may be trapped in illusion. Art initiates the ethically good life because it invites us to examine and revise our conception of the real in order better to see and relate to others.

Attention in this sense differs from predatory or obsessive focus because, in these kinds of gazing, the self is only apparently, but not in fact, concerned with the mind-independent world; rather, the predator is in fact concerned with how the phenomena in question might benefit the self. Such a gaze is not an act of attention. Attention, at least in the way Murdoch wishes to use the word, is therefore analytically compassionate. That is to say, an act of attention is by definition compassionate because it involves self-limitation in the face of the mind-independent real, and this self-limiting activity makes space for, i.e., shows compassion towards, the ethically encountered other.

For example, in *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* (hereafter *Metaphysics*),

Murdoch discusses how literature has a particularly powerful capacity to promote moral reflection because it is discursive. She writes:

Art, especially literature, has in the past instinctively operated as a form, the most profound generally accessible form, of moral reflection, being in this respect close to ordinary life which is saturated with moral reflection.
(*Metaphysics* 89)

And elsewhere, she explicitly gives literature primary status with respect to moral reflection:

For both the collective and the individual salvation of the human race, art is doubtless more important than philosophy, and literature most important of all.
(*Sovereignty* 76)

Her claim that ordinary life is saturated with moral reflection can be explained by pointing out that we instinctively fit events into a story and then evaluate the truth and moral lesson of the story. Literature is morally significant because it enlivens this story-making and reflective habit. Morally good literature, according to Murdoch, is that which displays our common, reassuring narratives in disjointed and porous form such that our ego-centric conception of the world is ruptured or stretched to contain more awareness of others. Good literature discursively destabilizes our conception of the world and accelerates our readiness to question our own narrative. Murdoch writes:

The appreciation of beauty in art or nature is [...] a completely adequate entry into (and not just analogy of) the good life, since it is the checking of selfishness in the interest of seeing the real. (*Sovereignty* 65)

Murdoch is interested in Schopenhauer's method for attaining this metaphysical knowledge. Schopenhauer gives the following common definition of metaphysics:

By metaphysics I understand all so-called knowledge that goes beyond the possibility of experience, and so beyond nature or the given phenomenal appearance of things, in order to give information about that by which, in some sense or other, this experience of nature is conditioned [...].⁸ (WWR, Vol. 2, 164)

He is akin to empiricists in this respect because he suggests that we must not use rational, *a priori* concepts (e.g., space, time, and causality) but rather, we must look closely at the phenomenal world itself. We must attempt to peer into the world of experience and try to see what principle seems common to all phenomena. We see his commitment to the empirical or experiential way to metaphysics when he writes, "the most complete knowledge of nature possible is the corrected statement of the problem of metaphysics" (WWR, Vol. 2, 178). The world of experience is like a riddle, he says, and the 'answer' is a metaphysical principle which helps the seemingly unrelated facts logically to adhere together. We cannot solve the riddle by appealing to *a priori* concepts because these take us away from the statement of the problem, i.e., the world of seemingly unrelated facts. Metaphysical knowledge, then, is gained by looking into the phenomenal world rather than by rising above it through *a priori* abstractions. (WWR, Vol. 2, 180-1)

What interests Murdoch about Schopenhauer's approach to metaphysics is the way it encourages attention to the world.⁹ As mentioned above, Murdoch borrows the notion of attention from Simone Weil. She then draws an interesting parallel between Weil and Schopenhauer. For Weil, morality, i.e., being good, consists not in conforming

⁸ To be sure, Schopenhauer's ethics suggests that we dismiss the world as valueless and meaningless. But, at least in his approach to metaphysics, he calls us to pay attention to experience; inner experience, to be precise.

one's will to a set of obligations but in truthfully seeing one's other. When we attend to the external world, the natural result is "a decrease in egoism through an increased sense of the reality, primarily of course other people, but also other things" (*Metaphysics* 52). Here it is clear that attention is somehow analytically compassionate in that it naturally leads to a decrease in egoism. Moreover, since morality is here described as a kind of vision rather than an act or movement, the agent's will, which is the central concept in so much moral philosophy, is sidelined by thinking of morality as attention. For Weil, morality is far more than a calculated use of our will, i.e., our freedom or reason, in an effort to coordinate our body with the requirements of duty (as in Kantian ethics).

This way of thinking, Murdoch claims, is in line with Schopenhauer's ethics to the extent that it involves a denial of the will. To grasp this we must recall that Will, in Schopenhauer's system, is the root of our egoistic drive. The cosmic Will operates in the phenomenal realm under the form of will-to-live. Will-to-live is our felt drive toward self-preservation at all cost. Morality begins once we are able to reduce this egoistic impulse and take up a compassionate stance toward others. This denial of will-to-live has a certain similarity to Weil's assertion that morality begins with attention and not movement, in that for both Schopenhauer and Weil, morality is a self-less, i.e., will-less, regard for the other.³⁰

³⁰ It is assumed that this purified vision of course leads a purification of action. "By the time the moment of choice has arrived the quality of attention has probably determined the nature of the act" (*Sovereignty* 67).

Murdoch understands Schopenhauer's ethics as aligned with Kant's placement of the kingdom of virtues beyond this world. For Murdoch, both Kant and Schopenhauer break through to the realization that ethics is otherworldly. The good person, for Schopenhauer, is the one who has denied the will and has thus moved outside the Will-determined, phenomenal world. Furthermore, the way that Schopenhauer sets morality outside of the phenomenal world agrees with Murdoch's impulse to think of moral striving as an infinite process of getting closer and closer to metaphysical truth through a gradual unselfing achieved through a habit of attention. Paying attention to the world moves us outside its limit. (I discuss this in more detail below.)

To be clear, the link between Murdoch and Schopenhauer is the fact that they both think of truth not as some abstract transcendent object, but as an immanent, inner-worldly aspect of that which we perceive. This inner truth of the world is transcendent in that it always extends beyond the limit of our understanding (because the phenomenal world is inexhaustibly complex), but it is not transcendent in the sense of being outside the phenomenal world. And the good person is the one who is always working better to see this immanent, inexhaustible truth. Such a person is always making space for, i.e., being compassionate towards, the other.

However, Murdoch argues that Schopenhauer's system ultimately fails because he does not give us an adequate account of duty. She finds Schopenhauer very helpful with his notion of compassion and with his teaching about metaphysics as the process of attention, but we are never given an adequate explanation of why we ought to be

compassionate: "Schopenhauer's chief stumbling block is his concept of Will as fundamental, all determining and (qua neutrally relentless) evil" (Metaphysics 65). There is no fundamental ground or obligation for compassion in Schopenhauer's system because the ground of all things is selfishness, will-to-live. In order to be compassionate, we must deny the will-to-live, but we are never obliged to be compassionate.

Murdoch's point against Schopenhauer raises the same concern with her ethics of attention. Can we find an adequate notion of duty in an ethics of attention? What aspect of attention obliges us to be compassionate toward the other? We could perhaps explain the absence of a conception of duty in Murdoch's ethics seems by referring to her definition of attention as a self-less regard for the other. It seems that attention, in the true sense of being in fact outwardly attentive, is analytically compassionate. Attention simply is compassion. But this of course begs the question. We are left with the question: What obliges us to pay attention to others? I raise this problem with Murdoch's ethics here to point out that she may be closer to Schopenhauer than she would wish. However, it is not within the scope of this thesis to pursue a conception of duty since we are concerned with the notion of attention and how music may function as a mode of attention rather than with establishing a fully consistent ethical theory.

There is, however, somewhat of a difference between Murdoch and Schopenhauer. When Murdoch says "Good, not will, is transcendent" (Sovereignty 69), she is responding to the behaviourist/existentialist neo-Kantian ethicists of her day, but,

in the context of this thesis, we could equally read her epigram as responding to Schopenhauer. For Schopenhauer, when we look into the world to see the immanently 'transcendent' truth, to solve the riddle, we see Will: an all-powerful determining force which energizes the phenomenal world with a relentless impulse—equally felt by the inorganic, the organic, and the ideal—to self-preservation. For Murdoch, however, when we look into the world we begin to experience the magnetic pull of an inexhaustible and thus indefinable property which continually draws us out of ego-centric striving and into increasingly harmonious, i.e., communicative, relations with others. This indefinable property is the Good. Of course, to be sure, we have not here defined the Good but have merely gestured toward it or described its effect. I say that the difference between Good and Will is only somewhat of a distinction between Murdoch and Schopenhauer because it remains clear that Good and Will are similarly abstract explanatory postulates. So, in this sense, Murdoch may be again more similar to Schopenhauer than she would like to think. In any case, the effect of the Good, as described by Murdoch, implies a realism which Murdoch finds to be the basis of sound ethical theory.

3.2 The Limited Whole and Thought's Tacit Ontology

The effect of the Good and the ontological structure within which such an effect is possible can be understood by considering the term 'limited whole'. A 'limited whole', for Murdoch, is simply a conception of the world such as an image, a discursive narrative, or a philosophical description of what the world is like. "Intellect is naturally

one-making", Murdoch writes (*Metaphysics* 1). We see only a part of the world but we instantly intuit a unified whole which we do not see. This is to say, we transform the parts of experience into members of a complete picture.¹¹ Such unities are limited in that we stand apart from them. When we think of an object as a unity, we give it a limit outside of which we stand as the thinker.

The work of art is an example of this three part interaction between a whole, its limit, and our thinking. The work of art is the object presented as though we are different from it. The limit is created when we give the object a fixed form in a medium—clay, stone, parchment, paint, prose, etc. The fixed form has a limit outside of which our thinking operates. This limit functions as a boundary beyond which we must remain, given that we are forced, by the work of art, to recognize that we are other than it. This is part of art's power to teach selflessness. Its limit is also the limit of our self. Murdoch explains:

It is important too that great art teaches us how real things can be looked at and loved without being seized and used, without being appropriated into the greedy organism of the self. This exercise of detachment is difficult and valuable [...]. (*Sovereignty* 65)

The good life, according to Murdoch, involves thinking of the world as a limited whole (*Metaphysics* 26-7). That is to say, the good person steps back from the world as though it has a limit beyond which we can stand. In approaching the world this way, we present it to ourselves as a whole so that we may think about it and evaluate our

¹¹ "The urge to prove that where we intuit unity there really is unity is a deep emotional motive to philosophy, to art, to thinking itself" (*Metaphysics* 1).

relationship to it. As soon as we think of the unlimited, we notice that it is a kind of vacuous, unthinkable object. The unlimited is that which is eternally beyond thought.

The great iconoclasts of the past have been those who break our limited wholes and show our borders to be unjust or untrue. They set up new icons, i.e., new limited wholes, which have new borders and increased explanatory potential. In contrast, Murdoch discusses a less honest kind of iconoclasm which occurs when, for example, structuralist and analytic philosophers tell us that unity is itself a unthinkable. Unity is unthinkable, they tell us, because each time we try to come to a conception of the world, the only thing we know is our language or our apparatus of thought. There is an insurmountable difference between our thinking and the world. The result is that our conceptions of the world are not composites of intrinsically related data but rather *ad hoc* relations which are not grounded in the true nature of the world. Murdoch dismisses this so-called profound critique of unity by pointing out that it is itself a claim about what the world is like and, therefore, it is also a one-making form of thought. For example, the critique of unity amounts to the claim: 'the world is such that we cannot think about it'. If this claim is to be taken seriously, it must be understood as a thought about what the world is like. But such thoughts are prohibited in the claim. Therefore, the claim contradicts itself. We cannot but make limited wholes.

As such, a limited whole is assumed and utilized in all thinking, and, furthermore, to recognize the limit is to recognize a mind-independent real, toward which thought aspires. Murdoch wants us to notice this important and, in a way, tacit ontology related

to the fact that all thinking presents the world as a limited whole. She turns again to quote Schopenhauer:

I therefore say that the solution of the riddle of the world must proceed from the understanding of the world itself; that thus the task of metaphysics is not to pass beyond the experience in which the world exists, but to understand it thoroughly because inner and outer experience is at any rate the principal source of all knowledge [...]. Yet this solution is only possible within certain limits which are inseparable from our finite nature, so that we attain to a right understanding of the world itself without reaching a final explanation of its existence. (Schopenhauer qtd. in *Metaphysics* 79)

In this passage, Schopenhauer first rehearses the aspect of his thought which we examined above, namely, that the object of metaphysics transcends the limit of our knowledge but is yet immanent with respect to the phenomenal world. The latter half of this quotation is, according to Murdoch, another important breakthrough. The fact of our finite nature means that when we do metaphysics we necessarily draw limited images of the solution of the riddle of the world. No matter our solution, we must remain open to revising it because the world itself is inexhaustible. It may at anytime demand that we revise our views. And the possibility of this demand is intrinsically related to our finitude. We make limited wholes because we are limited. Murdoch writes:

The ability thus to see (or feel) depends on keeping close to the reality of the world, accepting the facts and following the stream of life. [...] Within the 'limits' of our 'finite nature' we are able to feel or intuit the world as a whole, though not as a totally comprehended whole. (*Metaphysics* 79)

Schopenhauer's thinking is, according to Murdoch, ethically sound because it recognizes that the external world about which we wonder extends beyond our understanding. It is important to realize that this basic epistemological position assumes a realist ontology. To say that the external world goes beyond our understanding of course assumes that there is a world external to our thinking. The possibility remains that we are trapped in illusion, but the real can 'work' on us to reform and stretch our limited whole or, what Murdoch sometimes calls, our fantasy. The effect of the Good, as discussed above, is this working of the inexhaustible real to draw our attention outward. We call it Good because when our attention is outwardly directed and our conceptions are open to revision, we are receptive to building ethically mutual or respectful relationships with others.

3.3 Prayer and Religious Teaching as Modes of Attention

To further clarify what is meant by a mode of attention, it will be helpful to look at Murdoch's position on prayer and religious dogma, because these are a preoccupation of hers and because the *Sovereignty of Good* seems intent on preserving a certain theological structure to ethical discourse and practise.

According to Murdoch, prayer does not require belief in a personal God but rather a retreat into the "chamber of the soul" (*Metaphysics* 73). In fact, it can be argued that *The Sovereignty of Good* is a corrective work on the notion of prayer. In religious forms of morality, God is understood as the author of moral law and the person against whom moral offences are ultimately committed. In such a version of morality,

attention to God in the form of prayer is the unsewing which leads to harmonious relations. As the believer asks God for strength and grace, the self is left behind for the sake of an external reality. Interestingly, Murdoch develops an atheistic moral philosophy but she does not want to do away with the structure of the theistic morality.

First she corrects the thinking of prayer as a form of petition: "Prayer is properly not petition, but simply an attention to God which is a form of love" (Sovereignty 55). Next, she corrects the notion of God. Non-religious people can benefit from a prayer-like practice, she says, by reducing the idea of God to the following conceptual skeleton: *"a single perfect transcendent non-representable and necessarily real object of attention."* She continues: "[A]nd I shall go on to suggest that moral philosophy should attempt to retain a central concept which has all these characteristics" (Sovereignty 55, author's italics). Of course, this set of "characteristics" describes the Good as discussed above. The Good is "perfect" in that it is a property of reality which is nothing but itself; it is "transcendent" and "non-representable" because it is that property of the reality to extend beyond the limits of our finite understanding; and it is "necessarily real" in the sense that we assume its existence each time we reflect on the world or act in it. Murdoch suggests we think of God as a property of the world which ignites our outward interest and draws us out of egoistic tendencies. Attention is like prayer in that it is practised awareness of the beyond-ness or inexhaustibility of the world.

Elsewhere, Murdoch discusses of how religious teachings function as a mode of attention, and this gives us a good example of what we are looking for when we attempt

to say how music functions as a mode of attention. In *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, she discusses how Christianity sets up a powerful mythos (full of characters such as Christ as logos, Christ as Redeemer, the Trinity, the Prodigal Son, and the Good Samaritan) which functions as a conception of what the world is like and of how we are to operate within it (82). When religion consoles us, there is danger that it will thwart moral goodness by causing us to think of ourselves as righteous and complete. However, religion, she explains, can be an ethically sound mode of attention when it breaks us open and shows our dependency upon others. She writes:

Of course religion can console at any level, but it also contains a self-transcending imperative, a continuous iconoclastic urge to move beyond false consolation, suggesting a magnetic end-point where there is no more illusion, only truth, where consolation and explanation vanish. (*Metaphysics* 124)

We notice from this example that a mode of attention is any manner or medium by which we imagine what the world is like and, in consequence of our looking outward, are drawn into an infinite process of revising our thinking with respect to the real.

One of the major themes running through Murdoch's philosophy is the problem of fantasy or illusion. She discusses our ability to create self-consoling narratives in which we feature as significant heroes or unfortunate victims; both self-worship and self-pity can be forms of self-obsessive pride. These narratives create a layer of disunity between our self and the external world. They are fantastic borders which prevent us from seeing and thus being able to communicate and relate with others. Much of Murdoch's ethical philosophy teaches us to dismantle these fantasies.

However, there is an important nuance in Murdoch's prescription for fantasy-dismantling. We cannot, logically speaking, live without some grade of fantasy. There is always a layer of subjective preference which clouds our true vision of the other. In fact, our subjectivity is the condition of the possibility of our attempt to see the other. It is not the task of morality somehow to overcome this gap. Instead, what moral concepts do is set up a narrative in which we are aware of the gap and thus encouraged to notice those moments when our fantasy is becoming so strong that our relationships are suffering. Moral concepts, such as perfection, progress, love, justice, etc., encourage a subjective disposition which is anti-fantastic. Murdoch writes: "Moral concepts do not move about within a hard world set up by science and logic. They set up, for different purposes, a different world" (*Sovereignty* 28). They set up this different world for the purpose of making us aware that our conception of the other is limited. When thinking in the light of these concepts, we end up living in a kind of fantasy which is trying to undo itself for the sake of true and just vision of the other. "As soon as we begin to use words such as 'love' and 'justice' in characterizing [the moral agent], we introduce into our whole conceptual picture of her situation the idea of progress, that is, the idea of perfection" (*Sovereignty* 23). These ideas do not give us an unmediated vision of the other, but they call us to notice the mediation and attempt to peer through it.

In summary, Murdoch's position leaves us with the following ideas. We know that the world is both accessible to our thinking but also inexhaustibly beyond our current conception. Art, as well as religion and philosophy, produce limited conceptions

of the world so that we can think about what the world is like. These limited conceptions are necessary for thinking because, when we think the unlimited, its continuously unstable and expansive boundary leaves our judgments incomplete and inadequate to the object; this is to say, the unlimited, as an object, cannot be thought. We thus become art-makers, limit-drawers, in as much as we are thinkers. Ethically potent art is that which disrupts our current conception of the world to the end that we become more respectful and attentive to others and thus more capable of harmonious relations.

All this assumes that we participate in a relational ontology, i.e., a cosmos in which individuals and the structures by which individuals relate are real. Were I and my other ontologically detached, an ethics of attention would be futile because my peering beyond my fantasy logically could not attain a true or just vision of the other. Communication is impossible without some kind of relation. Moreover, it is the case that, in as much as we think about the world, we also assume that there is a world to which our thinking is related. Thus our thinking is either tacitly, or, for the realist, explicitly, committed to the relational ontology which undergirds Murdoch's ethics of attention.

3.4 Music as a Mode of Attention

In terms of music as a mode of attention, we must now ask: in what way does music create a limited whole? The difficulty in answering this question arises because up to this point we have looked at modes of attention which are primarily conceptual.

That is, philosophy, religious practise, and art such as poetry and literature all deal in concepts. In addition, visual art, since it represents the phenomenal world, which is always organized in our thoughts through an array of concepts, is also understood through concepts. Music, on the other hand, as I have stipulated in my introduction, does not represent the phenomenal world and does not, for that reason, communicate a conceptual vision of the world. Therefore, as a mode of attention, music differs greatly from the modes of attention which we have thus far outlined.

Another difficulty in saying how music is a mode of attention arises from the fact that it can be argued that music, rather than produce limited wholes, merely gives reflections to those limited wholes which have been produced through philosophy, through religion, and through other conceptual arts. If this is correct, music would not be a mode of attention capable of envisioning the world but rather a reactionary surface in which philosophical or religious conceptions of the world become mirrored. It is certainly the case that philosophical and religious shifts correspond with shifts in musical theory. The question is then whether these shifts are initiated in the conceptual modes of attention or in the music. In what follows, we will see that Lewis Rowell argues that the interplay of these cultural currents is mutual and that, even though a musical vision of the world corresponds to a culture's philosophical/ontological vision, music is still, in its own right, a vision of the ontological structure of the world; albeit, a non-conceptual, non-verbal, representation of that structure.

To be specific, the way music represents the world is unique: its structural properties, i.e., the principles of music theory, which are internal to the phenomena of music, are analogous to the structural properties of the world, i.e., the internal or ontological properties of the world.

To clarify this claim we must begin by drawing a distinction between sound and music. This distinction is analogous to the difference between nature and mind. Roughly speaking, we can say that nature gives rise to sound while mind gives rise to music. Sound is a general term which refers to that effect which is proportionate to the sense of hearing, whereas music is an arrangement of sound according to, or in opposition to, pre-given aesthetic parameters. Some music is sound which has been formed according to a rule of composition or according to a purpose, while other music seeks to break all previous rules in order to give rise to a new rule of composition or a new purpose. This latter kind of music, as it emerges, seems to have neither a rule of composition nor a purpose. However, it remains in dialogue with previous rules of composition and it remains purposeful to the extent that it aims to display a new rule of composition. Therefore, whether iconic or experimental, music is recognized as music because it is composed of purposefully ordered sound.

We may be concerned that this is an anthropocentric definition of music. Cannot nature give us music? We may want to broaden the definition by arguing that that bird song, for example, is music; and it would be perhaps true to say this. But to say that bird song is music is to say that it seems to display a high level of organization, compared to,

for example, the roar of a waterfall or the rush of the wind. The 'musical-ness' of a sound is its level of organization according to a rule of composition or according to a purpose. The highest example we know of organized sound is speech and, next to that, music. Bird song seems music-like to our ear to the extent that its quality serves the purpose of ensuring survival the composer, i.e., the bird. For example, bird song serves biological purposes such as attracting a mate, delineating territory, establishing social relations, etc. From this observation, we can say that component sounds in bird song are more purposefully held together than the sounds coming from a waterfall. Human organization of sound is of course more complex and, in the case of certain avant-garde or experimental music, it can even serve the purpose of serving no purpose. But what makes such an arrangement of sound recognizable as music is that it is purposefully ordered.

This distinction between sound and music is admittedly contentious. Another possible way of broadening the definition of music is to think of a case when someone accidentally produces ordered sounds. For example, we can imagine an improbable though nonetheless possible case in which a person falls against a piano and accidentally plays a major chord. The fact that we would recognize the chord as an ordered arrangement of pitches that is accidentally produced means that this is an example of purposeless ordered sound. Had the chord been played intentionally, we would call it music. Why is it not music simply because the production is accidental? Our definition of music as purposefully ordered sound is preserved if we say that the accidental

production of ordered sound is just that, accidental. It is not music. With this move we see that our definition of music is a kind of stipulation rather than an argued case. Keep in mind that we are trying to consider music as a mode of attention, and acts of attention purposefully develop conceptions of the world. We aim here to examine those constructions of sound which are reflections of purposeful (philosophical and religious) attempts to know the world. Therefore, it is admissible and fruitful to stipulate that music is purposefully ordered sound. Here we have a clear target for our inquiry. A better way to phrase our question is: how does purposefully ordered sound function as a mode of attention?

The distinction between Western and Eastern music sheds light on how we conceptualize the world through purposefully ordered sound. Musicologist and philosopher of music Lewis Rowell, in his paper "The Idea of Music in India and the Ancient West", studies this distinction because he wishes to consider music as an idea. He explains that various attempts have been made to say what music is or to say what constitutes musical sound. People typically approach this problem from either a phenomenological or a psychological perspective. We describe the character of sounds which appear as music, or we describe the brain functions which operate in response to musical sound. Both these approaches give us universally valid descriptions of music but they do not allow us to be specific about the way different cultures express or enshrine particular conceptions of the world through music theory and practise. Rowell explains:

Music, whatever else it may be considered at any one time or place, is – more than anything else – an idea: surely one of the most profound, ancient, complex,

and sensitive products of the human mind. The idea is, in a sense, a cultural achievement; it is what we make it. The only reason why we seem at times to agree on music as a certain phenomenon or collection of phenomena is because we share so many cultural assumptions. (323)

He goes on to point out that this definition of music opens a broad field of enquiry.

From this approach we can look at how characteristics of a given culture influence its aesthetic parameters, i.e., the rules of composition, for musical sound. That is, we can study how different cultures, when they purposefully order sound into musical form, use different ordering rules based on their culture's underlying ontological presuppositions.

Rowell is helpful in the context of relating music to Iris Murdoch's ethics of attention because he explains how Western and Eastern music are not simply two ideals for the pleasing arrangements of sound, but are in fact different visions of what the world is like. Each music theory manifests an ontological theory. Or, we may put it this way: music theory is a conception of what the world is like. He helps us see how ontology can be pictured through sound.

Let us look at the characteristic features of Western and Eastern music which Rowell outlines. In the Ancient West, the idea of harmony was far-reaching. It connoted the fitting together of all differences into a rationally ordered whole. Opposing forces were thought to stand in a balanced, proportional relation to one another. It is certain from ancient sources that the idea of cosmic harmony influenced the development of musical practise, but we have no way of knowing what such Ancient music sounded like. In the history of Medieval Europe, however, where the Greek idea of harmony retained sway, we find more detailed description of musical sound. It is clear that the Greek

notion of harmony had a lasting influence on Western Medieval and subsequent music (Rowell 331). For example, Western music prizes the hierarchical structure of the harmonic series. The intervals between pitches are described using ratios which function in a over-arching system of interconnected rational patterns. Certain pitches are subordinated to others and certain intervals are prized over others. In this tradition, music becomes thought of as a system of discriminate yet interconnected pitches related in a rational whole. And this idea, this thinking of music, cashes out in a practical emphasis upon pure intervals such as the 5th, 4th and the 8th or Octave.

Eastern music, by which Rowell means Indian music, is informed not by the idea of *harmony* but by the idea of *nāda*. In distinction from the idea of *harmony*, *Nāda* connotes:

[...] the rise and discharge of vital, continuous, inner substance; born of mind, activated by heat energy, tracing a spiral pathway along the channels of the human body (passing from subtle, unmanifested sound to gross, manifested sound, and thereby acquiring definition and divisions), and finally emerging in the form of uttered syllables, pitches, and time durations, controlled by symbolic gestures that imply a distant origin in sacred ritual, and manifesting cosmic process – the process of continuous creation. (Rowell 328)

This ontological principle involves a continuous flow of a cosmic substance from deep within the human body, along the tubular channels of the body, and out into the articulate world as vocal sound. Such a principle influenced Indian music in several ways. The continuity of *nāda* is expressed in the continuous drone which accompanies Indian music. Also, the notion of the emergence of energy out through the mouth is expressed in how Indian music takes vocal sound production and quality to be a model

for instrumental sound production and quality. *Nōdo* is further captured by a preference for rhythmic and tonal relations which move in horizontal, cyclical patterns rather than toward vertical, hierarchical structures (Rowell 336).

Rowell is not simplistic in his claim that ideas influence music. He demonstrates how dominating ideology—the emphasis on *harmony* in the West and the emphasis on *nōdo* in the East—gradually shapes the aesthetic parameters for the purposeful ordering of sound. Rowell writes: “[W]hen we observe musical style developing and intensifying in directions consistent with long preexistent ideology [...], I think we are obliged to acknowledge the powerful role of ideas in the molding of musical style” (330). The harmonic series and its rationally distinguishable parts become emphasized and celebrated in Western music because they best represent the hierarchical vision of the cosmos held by Ancient Greek thought. On the other hand, the continuous flow and subtle shifting of sound which can be achieved by the voice becomes emphasized and celebrated in the East because it best represents *nōdo*, the levelling, indeterminate substance coursing below the phenomenal world.

As an aside, and in reference to Chapter Two above: Strangely, Schopenhauer claims that Western music, which celebrates distinctness of pitches and hierarchical harmonic structure, imitates Will, which is antithetical to distinct individuality and hierarchy. Eastern music remains consistent with Eastern thought in that each pitch merges with the continuous drone, just as, on the level of ontology, each individual merges the creative process of the universe (Pickstock 244). Western music, however,

celebrates the individuality of pitch through articulation and harmonic distinctions. Yet, for Schopenhauer, Western music is somehow imitative of the *nāda*-like principle, Will. He does not explain how Western can music becomes structured when its source is absolutely unstructured. In the same way, it can be argued that, for the same reason, Will is not an adequate ground for the individuality and hierarchy of the world of representation.

Rowell argues that certain properties of sound become emphasized in music because of dominant conceptions of the world or of the *cosmos* (332). But what concerns us is whether or not certain conceptions of the world become influential in our thinking as a result of the musical practise which surrounds us. We may state this question more specifically: is it the case that our listening to and practising of Western music causes us to think of the world as a rationally ordered whole in which individuals participate in a vast interconnected pattern similar to the harmonic series celebrated by Western music's aesthetic parameters? It may be difficult to establish a cause/effect relationship in which the direction of influence is from Western musical practise toward Western thinking. That is, it would be difficult to prove that music furnishes us with a particular ontological vision. However, we can see evidence that ontological vision and musical practise are intrinsically interconnected in that Western composers, in the wake of the deconstruction of Western ontological assumptions by what is rightly or wrongly called postmodernism, have dismantled modern and premodern harmonic practise. The music theory which manifested the modern and premodern ontology has become

deconstructed along with the ontological vision itself. Further, it seems likely to say that deconstructed music tilled the soil, so to speak, for deconstructed thought to permeate culture; when one hears Schoenberg, one cannot help but think about if and how the West's vision of the world is changing! Just as from Rowell we see that a culture's ontology forms a reflection of itself in music theory, we can also see how a particular music theory becomes aids in the broader conceptual deconstruction of an ontological vision. Western music and thought are clearly intertwined.

However, this does not mean that music composers consciously set out to envision or pay attention to the ontological structure of the world. What is interesting about music is that its theoretical or internal principles of organization, which gradually become codified alongside conceptual modes of attention such as philosophy and religion, are laden with ontological significance. My claim is not that music is a mode of attention in the sense that it is a conscious act of gazing intently at the world. Rather, music is a mode of attention in that, by virtue of its internal principles of organization, music re-presents, in a non-conceptual form, a culture's ontological apprehension of the world.

Conclusion

In this thesis I began by demonstrating how music has often been understood by philosophers as a representation of ontological structure. Pythagoras and Schopenhauer understood music to be a sensuous manifestation of abstract structure. Nevertheless, it is clear that music, on the level of the individual composition or performance, can also represent concrete phenomena. For example, a composer or a performer may stipulate that certain elements in the composition signify extra-musical phenomena. Wagner's 'Tristan Chord' and Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* are two better-known examples of this use of music to represent phenomenal reality. Whether music is mimetic in this phenomenal sense depends on the intentions of the composer.

However, in this thesis I also brought to light how, on the level of music theory, Western music is unavoidably bound up with the West's ontological vision because, according to Rowell, a culture's prevailing ontology gradually shapes the aesthetic parameters in music. The reason we say that Western music imitates or articulates Western ontology is because the rules which govern its ordering of sound are analogous to the Pythagorean ontological principles which held sway in Western thought while the principles of Western music theory were codified (Rowell 330-1).

Pythagoras and Schopenhauer both thought that music represented the ontological substratum. In a way, Rowell's research validates Pythagoras' and Schopenhauer's understanding of music because he shows how a culture's ontological

vision ends up expressed or mirrored in the structure of its music. However, by pointing out that a culture's ontological vision determines the structure of its music, Rowell suggests that music manifests cultural idiosyncrasies rather than the real itself. Western music is therefore a sound image of Western ontology.

Rowell's conclusion can be worked into a Murdochian ethical framework because he acknowledges that music and its concomitant ontology are limited to cultural context. That is to say, an ontological vision, being a philosophical conception of what the world is like, is a limited whole, and, if it becomes manifest in music, the musical version is also a limited whole. This precisely is how music functions as a mode of attention. It envisions, re-presents, or articulates ontological structure. It remains to consider how music, as a sound image of an ontological structure, promotes ethical interactions. What is the ethical effect, in Murdoch's terms, of audibly experiencing the principles of Western ontology?

In this thesis I have outlined a framework for answering this question. One can go further in the following way. If it be granted that Western music has a specific underlying ontological significance, and such music has a profound and powerful effect on its audience, then it may be argued that listening to Western music opens up, guides, and orients the audience toward a particular apprehension of reality. In this respect, Western music can be said to promote a certain disposition toward the world. It cultivates a specific sensibility or structure of feeling. The link between ontology and music, the claim that music represents ontological structure, implies that music is a

Murdochian mode of ethical attention in that the limit of the musical ontological vision implies the limit of the self, and this limit is the basis of ethical openness and compassion. The limit of the musical vision, like all other artistically mediated limited wholes, encourages ethical goodness by promoting our awareness of our own limit. But, unlike the other arts, music does this in a non-conceptual way. We do not conceptually know, when listening to music, that we are experiencing a particular sonorous pattern which is also an analogy for an ontology with a discrete limit. We sense the patterns and organizational principles operative in musical sound, and these represent ontological principles, but we do not therefore hear a conceptual treatise on ontology. For this reason, in order to map the ethical effect of music, we must map the effect of a non-conceptual yet formative encounter with ordered sound. It must be asked whether Music delivers an ethical reformation of the self; it must be asked whether music orients us towards the world in a particular way. And it must be stressed that this does not happen consciously or in terms of a conceptual-linguistic mode of attention. Instead (and here is the limit this current thesis), we must study how music subtly, unconsciously, in-forms us with a sense of what the world is like and of how we ought to relate to others.

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