2.1 The ontology of music

We encounter and experience music in manifold ways. The diversity of this experience raises the question in which respect we are dealing with a unified phenomenon. After all, what-if anything-unifies such diverse phenomena as a Wagner Opera, a pop song, a synthesized polyphonic ring-tone or the film music-come sound effect illustrating Hitchcock’s film “Psycho”? Can they indeed all be classified as music? Do they share more than the most general and seemingly trivial characteristics of sounding structures?

In addition we wonder about our musical encounter and activity itself. We listen to music in elevators, concert halls, surgeries and on electronic media. We play music and some invent and write it. We sing in the shower and drum on the kitchen table. What do we do when we make, play, hear and remember music? What kind of activity is musical activity?

In the first instance we seem to be confronted with music as an aesthetic phenomenon. Thinking of the diverse examples of music and musical activity we may encounter immediate perplexity where the realm of music really commences and what it really contains. The examples trigger the aesthetic puzzle what is mere sound and what distinguishes noise from music. In some cases philosophers discuss music even in the context of silence. Are the four minutes and thirty-three seconds of silence which encompass John Caige’s notorious 4’33” to be included among the musical works? What do we refer to when we speak about music? To be sure, we have in mind a realm of aesthetic sounding objects and of a specific activity of listening and making music. But the diversity of music and musical engagement raises the suspicion that musical objects, music making and listening to music inhabit and engage very diverse strata of ontology. Our suspicion contrasts starkly with our confidence with which we imply a shared and particular commonality (arguably with some considerable disagreement at times) in our references to various types of sound as music. We have no obvious difficulty applying the attribute “musical” to people, sounds, human potential, attitude and entire sounding structures. What underlying phenomenon makes us able to attach this qualification? What kind of reference do we have in mind with this qualification? What type of relationship with the world do we presume in this assignment?

While we may wonder what music and musical activity are, we readily acknowledge that sounds are transformed and translated into contexts in which they assume diverse aesthetic significance. Under certain circumstances any sounding item can become music in a different sense. To take the most extreme cases: The melodic and harmonic material of the polyphonic ring-tone of the “Torreador’s March” is music when we

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7 “My thoughts”–said the wanderer to his shadow–“shall indicate to me where I stand: but they are not to betray to me where I will go. I love the unknown of the future and do not wish to perish because of impatience or because of the taste of promised things”

8 Thom, 206.
hear it in the original setting of Bizet’s opera. The argument starts with its transformation and with its synthesis to a signal. What would it be if it was used and incorporated into an avant-garde composition using synthesizers and synthesized music to effect or if it was incorporated into a modern opera and embedded in musical texture of some kind? Let us consider sounds, noises, screeches or eerie sound effects which qualify perhaps a 20th century composition or a film score? Are bird calls musical? Are they musical when incorporated in a work such as Respighi’s Pines of Rome or when composers such as Olivier Messiaen transcribe and notate them in works such as Oiseaux exotiques? Are the sound effects and noises which contribute to some film scores music? At which point and why do sounds with directly illustrating properties become music?

We are dealing with music on diverse level. Not only do we talk about music as the stuff and object of listening, music making and playing, but we also refer to music as a human potential and performance. We say that someone is a musical person. We may find that while someone else plays a musical instrument they are not “very musical”- we detect a detachment, an unease and a lack of natural connection with the subject matter. How do we manage to make this assessment and what type of thing do we presuppose in these kinds of judgements? What kind of qualification grounds the perception and judgement that speaks of musical (as opposed to unmusical) behaviour and activity?

At the moment it seems that we are raising aesthetic questions and aesthetic questions only. These, we assume can be dealt with by considering the questions what productive- or receptive aesthetic attitudes qualify a given sounding structure or activity as musical. From this aspect, music is understood by a process of signification. Music is what is musically significant. And the latter would appear to be entirely a matter of aesthetic design, practice, convention or culture. It certainly does not require us to awaken ontological considerations. On closer inspection, however, we stumble across a number of questions: Why can we transform certain sounding structures into music and others not? How do we separate the realm of the musical from the non-musical? What are the fundamental structures that grant music its meaning? What kind of activity is the creation, re-creation and perception of music as music? What do we create in our musical activity? Do we create anything or is music a merely subjective affair? What, in short, is music? Is it dependent on aesthetic contexts and aesthetic contexts alone or is its significance grounded in ontological modalities? Most importantly perhaps: what kind of question are these? What kind of being do we imply when we ask what music is?

2.1 Aethetics or ontology?

The unrest which these questions create relates to the issue to what extent music is to be dealt with in the contexts of aesthetics only. There are arguments⁹ which suggest that any reflection about music should restrict itself to exploring aesthetic contexts. Attempts to lead a discussion on music on an ontological or metaphysical level are misplaced. It is asserted that what matters in music is the aesthetic experience and evaluation of it. This kind of inquiry does not require ontological underpinning it simply requires the recognition that music is revealed in its performances and it requires an aesthetic interest. The philosopher’s tendency to avoid questions of aesthetics and rather focus on musical metaphysics or ontology strikes us as

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⁹ Ridley, 115-126.
Ontology has no claim to supporting evaluative judgements about music. While I will discuss the argument in more detail below in the context of ontological identity conditions of the work of music, it is necessary here to make a general observation about the relationship between musical aesthetics and ontology: Ontological and aesthetic questions simply do not operate on the same philosophical level. Advocates of the view that ontology of music constitutes a distraction are ultimately compelled to make admissions of philosophical naiveté of the following kind:

“All I have argued is that performances can show us things about works; and that requires nothing more than the thought that (some) performances are interpretations of works – not, I surmise, a proposition likely to provoke a storm of protest and certainly not one that involves or presupposes (or should prompt) the slightest flicker of ontological reflection…. It is true that I have cast a number of my sentences in undeniably realistic terms… And finally, to the suggestion that I’ve really just helped myself covertly to a raft of identity conditions, I simply deny that I have. At most I’ve helped myself to some perfectly neutral, pre-theoretical thoughts.”

The difficulty with the use of “realistic terms” or “neutral, pre-theoretical thoughts” does not potentially affect the aesthetic debate at all- this debate is contingent on precisely such presuppositions and can progress productively within common sense terms. Difficulties and ontological challenges, the “flicker(s) of ontological reflection” arise when we wonder further about the foundations of our activities and experience. This kind of reflection (which we may call with Hegel “speculative”) stands aside from questions of aesthetic value. It is at the same time also seemingly unnecessary and possibly raises questions which have no (or no straightforward) answer. Needless to say and with reference to Kant, the difficulty or even impossibility to find answers does not necessarily imply that we should stop asking those very questions. It just shows that the generated enquiry may be of an entirely different kind. It may raise the Heideggerian issue if we are equipped to articulate the question in an appropriate way or if we should not rather spend time establishing our ability to articulate the question before declaring it irrelevant or un-answerable. The considerations suggest that ontological questions and aesthetic questions do not operate on the same level and in the same dimension of inquiry. They cannot be directly pitched against each other. So, in the very least the relationship between these two modes of approach may need to be clarified in relation to music.

Limiting ourselves to an investigation of a realm with straightforward answers does not imply we are making any reasonable progress in our understanding. “Categorical” boundaries remain hidden and outside the context of inquiry. The aesthetic discussion is unable to qualify what constitutes originally the aisthesis which supposedly defines the realm of discussion. It takes the fundamentals of perceiving subjective and objective given for granted. However, in the case of music, a realm that engages the actively listening human consciousness in a particular way, this very separation may be justifiably placed in question.

There seems to be a further aspect which is relevant to the question of the relationship between aesthetics and ontology: As a formal philosophical discipline aesthetics is relatively young and rests on shaky foundations. Alexander Baumgarten, the 18th century founding father of the modern discipline of aesthetics sought to defend the cognitive powers of the senses against some of his predecessors’ charge (notably Wolff’s) that sense perceptions deliver “inferior understanding”. Baumgarten’s attempt to rehabilitate sensory cognition and its relevance to truth and understanding is built on essentially Cartesian ontological

10 Ridley, 114.
11 Ridley, 125/6.
and metaphysical principles. It conceals the ontological questions underpinning Descartes’ distinctions between res extensa and res cogitans. The issue of (aesthetic) value and evaluation alerts us in particular to critical questions in relation to its justification and its possibly evident – but unexplained- ontological grounding as Heidegger has pointed out:

“Values are present determinations of things. Values have in the final analysis their ontological origin solely in the preliminary approach to substantial reality which is the fundamental level. However, even pre-phenomenological experience shows something in reality (dingliche Sein) that cannot be explained by extended matter alone (Dinglichkeit). Thus reality (dingliche Sein) requires an extended explanation.”

If we follow Heidegger’s point we become compelled to invert the argument for the “pre-theoretical” naïveté made above. Pre-theoretical insight precisely distinguishes primordially (albeit implicitly) between different values in our experience. We do not initially encounter a res extensa but the many different things. The many different things come with different value. Their distinction is not explained in an indiscriminate ontological conception of external reality or Cartesian res extensa which assumes that the existence of manifold being is uniform and – for all intent and purpose- material and “extended” . This conception of presence as res extensa is by no means a “pre-theoretical” position of the simple existence of some-thing. The pre-theoretic intuition rather challenges us to seek an ontological explanation for the varieties of reality which we encounter and in this endeavour arrives at explanations of being in for example Cartesian terms. Yet, these terms are derivative, the outcome of abstraction and reflection and as such philosophically the subject of investigation. We suggest that the “value” of the manifold things emerges ontologically from the substantive reality of being which is nevertheless in question. Pre-theoretical experience encounters this value immediately and it is through an uncritical, theoretical expansion of a value-free concept of “matter”, res extensa or reality that the original intuition of ontological value is ignored.

This point shows that the direction of enquiry between aesthetic and ontological viewpoint differs in regard to the questions asked: Whereas the aesthetic inquiry takes the ontological givenness of the subject matter for granted and desires to establish the characteristics of the modes of human production and reception, the ontological enquiry takes these modes as symptoms of the givenness to enquire what ontological characteristics are required to allow these modes of engagement to proceed. The ontological question establishes the derivative nature of aesthetic being.

The essentially defensive view that sense perception (aisthesis) is unable to generate knowledge is rooted in a long tradition. Plato discusses this view at length in the Theaetetus (commencing at 151e) and identifies ontological reasons for the confusion that such a view creates. The Theaetetus argues that the world of sense perception is ever changing. It is a world of becoming which presents diverse and contradictory phenomena to us. Thus entangling ourselves in this world of appearance may involve us in confusion and perplexity (as Plato shows in a very direct way in the dialogue) rather than knowledge. Plato’s discussion of aisthesis is relevant in so far as it too insists that the question of sense perception needs to be grounded ontologically. The dictum that it is not “possible for one to attain ‘truth’ who cannot even get as far as

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12 Beardsley, 157.
13 Heidegger (1989), 99. The translation is my own and I have attempted to translate Heidegger in such a way that the meaning becomes clear. Heidegger’s point is based on the ontological difference between thing-ness (Dinglichkeit) and objective being (dingliche Sein).
"being"\textsuperscript{14} is not only a statement about rejecting \textit{aisthesis} as a candidate for knowledge but a statement about the ontological dependency of sense perception and ultimately the ontological dependency of the aesthetic realm. The aesthetic realm is ultimately the realm of becoming. Ontology asks the question of being. Any discussion of the relationship between aesthetics and ontology will inevitably return to the fundamental question of the relationship between being and becoming, a question which is in its essence ontological.

If we look more concretely at music, the argument against the independent ontological speculation about music or the musical work simply asserts that all we can know about music is revealed in performance and through our active perception. We accordingly have no independent "ontological" knowledge of music or the musical work. Speculating about music, musical activity or the musical work would make only sense if we did so in terms of aesthetic or musical properties, that is properties dependent upon the processes of productive or receptive consciousness, but not in ontological terms as there is no way of knowing these. This view has distinctly Kantian overtones. Kant affirms that aesthetic judgments are no judgments of cognition as their foundation is "nothing other than subjective."\textsuperscript{15} This notwithstanding, the aesthetic judgment of beauty presupposes for Kant an aesthetic object and lays claim towards "intersubjective validity,"\textsuperscript{16} which in the very least raises further ontological questions. To be sure, this intersubjective validity is not subject to a "concept". But it presupposes a \textit{sensus communis} rather than a grounding in the object itself. And it presupposes an object of a kind which firstly distinguishes itself from any other object (eg. objects of cognition) and presents itself in such a way as to be subject to aesthetic perception. Kant’s view thus seems to make two ontological references: one to the objectivity of the aesthetic object, the other to an intelligible \textit{sensus communis}. Let us look further at Kant’s aesthetic theory to establish if there is an argument against a concern for the ontology of music.

\subsection*{2.3 Questions arising from Kant’s understanding of aesthetic judgement and beauty}

To achieve the claim towards universal validity, Kant affirms that the aesthetic judgment is disinterested. This distinguishes it from judgements about the good and the agreeable. However, Kant’s negative qualification is explained further as an attitude of "mere giving" (\textit{Gunst}) or pure pleasure (\textit{reine Wohlgefallen}).\textsuperscript{17} The aesthetic attitude is thus qualified by a stance of pure attention to the aesthetic object. In the very least we can affirm two basic points: There is an aesthetic object and the aesthetic attitude attends purely to this object. There seems to be a third point: Kant qualifies that perceived beauty is based on a perception of "purposefulness without a purpose" (\textit{Zweckmaessigkeit ohne Zweck}).\textsuperscript{18} The purposefulness (\textit{forma finalis}) is perceived in the aesthetic attitude in a formal way - that is in reflection. Kant alleges that we

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\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Theaetetus}, 186d\textsuperscript{15} Kant, KdU § 1
\textsuperscript{16} Kant uses the term "\textit{subjective Allgemeingültigkeit}" (subjective universal validity) (KdU § 8) as opposed to logical or objective validity grounded in concepts.
\textsuperscript{17} KdU, § 5. The importance of seeing disinterestedness as a "preliminary" qualification and of establishing a positive conception of disinterestedness is pointed out by Heidegger in Heidegger, \textit{Nietzsche, Bd. I}. Heidegger comments that we need to consider what remains when the "interest" falls aways: "The misinterpretation of "interest" leads to the error that the exclusion of interest supresses all essential connection with the object. The opposite is the case. The essential relation to the object itself comes only into play through the "disinterest". What is not seen is that the object comes only now into view as a pure object, that this "coming-into-view" is beauty." (130) See also references by Reed, 582 and Lories, 39.
\textsuperscript{18} KdU §§ 10, 11.
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"can in the least observe purposefulness in a formal sense without grounding it in a purpose (as the matter of the nexus finalis) and in objects if only in reflection.\textsuperscript{19}

Thus the realm of aesthetic experience is the realm of reflection. Aesthetic judgements are for Kant not judgements about the world and its objects but the result of a free interplay of the reflective powers of consciousness. Yet, while it makes sense to think of aesthetic perception as essentially subjective in this way to a degree we also note that an aesthetic judgement arises out of an encounter with an object. What is it that gives rise to these perceptions of purposefulness? And why is this matter a question of subjective consciousness only? Is it a question of eliminating the concept of the object entirely from this picture? Certainly not, as the reflective consciousness requires an “ob-ject” (Gegen-stand), a resistance to its activity, a presence and distinction in which an engagement can take place. The beautiful painting or sculpture is judged to be beautiful because it is what it is. If this judgement was merely subjective, the object would not be required at all. The human consciousness would move within itself. Reflection and the aesthetic experience require, it seems, ontological difference.

It is at this point that it is tempting to relate the concept of beauty to that of perfection or goodness. Aligning beauty and goodness has after all a distinguished history.\textsuperscript{20} It also can assist us to establish a clearer view if and how aesthetic attributes may have ontological foundations.

Kant is keen to distinguish goodness from beauty or perfection (especially objective perfection) from aesthetic “purposefulness without purpose” for the simple reason that he wishes to uphold the foundation of his conception of the aesthetic as a purely subjective realm. At the same time, he is keen to do justice to the phenomena which suggest that judgments on aesthetic beauty are judgements on artistic and aesthetic quality and require objective grounding. The turning point for his argument to distinguish goodness and beauty is the concept of purpose. To what extent can we speak of the aesthetic object to be defined by ends? Kant has excluded the “external purpose” (or usefulness) as an aspect of the aesthetic object which is given purely and in disinterested fashion. This qualification is important as it establishes an ontological quality: The aesthetic object is the object given as itself. It is what it is in its pure form. The aesthetic attitude approaches its object free of considerations of usefulness, practical purpose or subjective relevance. Instead it recognises the object in its pure objectivity. This raises the question if perhaps “internal objective purposefulness” or “perfection” would align with a conception of beauty? Kant argues against such a possibility:

“To judge the objective purposefulness we require at all times a concept of a purpose and (if this purposefulness is to be an inner and not outer (usefulness)) a concept of an inner purpose which contains the grounds for the immanent possibility of the object. As the purpose is nothing but the concept of the reason for the possibility of the object, the concept of the essence of the thing (der Begriff von diesem, was es fuer ein Ding sein solle) must precede it. And the harmony of this concept (which gives the rule of connection) of the manifold in this is the qualitative perfection of a thing. Against this the quantitative one, that is the completion of every thing according to its kind is distinguished and a mere quantity (of universal kind) according to which the substance (was das Ding sein solle) is already determined; it is merely established if everything that is required is present. The formal aspect in a representation of a thing, that is the harmony of the manifold in the one (regardless what it is to be) does not reveal for itself any objective purposefulness whatsoever. Since, as we are abstracting from this one (what the thing is to be) as its purpose, nothing is retained but the subjective purposefulness of the representations in the soul (Gemuete) of the perceiver which admittedly reflects a certain

\textsuperscript{19} KdU, A34.

\textsuperscript{20} see Closkey’s discussion of Aquinas on this point in Closkey, 1987, 75-79.
purposefulness in the imaginative constitution of the subject and a certain satisfaction to conceive a given form of imagination, but no perfection of any object which is also not conceived under any concept of purpose.”

Kant’s argument appears difficult to follow. It seems to make the following point: In order to establish the immanent (objective) purposefulness of a thing we must know what the thing is. Thus as soon as we know the thing as it is (in its substance) we merely judge it according to its own substantial qualifications and in regard to its “quantitative perfection”. The existence of a thing is subject to the presence of certain properties alone. However, the existence of the thing as it is only reveals a determined purpose. Once we abstract from the determinate purpose we also lose the conception of the substance of the thing and merely retain a notion of “formal purposefulness” within the subjective “harmonious free play of the cognitive faculties”. Thus, if we conceive purposefulness as inner purpose and objectively (that is through the determinations of the object) rather than as a subjective conception, we also presuppose objective determination and a determinate concept of the object. A conception of a mere formal perfection (a formal objective purposefulness without a purpose) is according to Kant a “true contradiction”.

It seems clear that Kant needs to argue this way to maintain the autonomy of the aesthetic realm and to justify the intersubjective validity of judgments concerning the beautiful as distinct from those affirming the Good. After all, the distinctiveness of an aesthetic judgement depends on its subjective but universal validity for Kant. However, the distinction between objective and subjective purposefulness requires further discussion: The subjective “purposefulness without a purpose” is an abstraction, however, not an abstraction which eliminates the object from subjective consciousness but one which allows the object to stand out in its pure objectivity. On what basis can such an abstraction proceed? Finding or perceiving purposefulness as such implies finding or perceiving objectivity. To be sure, such an encounter does not determine necessarily anything about an object except its givenness and presence itself- its existence. But it does presuppose that the object is in principle capable of supporting a given purpose, that is, the ontological constitution of objectivity is such as to invite purposefulness as one of its attributes. In formal purposefulness the object is thus encountered as purely existent. One could argue that a determinate object which exists as a particular and thus with a defined essentia is not “merely existent”- it is after all particularly characterised. While it seems to make no sense of referring to formal purposefulness in relation to a determinate object, it does make sense of referring to formal purposefulness in relation to objectivity itself. In fact, the notion of formal purposefulness implies objectivity (existence of the other) and its conception is no solipsistic “harmonious free play of the cognitive faculties.” Thus aesthetic perception does not determine anything about the object- this much seems to be granted. Does this make the perception completely and autonomously subjective? Certainly not without further qualification, as it affirms the object in its pure objectivity (existence).

Given Kant’s insistence on the autonomy of beauty from the good, it is a little surprising that Kant appears to undermine his argument by referring to two types of beauty: “free beauty (pulchritudo vagae) and

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21 KdU A 45/46.
22 It seems important to bear in mind that Kant is making a transcendental argument „aiming at the justification of the interpersonal claims made in making judgements concerning the beautiful“ and does not primarily argue the ontology or otherwise of aesthetic objects. (Closkey, 1987, 63) My subsequent comments are consequently not an engagement with Kant in the strict sense. I merely take his approach as an opportunity to pursue the question if there is any need for a further investigation of ontological characteristics of aesthetic objects. This does not concern Kant, although his insistence on the purely subjective nature of aesthetic judgment appears to be a paradigm argument against posing such a question.
merely dependent beauty (pulchritudo adhaerens).”\(^\text{23}\) The latter is said to presuppose a concept of the object. Dependent beauty is conceived under the notion of an object’s particular purpose and perfection. This does not only significantly undermine Kant’s conception of the autonomy of aesthetic judgement but also his previous argument which as we have seen implies that once the substance of the thing is known and conceived, the judgment is no longer one about beauty but about goodness. In the case of dependent beauty Kant defends the function and role of “the Good” in relation to beauty as regulative. Dependent beauty is limited in its possibility to attach only to possible forms that remain suitable for aesthetic improvement:\(^\text{24}\)

“One could attach much that is immediately pleasing to the eye to a building, if only it was not meant to be a church; to beautify a figure with a whole lot of ornaments and light but regular decorations, like the New Zealanders with their tattoos, if only it was no human being; and he could have much finer features and a more pleasing, gentle outline of his features if he was no man, or rather no warrior.”\(^\text{25}\)

On this reading, the damage to Kant’s conception is somewhat contained. Kant could simply say, that beauty relates to realms of appropriate application and that aesthetic treatment and perception are applicable in various ways to various things. There are limits to the area of the aesthetic and these limits are set by the substance of the thing which provides the opportunity for aesthetic engagement in the first instance.

However, it seems to me that the possibility of “dependent beauty” brings down any insistence on an absolute separation of the aesthetic from the determinations of ontology and further relativises the way in which the priority of the aesthetic over the ontological can be asserted in relation to music. In summary, Kant’s insistence on a separation of the aesthetics from cognition and objectivity with its subsequent concern for the aesthetic judgement over the aesthetic object presents us with the following issues:

(1) Kant’s notion of “formal” purposefulness is potentially not devoid of objective characteristics even if we merely consider that it reflects objects in their potential being. To consider formal purposefulness seems to me to consider objects in a possible ontological modality. The object of the aesthetic judgement is precisely the object as it gives itself purely- the object in its mere, naked objectivity. If we take the case of dependent beauty we may even say that this relates to the object as it gives itself purely and substantially. In this sense the recognition of the object in its formal purposefulness is not even completely devoid of particular objective or ontological dimension. The object qua object is given to consciousness- it just lacks the ordinary and everyday determinations of its existence when we consider it in the aesthetic consciousness. To be sure, the pure givenness of the object is no realist affirmation of the object as it is in its concrete actuality- although again the case of dependent beauty would demand some partial affirmation of the object in its real existence. It also is no judgement of the object in its determined, potential ideality. But it seems necessary that the object is at least intentionally referred to as without such a reference the play of imagination producing the conception of purposefulness would have no meaningful correlate and aesthetic judgment of beauty would be a freestanding subjective performance which could occur without intentional reference to any object whatsoever. A consciousness of this kind seems fairly inconceivable to me and suggests an amorphous associative “rambling” of consciousness rather than the free and harmonious play of the cognitive faculties. Such freedom and harmony requires a given form of some kind to be free and

\(^{23}\) KdU § 16.

\(^{24}\) “The notion of what the thing is to be does not delineate how it must be if it is to be beautiful, instead it provides criteria for ruling out as inappropriate or unsuitable some amongst the possible freely beautiful forms.” (Closkey, 79).

\(^{25}\) KdU § 16.
harmonious and – it seems to me- this form is the aesthetic object as the “other” rather than the self-referential consciousness itself.

(2) When Kant implies further that the immanent purpose of a thing implies its substantial determination and thus substantial determination denies formal purposefulness it seems to us that this is only true in regard to the particular object itself. If we consider an object in its intentionality, that is without particular conceptional determination and merely in its pure givenness (that is irrespective of its essence), this givenness can affirm an immanent purposefulness without a determined purpose. Let us consider an example: If we consider any object and further consider possible immanent purposefulness which may not need to apply to this object at all, the mere connection between the two concepts can become a meaningful application and conception of the thing. The thing may not necessarily be constituted conceptually as the thing that it is, but it is nevertheless constituted by formal purposefulness itself as an object of aesthetic experience. A shoe which is not recognised as a determinate object (say, due to difficulties of perception) but nevertheless seen to have a form of finality can be perceived as a beautiful object. At this point the assigned ontological determination of the shoe may be entirely different from its original mode of existence. The shoe may be seen as a plant, for example. The shoe is “really” only a shoe of course, but ontologically speaking it is an object, an entity which takes a stand against our perceptions (Gegenstand). We may mistake the shoe for something else. We also may realise that this mistake is the outcome of a free interplay of our cognitive faculties. But this does not mean that there is no object of whatever kind that underpins the aesthetic judgement. The object which stands out from and against our perception must have some foothold outside the play of cognitive faculties in order to take a stand and to be distinguished from our consciousness. The very possibility of dependent beauty in fact underlines this point further: if objectivity had no bearing on aesthetic judgement there would be no way that we could demarcate the realm of the aesthetic in any way. The aesthetic would potentially be a universal realm of judgement.

2.4 Form and performance

The discussion of Kant shows that our ontological concern is somewhat inevitable. It indicates that the discussion of the characteristics of given aesthetic phenomena does not include an illumination of the possibility of aesthetic being itself and of the possibility of phenomena to become musical. This transforms our aesthetic interest into an ontological one as we are directed to the conditions according to which the aesthetic can be referred to as aesthetic:

“The ontological question does not aim at the reality of events (this is evident and can only be reconstructed in regard to its constitution) and it does not aim at the reality of meaning (this is the result of intentional acts of understanding and valorisation). It rather aims at the limits of the possibility, through which particular appearances are assigned to the realm of aesthetic definition, that is, at the possibility of the musical work of art.”

In returning to music, it seems immediately striking that music confronts us with a pre-theoretical, ontological cleft: we experience music in the activity of music making and through the realm of sounding forms or structures which are experienced in manifold circumstances and modes of attention. In music we encounter two essentially and radically different ontological sub-strata: the work of music, the piece or the opus and the activity of music making, as a “working” with music in the form of composition, performance,
improvisation and listening. Both aspects present us with different ontological issues and they present us with considerable conceptual challenges in their own right as well as in their relationship to each other. In thinking about music we are challenged to not only explain the significance and status of the aesthetic object which we experience as the “musical work” but we also need to explain the connection and relationship of this object with musical activity, music making and musical reception. Music seems to be a phenomenon which confronts us directly with the ability of human consciousness to participate equally in the two ontologically diverse strata of being and becoming, of ontic existence and human action. Because of the clarity and distinctness in which musical work and the making of music are initially distinguished, music presents us with a paradigm of ontological difference.

As we progress to look closer at music within this dualistic paradigm, we need to be aware of the limitations of such a perspective from the outset. These limitations may be significant in cases of kinds of music which cannot readily be seen to inhabit both realms of this ontological perspective. Is there phenomenal evidence of music that eludes this dualistic paradigm? To establish this we would need to look for two types of music: musical form which has little or no connection with musical activity and performance and musical performance which does not follow or manifest itself in any musical form. At first sight, we may find the notion of a musical form which eludes a performative dimension counterintuitive. In fact, it may be excluded by virtue of the characteristics of the process. After all, does the very constitution of a musical form work not imply the ability and necessity to have this form per-formed?

In the first instance we need to consider what we mean by musical form here. In order to avoid the complexities of our later discussion surrounding the musical work, I initially propose to simply refer to musical form as the formed residue or directive of musical activity. Can we then consider that there are instances of musical form which do not involve musical performance? When we consider the history of musical theory and the philosophy of music we could suggest some examples of musical practice and musical conception which come close to denying specific musical forms a performance dimension. The Pythagorean contemplation of musical perfection and the subsequent constitution of a musico-mathematical “harmony of the spheres” would indicate a way in which music could be seen to transcend performance and achieve a formal presence without a formative activity. An example closer to ‘traditional’ musical practice could be suggested in the form of J. S. Bach’s Art of Fugue. We may wonder if this work was intended to be performed or if it is not in fact an example of an abstract musical form of contemplative and exemplary power which was not intended for performance and could in any case only be realised in a highly insufficient manner in concrete performance on account of its abstract nature.

The case of music which lacks formal dimensions and an objective constitution is somewhat easier to discuss. Ritual music, improvisation, particularly in the areas of folk- and jazz music, film music and other musical genres can readily be cited as having in the very least a problematic relationships with the concept of the musical work. In these cases we can readily point to a musical practice, a musical activity but we will have difficulty identifying and justifying the existence of a musical work in the absence of a manifest and pre-conceived schema and score. However, we cannot deny such results of free improvisation formal aspects. They are – albeit spontaneously invented – musical, sounding structures. In addition we could refer to formal attributes which are constituted through performance and afford the possibility of memory or recording. An

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26 Hubig, 86.
improvisation which is documented either through notation, memorisation (including collective
memorisation) or recording appears to acquire a work dimensions.

These examples shall suffice as an introductory reflection. They suggest the possibility to extend the
dualistic paradigm of musical form and performance to its limits. However, they also suggest that these
difficulties are for the time being marginal and our discussion of them can be suspended until such time when
we have a clearer understanding of the ontology of music within this dualistic paradigm. In any case, the
complexity of the subject matter is likely to ensure that this paradigm will remind us of its limitations if we
wish to do justice to the phenomena. Secondly, we will need to find a way of conceiving musical activity and
musical form in a way that takes account of their dependency and that allows us to understand examples of
fluidity and transcendence of these pillars. Such a conception may ultimately transcend the paradigm itself
and open the view towards a more comprehensive way of looking at music which should also be able to take
account of the instances and practices that may not conform to it readily.

Taking the dualistic paradigm as a starting point, I suggest looking at music from the following
aspects:

(1) The work of music: I discuss in this context largely analytical approaches to the philosophy of
music. I am particularly interested in the musical form as an aesthetic object and work. I look at Goodman’s
account of the relationship between the musical work and its notation, a conception of musical interpretation
as dialogue as well as accounts of the creation and performance of the musical work within the context of the
so-called Platonist view of the musical work. I conclude this section with a suggestion for an alternative
ontological account that proposes the musical work to be a topos of musical activity.

(2) Musical activity and the praxis of music making: I discuss here approaches which have tried to
approach the musical form from the point of view of musical praxis. There are strong historical grounds to
contextualise the musical work concept in both historical and musical terms. The latter becomes more evident
in a discussion of the relationship of the musical work to improvisation. I conclude this section with a
discussion of the aporetic character of the musical work.

(3) The phenomenological separation of music making and the musical work: A phenomenological
consideration of musical work and musical performance suggests their separation along a number of lines. I
re-discuss the issue of musical notation and Ingarden’s notion of moments of indeterminacy in musical
notation. This suggests that music is essentially dialogical. I conclude this section with a discussion of the
musical work as an intentional object and relate this discussion to the proposal to consider the musical work
as a topos.

(4) The phenomenological unity of music as temporal form: I consider here the relationship between
music and time, the view of music as temporal form and the polythetic constitution of music. Using Husserl’s
analysis of time consciousness and Bergson’s concept of durée I try to argue for an essential unity of musical
activity and form.
3.1 The work of music

Philosophers of the Anglo-American analytical tradition have made a significant contribution to the philosophy of music. They have done so within the limits of the aesthetic realm and without risk to the foundations of traditional metaphysics or ontology. The onto-metaphysical foundations in their discussions are often implied as otherwise their discussion is believed to broaden the debate beyond reasonable limits. Thus, writers on this topic such as Scruton, Kivy, Meyer, Goodman, Levinson and others accept usually without further significant discussion that the issue they are dealing with is music only as an art of composition, possibly improvisation, and performance. Their principal concern is the relationship between performance and art-works without attempting a specific justification of the aesthetic itself or without tracing the mode of being of the aesthetic. This concern is responsible for the definition of the musical work which underpins the further discussion. Thus the definitions of the art-work and the musical work affirm variously endurance, form and the relationship to an aesthetic perception. Thom defines the work of art as follows:

“A work of art can be defined as an enduring thing, created in some medium (such as oil or canvas) by an author (such as a painter) in order to be beheld in a particular kind of way (namely, to be viewed aesthetically).”

According to Thom, despite differences in etiology and teleology our understanding of works of music shares the ontological aspects of endurance, aesthetic medium, authorship and mode of aesthetic perception with artworks of other kinds. He refines a definition of the musical work in relation to its authorship, by stating that a “work for performance is the directed content of a performance directive”.

Similar ontological qualifications are made by other philosophers of the analytical tradition. Thus the musical work is variously referred to as a kind, type or token but as Roger Scruton states, the exact ontological identity is not a matter of nature but convention:

“The most convenient way of identifying them (works of music) is as temporally ordered patterns of pitched sound. Whether we call such patterns ‘types’ or ‘kinds’, or whether we identify them as abstract individuals like numbers of letters of the alphabet, is a matter of indifference, just as it is a matter of indifference in the case of single sound events. What matters is that such patterns can be ‘realized’ in performance, just as the design of a car is realized in the individual machines that emerge from the production line, and the text of a literary work is realized in a reading of it.”

By comparison, Scruton’s understanding of works as patterns which are realised in performance appears to commit to a minimalist ontology. However, if we look at it carefully it still contains the same ontological assumptions as those articulated by Thom: the temporal ordering and subsequent realisation of the musical pattern in performance implies that the musical work is created as an enduring structure in some sense within a given medium, that it is authored and that it is performed or (in Thom’s words) “beheld” by an audience.

It seems evident that within the context of these definitions, the ontological foundations of the discussion are laid: The conception maintains a division between the subject (musician, listener, etc) and the object (musical work) and separates performance (subject) and work (object). The diverse modes of music

27 Thom, 28.
28 Thom, 44.
29 Scruton, 441.
making which are discussed by these approaches and which include improvisation, composition and performance (more recently also recording) are viewed with a reference to the musical work and its performance and assume the absence of the musical work in forms of music making which are entirely transitory such as improvisation. Thus, while there are attempts within this paradigm to discuss music beyond the western classical tradition and to include an investigation of musical practice outside the boundaries of this history (as in the case of Stephen Davies) this discussion takes place to mediate a traditional, ontological view or to engage and take issue with so called contextual approaches to musical ontology.

I will not take issue with these definitions of the musical work at this stage as I am suggesting that the fundamental nature of their ontological assumptions deserve a large and concerted effort of investigation. The analysis of the objectivity of the musical work is one of the central questions in my discussion and I believe that its importance ultimately permeates all aspects of a philosophical conception of music. I will accordingly discuss two aspects of this issue within the context of analytical approaches to musical philosophy. These will enable me to suggest an ontology of music that differs substantially from the one outlined above.

If we assume that the principal focus of ontological discussion is the difference between the musical work and musical performance and given that the musical work in the traditional sense is manifested in a written score my first question is: How does musical notation relate to the musical work and musical performance? This question conceals the further challenge of needing to clarify what kind of referential relationship (if any) exists between work and performance. What kind of ontological assumptions do we need to make about if we conceive of the work as a directive and as directing or determining the performance?

3.2 Analytic approaches to music

When we look at the writings of Scruton, Kivy, Wolterstorff, Wollheim, Goodman, Levinson, Margolis, Meyer, Davies and others we notice a seemingly natural privilege for the paradigm that separates the work of music and its performances in regard to their representational or symbolic characteristics. These writers tend to inquire what properties the work of music should have in order to regulate, guide or inspire a performance of it. In their variously complex accounts, music is conceived in linguistic, symbolic, referential or representational terms where issues such as musical reference, representation and meaning assume elevated importance. In particular, questions of the constitutive properties of works, their identity, the importance and role of notation and the ontological status of the work as an (abstract or particular) universal and the performance as a particular are discussed. The discussion of the relationship between work and performance mirrors logical or categorical distinctions such as those between types and tokens, universals and particulars, kinds and instances or class and member.

30 Scruton (1997).
32 Wolterstorff (1980).
33 Wollheim (1968).
34 Goodman (1968a), (1968b).
35 Levinson (1990), (1990a), (1990b), (1990c).
One of the seminal views to which many philosophers in this tradition have responded is that by Nelson Goodman. Goodman is largely concerned with the linguistic aspect of art and (in relation to music) with the way in which the constitution of the musical work determines its performance.

Goodman’s fundamental paradigm distinguishes allographic and autographic art where autographic art is defined as a “work of art…if and only if the distinction between original and forgery of it is significant.” \(^{38}\) According to this definition music is an “allographic” art as works of music or musical performances cannot be forged. This distinction relies obviously on a correspondence theory of truth with reality (authenticity or truth versus forgery) in which certain objects (such as paintings for example) may become subject to deceptive imitation. The deception hinges – for Goodman – on the question of authorship or the work’s history of production:

“A forgery of a work of art is an object falsely purporting to have the history of production requisite for the (or an) original of the work. Where there is a theoretically decisive test for determining that an object has all the constituting properties of the work in question without determining how or by whom the object was produced, there is no requisite history of production and hence no forgery of any given work. Such a test is provided by a suitable notational system with an articulate set of characters and of relative positions to them.” \(^{39}\)

In Goodman’s view the absence of forgery implies that we can identify musical works definitively. Their identity is “freed from (a) history of production” and is achieved where a notation is established. “The allographic art has won its emancipation not by proclamation but by notation.” \(^{40}\)

The distinction between allographic and autographic art creates the foundation for the ontological paradigm which Goodman uses to explain the work of art further: He answers the question what a musical work and its performance are with reference to the objective manifestation of the score and the work’s notation. For Goodman the musical work is a “compliance-class” which is defined by the score.

“A score, we found, defines a work in its peculiar and privileged definition, without competitors. A class is uniquely determined by a score, as by an ordinary definition; but a score, unlike an ordinary definition, is also uniquely determined by each member of that class.” \(^{41}\)

The complete compliance with the score establishes a performance or genuine instance of a work. This demand for completeness is crucial for Goodman and it is the point with which Goodman’s critics have taken issue repeatedly. Goodman himself identifies this completeness of compliance provocatively as follows:

“Since complete compliance with the score is the only requirement for a genuine instance of a work, the most miserable performance without actual mistakes does not count as such an instance, while the most brilliant performance with a single wrong note does not.” \(^{42}\)

For my present context it is not necessary to engage critically with all aspects of Goodman’s view. In particular the latter issues of complete compliance has attracted much discussion already on account of its

\(^{38}\) Goodman (1968b), 113.
\(^{39}\) Goodman (1968b), 122.
\(^{40}\) Goodman (1968b), 122.
\(^{41}\) Goodman (1968b), 178.
\(^{42}\) Goodman (1968b), 168.
counter-intuitive character and others have in any case subjected Goodman’s view to much critical analysis. I do wish to, however, point to the following issues and questions arising from Goodman’s analysis:

Goodman’s compliance theory relies on a number of ontological assumptions which remain unreflected and in themselves appear to remain outside his enquiry. In the first instance, the notion of ‘forgery’ which underpins Goodman’s distinction between allographic and autographic art and which legitimises his concern with notation seems to be derivative. It seems to be based on a correspondence between real and alleged, constitutive properties of the work of art. One may need to ask if the musical work is such that it can have these properties altogether. How would an ontological relationship between the properties and the musical work need to be understood in the first instance?

Goodman’s understanding of forgery implies the deceptive imitation of any of the essentially constitutive aspects that qualify a work as being original or genuine. In Goodman’s account the notation of music (and literature) fixes the constitutive properties of the work unambiguously. This implies that all that is required for an unambiguous definition of the musical work’s identity is its notation or score. This distinguishes music from painting where no notation exists. In the case of a painting, the pictorial properties by themselves do not suffice to establish its constitutive properties and a history of production is required to establish authenticity. Goodman affirms that the history of production, the work’s autographic process enables us to speak of forgery when such a productive history is deceptively imitated. However, while we may assert a correspondence between the painting as a genuine object and the assumed constitutive properties which are said to be defining it, it is not altogether clear that such a correspondence can even be established in the case of music unless we already have an ontological theory of the musical work as a finite and closed object with constitutive properties. In which sense, though, can we speak of the musical work as a finite work with constitutive properties?

Goodman asserts that notation fixes the constitutive properties of the musical work. However, this seems to be in need of clarification before anything else can be derived from it. We may believe and bring good reasons to bear that the ontology of the musical work is of such a kind that it remains open as to how its identity is constituted. In this case, we may not even be able to refer to a “musical work” in any finite or finitely and completely defined sense independently of its process of interpretation. If this was the case, we would not only need to reject the notion of forgery for musical works (as Goodman does) but we would also need to accept that we cannot know if a musical work can or cannot be forged as we have no finite and complete view of its identity. The correspondence theory of truth and forgery which governs Goodman’s distinction between auto- and allographic art appears to collapse if it is faced with an open ontology (an ontology of a living being) in which being is not only determined by what it is but also by what it may become. The musical work as a set of possibilities of performance and listening may well not be a candidate for forgery because its properties are at no time complete. If musical works are incomplete creations whose interpretation is ontologically constitutive of their being, the concept of forgery would have to be replaced by a notion of “pretence” or in-authenticity and the paradigm of truth as correctness by a paradigm of truth as disclosure.


The assumption that the musical work may not be a finitely and completely defined class or object creates further issues for Goodman’s point of view. Goodman’s project is dedicated whole-heartedly to work preservation. This places him firmly in the aesthetic traditions of the 19th century which from the Beethoven essay of the early romantic poet, philosopher and musician E. T. A. Hoffmann onwards advances a view of the autonomy of the musical work and of the musician as the servant of the work. In this view the principal aim of the performance and the performing musician is the re-creation of the work. Faithfulness to the work becomes the central concept of classical music history from Beethoven to Stravinsky. For this point of view to make sense, we need to assume that there is such a thing as a comprehensively defined musical work and that it can be recognised and even conceived independently of any of its performances. In this context, Goodman’s distinction between allographic and autographic art does not only reflect ordinary forms of reference to diverse artforms but it also directs our view towards finding alternative ontological characteristics which will assist to establish and defend the objectivity of the musical work. Goodman finds such alternatives in a very traditional way in the phenomenon of notation and in particular in the relationship between a score and its performance. However, reducing the work to a “compliance-class” and the performance to the particular compliant does not satisfy any questions about the nature of the compliance itself. The pressing questions how the musical work can exist independently of its performance, how then the performance relates to, represents or instantiates the musical work and what levels of determination, faithfulness or freedom govern the relationship between the supposed musical work and the performance are not assisted at all by the reference to notation alone. The nature of the relationship between the compliance class and the compliant are regulated by conditions which are potentially independent of those governing the compliance class and the compliant themselves. These are themselves not part of the explanation for the relationship and their mode of being appears to require further philosophical justification.

Furthermore, there are questions within Goodman’s own view what guides the understanding of each entity. The class (work) does not appear to be defined completely by the score as the members of the class define the score as well (as Goodman points out). This suggests that the notation does not contain the complete set of constitutive properties of the class. Instead, the score appears to be an open concept which awaits further definition from future performance. In the most striking cases this creates problems in cases of works which have not been performed and may never be performed. Do these works exist and, if so, in which sense? It also seems to leave the question open how and what set of definitions are beyond the formative influence of the performance and why. What kind of object are we talking about, though, if its constitutive properties remain an open set of possibilities? Are we indeed still able to conceive its ontological character within a paradigm of constitutive properties of an object or may we need to look for a completely different ontological framework to describe the phenomenon of music?

Even if we accept Goodman’s description, the constitutive properties of a class appear to be on a different level from that of a physical object like a painting. Since a concrete object is not a class genuine paintings may be distinguished from deceptive imitations (forgeries) by reference to objective correspondences. However, why would such correspondences necessarily apply to compliance classes and...
how could they, if any particular member of the class contributes to the definition of the class itself? In practical reality it seems to me that a musical work could still be forged if authorship and style were deceptively imitated. However, authorship and style appear to be in Goodman’s understanding constitutive properties in one case (painting) but not in the other (music) Why is this so? Goodman seems eager to fulfil ontological assumptions. The distinction between allographic and autographic art is called upon to underpin the ontological privilege of notation in regard to music, yet notation in turn is called upon to satisfy the ontological status and constitutive properties of the musical work but without clarification as to how notation and interpretation (realisation) actually relate to each other.

3.3 The dialogical nature of the musical work and its notation

The discussion so far seems to suggest that the view that notation emancipates the work of music from the “history of production” is questionable. It suggests further that the ontology which underpins Goodman’s account tacitly needs to be challenged even if we accept that notation is a privileged context in which the work of music manifests itself. It seems to me that the notation of a musical work requires referenced reading and interpretation in relation to a musical style, authorship and “history of production”. The notation of the score does not constitute a code which translates automatically into the sounding work. This also makes any conception of the work as a “directive” complex. Since performers will realise the sounding work in (potentially vastly) different ways depending on context and a contextually defined reading and interpretation, the direct referential relationship between the score and the performance is problematic. In addition, the demand that interpretation (even partially) constitutes the work in performance would commence to undermine the rigid ontological view that performances are merely renditions of works. If interpretation plays a substantive part in performance as is suggested by the ontology of the notated score the ontological distinctions between work and performance become fluid and will require consideration.

Goodman leaves the ontological relationship between the work and the score quite unreflected. Yet, this relationship is determined by a context in which the work is notated, read and interpreted. While it is true

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46 E.T.A Hoffmann, 22-42.
47 We may take the case of musical forgeries of sorts: The violinist Fritz Kreisler purported to have ‘discovered’ works by classical and pre-classical composers (such as Pugnani) when he revealed later that in fact he had written these works himself. What kind of forgery is involved here? Kreisler imitated the musical style and compositional ‘handwriting’ of the composer in question. This in itself is not forgery - it is just imitation and is an accepted practice in musical composition, in fact an accepted practice of mastery where imitation is used and absorbed into the style of the imitator (see for examples Bach’s imitation of Vivaldi, Brahms’ imitation of Handel, Vaughan-Williams’ imitation of Tallis, etc) Kreisler produced a genuine score. This would disqualify him in the eyes of Goodman from being a forger. Yet, Kreisler imitated the “style” of the composer and initially and deceptively alleged an authorship or history of production (not the notation as that did not exist). This combination surely must qualify the resulting works to be forgeries. Once the history of production is clarified the work no longer constituted a forgery, but an imitation in the style of Pugnani. I can see no difference here in the case of paintings: an imitation of a painting is a forgery where a certain history of production is deceptively asserted. Once such a history is revealed (as in the case of Kreisler) the imitation ceases to be deceptive and becomes a simple imitation. It is only in the process of attributing authorship that the issue of forgery becomes relevant in any case. The correspondence relationship which is relevant here is between the author and the “style” of the work, not between the work and its notation.
48 This view has been advanced by Thom.
49 Thus Thom says of the “consummate performer”: “Although substantive interpretation is not logically required for the artistic performance of works, it is clear that the consummate performer is one who is able to take a reading or planned rendition of a work as material for substantive aesthetic interpretation. Substantive interpretation is in this way intrinsic to the teleology of works for performance. Without it, performance lacks imagination and spontaneity and works for performance cannot achieve their full life.” (Thom, 110). The latter point in particular would imply that substantive interpretation is indeed required on ontological grounds, which appears more compelling than merely logical grounds.
that some composers propose an unambiguous view of the performer as a servant to the composer’s intentions whose only concern must be faithfulness, it is equally clear that the practices of interpretation and composition alike recognise the activity of an interpreting, autonomous consciousness. In other words, the performer does not (and cannot) merely read the work and represent it, but needs to make sense of it and bring it to sounding life. Notation is thus not a blueprint in the form of a constructive plan but a ‘game plane’, a performance plan of some kind, a design of a living being which relies on the performers’ understanding of style, their fundamental musical intuition and a number of other interpretative skills to be coherently and meaningfully brought to life in performance.

This dependency on interpretation is so strong in the case of music, that one could speak of a musical dialogue between composer and performer. This puts into question the view that music could be interpreted literally, establishing a direct match between performance and score. Musicians themselves recognise this dialogical nature in particular in relation to the concern for faithfulness. Thus an insistence on faithfulness or literalness of interpretation and the implied attitude of servitude to the work is interpreted by performers (as distinguished from composers) as a reaction against excesses in interpretative arbitrariness and does not necessarily reflect the nature of musical performance and the organicism of the living work. The historical context here seems to be well reflected by the eminent conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler:

“The theory came about that tempi, dynamics, in fact all questions of interpretation, were matters of taste. More or less ridiculously, interpreters became more prominent than creators, as true…drawing their strength from the creators and usually ending up by ruining them. It was the onset of chaos; and the consideration of the score, of what the author wanted, the demand for fidelity to the work, was a natural reaction to this, a deliverance. In the face of this professed capriciousness—whether sailing under the colours of the desire to make art contemporary, or of the theory of individual taste as the one true faith—consideration of the original, ‘literal’ rendering is thoroughly understandable. And one could draw some comfort from this if music were a matter of museum knowledge, of education. But it is not; it is a matter of life, and the moment it loses its authentic, necessary relation to life, it becomes, more than any other art, superfluous.”

Music as a “matter of life” has particular implications for the underlying ontological view of it. It places the relation between notation, work and performance in an important context where the role and character of notation and the musical work as a static, objective thing are starting to appear to become problematic. The lack of definition of the score is an outcome of the ontological characteristics of music and musical activity as living being and living activity. The organic and generative characteristics of the musical work imply that it cannot be fixed in all its details comprehensively. Composers accordingly handle the notation with an appropriate level (or lack) of detail. Examples of absence of detail can be extreme. Even where they are not obviously extreme, the complete concrete reality of a work cannot be fully prescribed by a
score, just as the ultimate reality of a text cannot be fully articulated without a reading and interpreting consciousness. This dependency between score and interpretation also reveals itself in a number of contexts which are cited by Goodman himself. The question if tempo specifications for example are to constitute an integral part of a defining score is denied by Goodman:

“For these tempo specifications cannot be accounted integral parts of the defining score, but are rather auxiliary directions whose observance or non-observance affects the quality of a performance but not the identity of a work.”

However, it seems ontologically arbitrary to take purely and crudely physical aspects of the work of music such as pitch, rhythm and instrumentation to be its constitutive properties while other aspects which can severely alter or deny the work’s identity are not included. As musicians know, the tempo of a musical work will do much to alter its character and identity. In addition, the rhythmic notation depends on the tempo imagined and in fact makes only sense in such a context. If the tempo changes significantly, identical rhythmic notation assumes a different defining value in constituting the identity of the work. Both tempo and rhythmic notation appear to be aspects of the temporal and metric formation of the musical work and thus seem to have equal ontological significance. To deny this significance to one without including the other appears arbitrary merely because one is clearly notated symbolically and the other is given metaphorically and subject to intuition in the process of composition or interpretation itself. For the musician, the determination of the “right” tempo for a particular work by composer and interpreter contributes to the identity of the living work in a substantial way. Accordingly, it seems that far from emancipating the work of music from the “history of production”, notation and its resulting need for interpretation may in fact embed the work of music more firmly in this history as interpretation must occur with reference to an appropriate perception of style and meaningful internal symbolic relationships within the interpreting consciousness to constitute an identity of a work.

From the above points it has become clear that the compliance theory refers to an ontological framework that may not be suitable for an adequate understanding of music. The notions of constituting properties and complete compliance are not sufficiently clear to be applied in a straight forward manner to music when its ontological status may be as entirely fluid as life itself. While Goodman refers to various contexts and even “notational subsystems” as relevant to the definition of the work of music, the definitions contained in a score which become the definition of the compliance class may never be explicitly exhaustive and thus the identity of the work may never be entirely established. It is not altogether clear at this point how one could make value judgements based on a correspondence between work and performance when its interpretative possibilities are constantly evolving and effectively inexhaustible. What can Goodman ultimately mean by “correct” or indeed “miserable” and “brilliant” in this context, if the performance of the work is only the performance of the work under the complete compliance demand? The very demand for completeness renders the notion of compliance problematic if we are unable to refer to a finite set of referential properties. When exactly is complete compliance achieved and how can we tell? Goodman’s paradigm of class and compliants does not allow us to establish the ontological identity of either as both class and compliants form in reality an evolving ontological context and depend constitutively on each other.

Viennese dance music by Strauss, Lanner, etc whose execution demands particular interpretations of rhythmic values and articulations that are not – and cannot be notated.

54 Goodman (1968b), 185.
What these points variously highlight is a difficulty with the ontological presupposition that the musical work is an enduring object of reference with finite constitutive properties to which the performance has to refer. This view seems to be a reflection of a musical practice which has its root in the commercial presentation of musical works to a concert going audience in different contexts such as live performances or concerts, recordings or broadcasts of various kinds. We have suggested that this preconception may deny a more authentic understanding of music and music making as “a matter of life”. While this latter view requires much further discussion, it seems clear that the philosophical view proposed by Goodman leaves a significant gap in our understanding. This gap becomes particularly noticeable when we consider the ontology of notation. Do we understand notation to be descriptive, prescriptive, suggestive or even hypothetical? If we believe that notation is symbolic and abstractly referential how would we account for these properties if the object of reference and symbolisation is a living being? It seems to me that there are ways to look at this within the propositional paradigm and we will do so in the context of the writing and interpretation of philosophical text which faces similar issues. In the interim we reiterate the suggestion that musical notation variously proposes to, suggests, questions and makes conjectures for musical activity and performance. Such a role does not deny the presence of the “musical work” but assumes that its presence is much more complex than suggested by a naïve ontology. It in fact suggests that the musical work is an invitation for musical dialogue and an opportunity for musical unfolding.
3.4 The so-called Platonist view of the musical work

Goodman’s view is usually referred to as a nominalist view of music on account of its preoccupation with the constitution of the ontological identity of music within a symbolic system. Within the analytical tradition, other writers have argued for so-called Platonist views of musical works.

Wolterstorff argues for the view that a musical work is a norm-kind and the performances of it are occurrences or objects of this kind. He draws the productive analogy between musical works and games:

“Over the past quarter century analogies to games have played so prominent a part in philosophical discussion that to draw such an analogy once more is to risk ennui or nausea. But the inventing of a game does provide a genuinely illuminating analogy to the composing of a musical work. The inventor of a game selects certain properties which action-sequence-occurrences can exemplify; and therein he makes a game- that one, namely, which has exactly those properties (and any others presupposed by them) as normative within it. Specifically, he selects those properties as a set of criteria for correctness in occurrence.”

This analogy appears to have the advantage that it allows for flexibility in the ontological relationship between the kind and its instances. There is no need for complete compliance. The performance of a work is established if the performer and audience hold beliefs which come close to being complete and correct or if performers aim to produce or come fairly close in succeeding to create a “sound-sequence-occurrence” which exemplifies the acoustic and instrumental properties normative within a work.

In view of the above discussion it seems important to note that the existence of the musical work in performance is an outcome of the shared beliefs of audience and performer. This alludes to the dialogical character of musical performance suggested above.

The view that a composer selects the properties of the work is however, problematic. It has been criticised on the grounds that art is “creative in the strict sense, that it is a godlike activity in which the artist brings into being what did not exist beforehand.” The demand that an ontological theory of the musical work must also be able to give an adequate account of the creation of the musical work and commonly held beliefs about the role of artists and composers in this process has been argued by Levinson. Levinson articulates a requirement of “creatability”:

“Musical works must be such that they do not exist prior to the composer’s compositional activity, but are brought into existence by that activity.”

Levinson’s point seems initially trivial, however, when considered in the context of a platonic view of the musical work it challenges the notion of the musical work as a universal. How, after all could the musical work be a universal and at the same time be created?

This question (which has also been discussed by Margolis) has been tackled by one of the most prominent, recent writers on music, Peter Kivy, who defends a view of performance as an instance of the musical work which in turn is seen to be an abstract universal. Kivy proposes that the understanding of musical creation as a “godlike activity” is an outcome of the cult of the genius put forward by the 19th century

55 Wolterstorff, 63.
56 Wolterstorff, 79.
57 Levinson, 66.
58 Levinson, 68.
59 Cited in Kivy (1993), 38.
Kivy’s view has in fact certain ontological attractions for a so-called Platonist view of music: the musical work as we find it performed at any given time already existed before it was notated and merely awaited discovery. This would indeed allow a view of the musical work as an abstract universal as the work has always existed and is strictly not brought into being proper but merely brought to human notice and attention. In addition it would accord with certain aspects of musical and compositional practice which includes the understanding that the musical work may not be exhausted by the score. If the musical work is indeed discovered, this discovery may commence with the notational conception of the composer (comparable to the mapping of a newly discovered territory) and continue within the exploration and interpretation of the performer who— in some cases— is alleged to have a better insight into the work than the composer.60

The question how the creation of a musical work is conceived has obvious implications for the way in which the relationship between work and performance is or can be conceived: If we follow analytical philosophers this far, the performance must in some way correspond (match) to a content of the notated work. This view has shown itself to be problematic: In order for such a correspondence to be evaluated we need access to the content of the work which needs to be enduringly formed and independent of any performance of it. This is clearly difficult. Even a reading and an inner hearing of a work from the score would suggest some form of living presentation, an inner performance, albeit one for our own consciousness. The real dialogue which is exemplified by musical performance becomes an inner dialogue of musical presentation and hearing. To be sure this critical point extends the notion of performance to cover activities such as imaginative representation or inner hearing of a musical work.61 This extension does not, however, affect the ontological issue, which arises from a conceptual dualism between an autonomous work and acts of presentation or representation. In this paradigm, there seems to be no opportunity to establish the characteristics of the autonomous work independently of an activity of interpretation and performance.

60 This point is somewhat reminiscent of Heidegger’s view of interpretation as constituting a dialogue with the thinker in which we may well arrive at a better understanding of the text than the original understanding achieved by the author. A similar point, however, could also follow from a reconsideration of the view that performances “match” the content of the musical work which is challenged by Ridley (2004). If we abandon the idea of ‘matching’ then the performance has an autonomous creative life, which in the case of a strong creative performing spirit may exceed the creative accomplishments of the composer.

61 Thom’s discussion of performance denies this extension (Thom, 191 ff) on account of the ontological separation between audience (beholding) and performer (representation, interpretation). This ignores the fact that an interpreter is
The critical point here cuts two ways: if we distinguish an autonomous work with its living and evolving characteristics from its performance we are in trouble when it comes to a conception of the work and its concrete characteristics. In a narrow view of performance as simple, concrete representation of music in actual sounding performance, we encounter the question how the work inspires, regulates or directs the performance given that we cannot know such directives independently of the representation in performance? In a wider view of performance we would be unable to distinguish the work from its performance. This leads to aesthetic subjectivism or solipsism as it seems that under such circumstances “anything goes” in performance. In a narrow view, the work is lost in its transcendence.

3.5 The musical work as a topos

Applying Kivy’s notion of the discovery of the musical work to this ontological challenge may, however, assist us in finding a solution for this dilemma, even if the solution suggests different ontological relationships altogether: Let us assume that the work does not refer to a dualistic ontology of object and representation in performance where object and performance relate directly to each other as distinct yet connected through an ontology of matching, representation or imitation. Rather, let us assume (with Benson) that in fact the work defines a realm (topos) of possibility or opportunity in which musical activity of various kinds (eg. listening, playing, interpreting and improvisation) takes place. The composer would be seen to initially discover the musical work as a topos. His discovery identifies the work as an opportunity for performance. The notation of the work would be a symbolic map, a representation of this topos. It outlines the basic characteristics of this realm symbolically and suggests to musical activity a realm of possibilities. The possibilities of the topos receive further and detailed clarity and actuality in the activities of musical performance. Performance reveals the topos and musical form in its actuality and further discovers the autonomous life of the musical work in audible practice. The creativity of the composer discovers a possibility – a “world in which music making takes place”62. The musical performance subsequently “dwells” in this world and completes this discovery. Together the topos of the musical work and the activity of musical interpretation, listening and performing bring the work to life. They transform the topos into a bios-music becomes a form of life.

One of the advantages of this kind of ontological view is that it starts to transcend the regional and static framework in which the discussion has progressed so far. That is, the musical work (score) and the performance have been considered in the main as two ontologically different “forms” or “things” within a symbolic and representational relationship only. I have suggested, however, that this relationship is not finite or closed. In fact the nature of the musical work as a work for performance implies that the musical work is ontologically similar to a living being, that is, the musical work constantly redefines its possibilities. If we conceive the musical work, its notation and performance in this context, the characteristics and role of notation become transformed as suggested above to reflect the dialogical nature of the discovery in question. The constitution of the musical work as a topos would affect our aesthetic discussion and evaluation: When we ask if a work had been faithfully realised, for example, we would ask if it had achieved vivid existence and always a “ beholder” and a beholder needs to represent and interpret. The aesthetic separation is granted, whereas the ontological one seems to be problematic.

62 Benson, 32.
if the performance had enabled the work to come to life. This seems to accord with musical practice, which ultimately is not concerned with correctness in performance but with disclosure.

In addition to its obvious advantages which are related to the view of the musical work as a living being, the ontological paradigm proposed here between the topos and its discovering activities require further discussion. How does it account properly for a cultural practice which seems to regard and deals with music in reified terms? What would it imply in regard to improvisation or recordings? And furthermore: what are the ontological characteristics of the topos? How do we know when, and that a work has been adequately constituted as a realm? What level of detail is required and how does this affect the nature of performance and its relationship to the realm of the musical work? These questions appear to be considerable.

3.6 Aesthetic pluralism

Challenges to the analytical approach have come from a number of perspectives within the analytical tradition itself: In his essay “Is music an art?” Peter Kivy argues that music (which he takes to be pure instrumental or so called ‘absolute’ music) is strictly speaking not to be considered as fine art but is closer to a decorative craft. This change in focus –so Kivy- would imply that we concentrate less on questions of the seeming linguistic or representational nature of music and rather concern ourselves with the value of music and music making on its own terms. Alperson\(^63\) has pushed this line of argument further to suggest that instrumental music constitutes a continuum of decorative and imitative art. He suggests that we need a pluralistic account of musical tradition to enable us to make a pluralistic assessment of the value of varying traditions.

Arguments for aesthetic pluralism and the emphasis of the process nature of performance continue to challenge the discussion of the analytical ontology of music and threaten the paradigm of work and performance. In addition, musical developments in contemporary music, popular music and in the various media which contain music (recording, film, etc) make it questionable whether the radical philosophical discussion of the question “what is music?” can restrict itself to the boundaries separating musical genres and forms. Instead, the inquiry tends to drive towards an ontological substructure. The divisions between the various musical practices or genres such as improvisation, commercial and pop music, serious or classical instrumental music, music theatre and opera, folk music and ritual or religious music, etc. become unstable at an even superficial level of philosophical reflection as far as the ontological foundations of music are concerned. In an environment of aesthetic pluralism, music and musical activity start to dissolve the boundaries which keep form and formation separated.

Some of the arguments which compound such a collapse involve historical developments which have formed the cultural and aesthetic characteristics of music and music making and have altered the contexts of creation, re-creation and reception of music of all kinds. Particular examples here include the embeddedness of musical performance in a professional and commercialised setting, the use and presence of music in recording and multimedia technology or the use of music as film music.

Transposing the discussion of music into a realm of musical performance praxis seems to have far-reaching implications. It erodes the dependency exhibited by analytical discussions on an initially clear distinction between musical work and performance. While it introduces the possibility to consider an

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\(^{63}\) Alperson, 1992.
expanding range of musical practices, styles and historical contexts, this expansion comes at a price as ontological phenomena become more complex and the concerns for the details of musical praxis displace the more abstract view of ontological questions. In fact, the critical outcomes of such an extension seems to be responsible for a loss of patience with the project of ontology as a whole. Ridley proposes that the “whole move to ontology in thinking about musical performance is a mistake.” The grounds for this view are that when we reflect on music we consider primarily and exclusively questions of practice and aesthetic value:

“The first is, that in our ordinary- indeed in our actual aesthetic encounters with renderings of pieces of music, our primary concern, or at the very least one of our most prominent concerns, is whether a given rendition is good: or if it isn’t, whether it is so bad as to merit further action. As listeners, that is, we are chiefly alert and sensitive to issues about the value of what we are hearing. The second conclusion is that, since these sensitivities are operative, and even virulent, against the background of an apparently rather robust sense of work-identity, issues concerning work-identity can hardly be very urgent if what we are chiefly interested is our aesthetic experience of renditions of pieces of music. If we are doing aesthetics, that is, ontological questions deserve a place in the back row, at best.”

Ridley argues against pursuing an explicit ontological grounding of aesthetic and musical experience. His first issue is that any identity conditions of the work are not revealed anywhere else than in a performance of the work. This implies that our primary philosophical concern is to be with performance anyway. If we are to establish the identity and characteristic of a musical work we simply set out to find out “what properties it has, by experiencing performances of it, or by giving performances of it, and that is a process of discovery that may well have no determinate end.”

The suggestion is that the content of a work is an empty concept until it is revealed in performance. We have accordingly no choice but to consider the latter issue primarily. The most ontologically daring assumption that this position is prepared to make is that “performances are interpretations of works.” Beyond this supposedly unproblematic “neutral, pre-theoretical thought” there is no need, nor ground for further ontological discussion. “A philosophical interest in music and its performance is best satisfied when pursued independently of ontological considerations… Musical ontology should be responsive to the ways we engage with and discuss music and its works.”

The idea that ontological questions are irrelevant to a discussion of music mirrors Hume’s point about the need to abandon metaphysics and metaphysical questions because human consciousness and conceptual ability is simply unable to decide such questions. As in this most famous case, we must doubt if the argument of aesthetics over ontology is firstly well conceived and secondly successful. The view that our interest in music can simply limit itself to the aesthetic value of what is heard and experienced in performance does not seem to allow us to ground such value and interest itself. In addition where does the assumption of the musical work itself become further substantiated? Given that it is essentially an empty concept why would

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64 The exception here is Davies who discusses extensively the issue of a contextualist ontology of a musical work and develops the notion of “thickness” of the constitutive properties of a work. Thus, works which seek to define the performance process extensively, including works in the recent western musical tradition are said to be “thick” in constitutive properties, whereas works which leave considerable decisions to the performer and contain improvisatory aspects (which may include works of the non-western tradition) are considered to be thin. (Davies, 2001).
65 Ridley, 111.
66 Ridley, 113/4.
67 A similar ontological scepticism is displayed by Sharpe (“ontology is ideology”) and Davies, who discusses ontology “without enthusiasm” (Davies (2001), 37).
68 Ridley, 141.
69 Ridley, 125.
we bother about it? If we merely consider individual works of music, the ontological interest in music may well seem irrelevant: after all we are already operating with a well accepted insight that we are dealing with worthwhile works of music. However, the question looks different when we consider music as such. Not only do we attempt value judgements across the entirety of music, but we also consider music as a human practice and creation, as a field of art. At this point we are necessarily asking how we engage with music as such. What makes it possible to relate to certain formed sounds (but not others) as music? Wherever a limit of a field and activity becomes visible the ontological questions seem to come into view. In fact, artistic creativity appears to rely on the challenges of such limits and experience. It puts ontological preconceptions into question which appear otherwise rather irrelevant when considered in the context of familiar and straightforward musical practice.71

Confronted with limits and perplexity in regard to the familiar realm, philosophical reflection emerges. One can of course argue for a containment of certain questions and in particular for a view that aesthetic questions can be determined independently of any but the most obvious and trivial ontological commitments. However, in the final analysis one cannot silence the urge to ask ontological questions themselves, because these seem to define philosophical thinking itself. A familiar musical practice is not strictly speaking the concern of the philosopher: philosophical interest becomes ignited by the problem of music as music - not by individual musical works. The latter is a matter for musicology or music criticism. Philosophical interest is aroused because music becomes unfamiliar and appears to be problematic - first in relation to its own practices but very soon in relation to familiar notions of ontology. The philosopher of music is primarily concerned with ontology because that is what makes the concern philosophical. This does not mean that he will not take as a starting point the pluralistic experience of music and musical activity. If he, however, stops there and discusses music in terms of its activity and form only (and the value, importance and relevance of such discussions is not denied) the discussion ceases to be philosophical.

70 Ridley 128/9.
71 We only need to think of the works of Cage who puts the performance concept into question in works such as 4′33″ which consists entirely of silence. Is this a work and is it performed? Do we attend a performance of a work? These are questions which challenge ontology precisely because artistic practice has been extended. To simply settle with artistic practice and ignore the ontological implications, seems to me to ignore the artistic impact of the statements these works make just as much. Art challenges us and requires philosophical reflection to sustain itself in turn.
4.1 The *praxis* of music making

In the previous section we have approached music through a consideration of the musical work and have considered musical activity within this context. We are now able to turn the table and approach music from the point of view of musical activity. One difficulty in particular invites us to do so: It is the question to what extent so-called Platonic conceptions of the musical work can successfully account for the relationship between musical performance and the musical work in their historical development. While the idea of a referential and symbolic relationship between the musical work and the performance could be maintained to a point, this relationship becomes somewhat more difficult to consider if we ask (from the point of view of a qualified music-historical understanding) to what extent musical performance determines the musical work? Is there a formative relationship which stretches from the performance to the work and how significant is this relationship? As we already have suggested above there are strong reasons to believe that this is the case. However, how would we conceive of this in practice? Would we need to look for qualifications that contain the historical influence of musical performances on musical works? What implications would this have for our conception of music and its ontology as a whole?

A phenomenon which seems to suggest the relevance of such a relationship is musical tradition and culture. Musical works are culturally determined in the way in which they are perceived, approached, performed and listened to. Furthermore the creation and performance of musical works is subject to historical developments to the point where one work can change its identity considerably.

Philosophers of music such as Adorno and Dahlhaus, the Marxist thinker Zofia Lissa and more recently the American philosopher Lydia Goehr have highlighted the historical and social context which informs the creation of musical works. Their views include important arguments for a relativisation of the musical work itself to the point of showing contingent aspects of the work concept (as in the case of Lydia Goehr for example). The discussion tends to focus on music-historical developments in relation to performance, compositional practice, contemporary and aleatoric music and their cultural significance and includes the reflection on the phenomena of folk- and non-European music. I will be primarily interested in discussing the arguments for the contextual or contingent aspects of musical work in order to establish a clearer view of ontological implications.

4.2 The relativity of the musical work concept

The idea to solve questions about the musical work and its relation to performance by abandoning the ontological perspective altogether appears to undercut the very foundations of the argument: abandoning ontological concerns will rid us of a philosophical perspective as well. However, this danger should not prevent us from looking at the duality of musical work and performance in its historical dependency. In addition, we may also need to consider how musical developments which appear to have transcended the work-performance context relate to musical ontology. After all there is by now ample evidence for music and musical practice which extends an obvious work-concept. Broadening our view to include the phenomena of improvisation, popular music, non-western music and contemporary music which no longer fits the traditional canon of the musical artwork will certainly challenge the work-performance distinction.
While this view (which we find variously emphasised by Adorno, Zofia Lissa\textsuperscript{72} and others) may compel us to revise the fundamentals of musical ontology, a broader view of this kind raises the question to what extent and in what respect we can still discuss music as a unified phenomenon. The work concept provides us with a unifying paradigm to music where characteristics such as creatibility, autonomy, identity, authenticity, originality, etc are easily centred. It provides an effective launchpad for further discussion on many aspects of musical practice and aesthetics. Relativising and even dismantling this concept may well have significant and complicated implications for the related and sometimes quite evident phenomena grounded by it.

At the same time, sticking to a traditional work concept also raises many questions in regard to the unified nature of music as not all musical practice (even with the history of western art, let alone the larger history of music) can be readily subsumed under the work-performance paradigm. A musical work (opus) appears to require certain distinct musical practices such as particular forms of compositional practice, performance practices and types of audience attention. The musical work-concept as it is used in musical analysis and practice at the moment seems itself evidently historically contingent.\textsuperscript{73} Lippman\textsuperscript{74} for example refers to the fact that the musical work has its root in a particular practice and is at the same time dependent on some form of permanence which it receives through its notational definition:

\begin{quote}
“The basic conceptions that define the musical work of art and the expression of notation and the artfully composed work were explicitly contrasted with improvisational practice, that individual genius and personal style became conspicuous as musical values, that the musical work of art was regarded as a self-contained and perfected entity, and that music was thought of, like the other arts, as a creative, or ‘poetic’ endeavour based on science, with products that merited preservation and imitation.”\textsuperscript{75}
\end{quote}

The contrast which is being created here is traditional: The musical work of art as a “self contained and perfected entity” is contrasted with the freedom and unpredictability of “improvisational practice.” Lippman (like Levinson above) believes that the existence of the musical work is related to its ‘poetic’ createdness, a process of definition and ultimately perfection in the activity of individual genius. However, if such an activity is evidently absent one may ask what will become of the ontological particulars of the musical work? If we consider a period of history or practice of music making in which the creation of music was not related to a specific and identifiable artist (composer) or to an unambiguous form of notation or where music is the outcome of a largely improvisational practice it seems questionable if much would be gained through a consideration of musical works.

Yet, even essentially work-less music is presented today to a listening public as a package of tradeable objects as readily as those works that have been created by individual composers, are notated in a score and are subject to conventional performance traditions. So why should the absence of a determinable author, notation or creative process threaten the ontological particulars of a musical work which appears to be also essentially determined by the processes of reception and dissemination? On the surface, the historical or cultural contingency of the work-concept need not disqualify our discussion of the work as the proper and clear understanding of what amounts to a work has not yet been reached. Superficially, there is no compelling reason to narrow the concept of work from the outset to encompass only a particular way of

\textsuperscript{72} Zofia Lissa (1969), \textit{Aufsaetze zur Musikaesthetik}, Berlin: Henschelverlag.

\textsuperscript{73} For a discussion of the historical aspects of the musical work concept from a music-historical point of view see G. Henneberg (1983).

\textsuperscript{74} Lippman (1977).

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making music. Instead a work maybe anything that is the result of a “working” (wirken)\(^76\) and either fixed in its structure and intentions in a rudimentary way or presumed to be fixed in these respects.

A broader view of the creation of the musical work as a work is on this reading not merely the result of a cultural and musical tradition with respect to its creative practices. It may also be the result of the receptive culture which interprets, attends to and deals with the musical work as a work. In other words, the work-character of music may be an outcome of the listening process and the contexts in which music is “appropriated” by human consciousness.

One of the striking aspects in which the musical work is seen to manifest itself is the process of notation. Upholding a priority of music making Small describes the impact of notation on musical activity (“musicking”) as follows:

“The moment the musician feels the need to write down instructions for performance in order to preserve it and hold it steady, a change begins to take place in the nature of musicking and in the relationships between those taking part. A crack appears in the hitherto unified musical universe; the single process begins to split apart, separating composer from listener, centralizing power in the hands of the composer, the person who tells the performers what they are to do, and of the director, the person who tells them how they are to do it.”\(^77\)

Leaving aside the conflation between alleged personal and political characteristics which notation is said to establish, the point that notation represents a “crack in the hitherto unified musical universe” needs to be considered further. In the most obvious sense, the work receives ontological definitions through its notation, which symbolises the individual characteristics of the work and invokes the realisation of specific actions and attitudes that lead to the concretisation of the musical performance. As long as music is defined through notation it seems we can speak of a musical work as discussed above. However, there are conceivably other modes and processes of documentation which lead to a constitution of the work including memorisation and the recording of music. These do not necessarily lend themselves to being re-creative directives, but they capture the form created by the activity and they would nevertheless be able to become performance directives. In both instances of memorisation and recording, musical practice, which may well have been originally creative and not directed towards work permanence, has been arrested and condensed into a musical work. Musical “working” seems to form the musical work when this activity is remembered, notated or recorded- in other words when music making (or musicking) is arrested for the present and future and secured from transience in (repeatable) musical form.

\(^75\) Lippman (1977), 201.
\(^76\) As Lissa points out the musical work (Werk) is the result of an activity (wirken) which is already implied in the language in which we speak about the work. (opus- operare, etc). Activity (wirken) is the precondition for the creation of the work (Werk). The specific activity of the artist (creator) in question here is creation (schaffen).
\(^77\) Small, 115.
4.3 The historical development of the work concept

One of the writers who have prominently engaged with the historically contingent nature of the work concept and its development is the German musicologist Carl Dahlhaus who considers its meaning far from self-evident. Dahlhaus cites the German philosopher Herder whose use of the Aristotelian distinction between praxis and poiesis underpins his understanding of music as an “energetic art” thus challenging notions of music as a collection of works. Herder’s emphasis of energeia as the central ontological feature of music is closely related to the 18th century analysis of language by v. Humboldt, whose statement that language is no “ergon” but an “energeia” and needs to be understood genetically highlights the need to think of the work as a secondary and derivative outcome of an activity. In addition, musical understanding would need to proceed “genetically” and focus on how music is made, composed, performed or improvised.

According to Dahlhaus, similar reflections are found in the early history of western classical music in the 16th century. The church musician Nicolaus Listenius for example separates musica poetica (composition) from musica practica (musical activity, performance) and draws attention to the musical text as the manifestation of music and the musical work. This viewpoint did not find general acceptance, according to Dahlhaus, until around 1800.

“In music the concept of a work arose at a relatively late stage in history, and, in contrast to the concept of the work in the visual arts, has always been a precarious one. For music is directly and primarily experienced as a process or a performance, and not as a form which confronts the listener. It forces itself upon one instead of being observed from a safe distance. It is therefore hardly a coincidence that it was only in the sixteenth century that the concept of a work was taken over from the poetics and theories of art by the aesthetics of music and even then only hesitatingly and sporadically – and that it did not establish itself in the general consciousness of the educated before the eighteenth century.”

Dahlhaus’ point is that our primary access to music is experience of process not form and that the experience of music “from a safe distance” is a function of historical development. The concept of the musical work as an enduring form is an outcome of musical practice and more importantly due to the establishment of the “institution of the bourgeois concert”. The result is that the “concert is as artificial as the works which it serves and which serve it.” Musical practices which do not rely on a presentation of concerts (i.e. social and ritual music making) thus also have no need for the concept of the musical work. In addition the work concept and the corresponding productive and receptive practices also serve to emphasise

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78 Dahlhaus (1982).
80 Humboldt states: “Regarded in its true nature, language is an enduring thing, and at every moment a transitory one. Even its maintenance by writing is always just an incomplete, mummy –like preservation, only needed again in attempting to picture the living utterance. In itself it is no product (Ergon), but an activity (Energeia). Its true definition therefore can only be a genetic one.” This quote is found in both Benson (Benson, 125) and Dahlhaus (Carl Dahlhaus (1982), Esthetics of Music, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, p. 10).
81 The point that Listenius is somehow the father of the modern musical work concept is disputed by Goehr (Goehr, 116/7) with reference to the Aristotelian roots of Listenius’ notion of an opus perfectum et absolutum as an outcome of musica poetica. Goehr argues that Listenius’ distinction may be just as much Aristotelian (reflecting the distinction between episteme, energeia and ergon) than it is about the musical work. In fact, there seem to be good reasons for Goehr to suggest that Aristotle and not musical practice is the main source of Listenius’ comments. Goehr’s point is philosophically fertile and will be taken up further below in my own appropriation of Aristotelian distinctions towards an ontology of music.
82 Dahlhaus (1982), 11.
83 Dahlhaus (1987), 220.
the importance of the creator/composer and ensure that the work survives after the death of the artist. In the
work concept music affirms its existence as poeisis; in the abandonment of the work concept that of praxis.

More recent discussions notably by Lydia Goehr have focussed on a considerable further relativisation
of the notion of the musical work.85 In her book The imaginary museum of musical works86 Goehr argues
that the notion of the musical work which features centrally in the ontological and aesthetic debate is a
historically derived and developed concept which requires in itself further clarification. Like Adorno, Goehr
suggests in particular that the concept is an outcome of musical practice which in turn is dependent on socio-
political, cultural and other historical influences. Goehr cites a number of historical facts which indicate that
the work concept emerged within the practices and ideals of romanticism. The important features of the
musical work such as autonomy, authorship and permanence are not found in the practice of the 18th century:

“The idea of a work of music existing as a fixed creation independently of its many possible performances had no regulative force in practice that demanded adaptable and functional music, and which allowed an open interchange of musical material. Musicians did not see works as much as they saw individual performances themselves to be the direct outcome of their compositional activity...Music was not always produced to outlast its performance or survive more than a few performances.”87

This attitude is also responsible for the fact that the role of notation and musicians’ attitudes towards
its interpretation tends to be accordingly flexible and loose. Notation of the musical work is far from direct
and prescriptive. Notation does what is required and no more: It fixes the musical material to exclude certain
possibilities, to define others and to provide opportunity for the performer to bring the intended musical work
to life. In fact one could go so far as to say that notation is in summary suggestive only and that in order for a
musical work to be realised and for the musical performance to be successful the composer relies necessarily
on the performer’s creative and active musical spontaneity. The interpretation of the musical work does not
only require the understanding of appropriate contexts it also requires the engagement of the autonomous
imagination of the performer to re-create the work as it where from its origins and in its living actuality.

This characteristic is emphasized in the point that appropriate interpretation requires realisation of the
musical work from the spirit (and not primarily the notes or “letter”) of the notated score. The conductor
Furtwaengler states as much when he describes the function of expression marks in musical scores:

“For it is quite clear that expression marks, whether they are sparse or systematic, as in
Bach, or abundant and realistically minute as with many of our contemporaries, are not the
slightest use if the sense and spirit of the music are not captured. They can protect one
against bad mistakes the first time there are encountered, nothing more. For one can never
simply deduce the sense of the music from them. Rather they presuppose the knowledge of
this sense and vice versa. Anyone actually satisfied with the “notes” knows nothing of the
secret of the great works.”88

In their reference to the “sense and spirit of music” performing musicians such as Furtwängler and
Harnoncourt emphasise the complementary dependency of the musical work on an interpretative activity and
performance and the active and open quality of the concepts of improvisation, performance and the musical

84 Dahlhaus (1987), 222.
85 Although it has been pointed out by Davies (Davies, 2001, p. 90) that Goehr in fact enforces what she attempts to
criticise.
87 Goehr (1992), 185/6.
88 Furtwängler, 68.
work. This quality extends not only to musical realisation but to the notation of music. Musical notation is as detailed, prescribed or suggestive as the interpretative and performative capacities that are required for its sounding realisation require and allow. Its interpretation is as literal as the individual musician’s spontaneity and imagination determine. The ontological picture thus is not clear-cut.

The performance does not simply realise a notated, musical work which exists autonomously and in a separate ontological stratum, but musical performance is guided, perhaps directed by the musical work while in turn constituting the musical work through its practices. Created by artistic and cultural practice, the work shows itself to be an open and regulative concept which regulates musical practice and is regulated by musical practice in response. Goehr suggests the following:

“'The ontological picture comprises claims about concepts and objects that together constitute an account of the normative structure of classical music practice. I shall claim specifically of the concept of a musical work (i) that it is an open concept with original and derivative employment; (ii) that it is correlated to the ideals of a practice; (iii) that it is a regulative concept; (iv) that it is projective; and (v) that it is an emergent concept.’”

Goehr dissolves the predictable relationship between work and performance by introducing a fluid concept of the musical work. This amounts to a turn of ontological attention away from the work to the musical practice. Focussing on the primacy of musical practice generates an understanding of the work as a regulative and open concept of this practice. As a regulative concept, the work-concept sets a context for the understanding, evaluation and engagement with practices of music making such as performance, improvisation, composition and listening. Its open character would suggest that the claims to permanence which are made by the musical work in its various aspects and are manifested particularly through its notation are in need of further understanding. It seems indeed, that the musical work may not be entirely on the same ontological level as the activity of music making and its creative practices. In addition, Goehr’s criticism suggests that the performance practice of the late 18\textsuperscript{th} century shows that all musical works (the canonical works of absolute instrumental music included) receive aesthetic and ontological definition from their mode of creation, concretisation (notation), interpretation and reception. Does this mean then, that we can abandon the notion of the musical work as an ontologically fundamental concept? Does the formal and regulative role of the work-concept imply ontological derivation?

On one level Goehr’s analysis seems to suggest a derivative status for the work as it is understood in a generic or general sense. In musical practice we may no longer refer to Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony as an absolute and independent reference point that can validate our performances of it. Instead, we may now need to understand the constitutive role of performance and the importance of the history of these performances to the identity of the work. This seems to accord with recent developments in the performance of music which emphasise the restorative work of performers and the need for a conscious understanding of performance traditions when approaching musical works of the past.\textsuperscript{90} The demand for authenticity here refers to establishing an historically appropriate and original context of interpretation and (in a wider sense) to uncovering individual and original ways of conceiving a work of music relative to the original mode of performance. Paradoxically for our context which claims the ontological embeddedness of the work in the performance context, this uncovering intends to cleanse the work from the historical layers of performance

\textsuperscript{89} Goehr (1992), 89/90.
\textsuperscript{90} Discussion of the authenticity issue in music are found in Kivy (1995) and Davies (2001).
traditions and instead claims to lead the interpretative focus back to original and buried contexts of interpretation to authentically establish the style and spirit of the work. The restorative attitude to performance seems to presuppose musical works more than ever. What are we referring to when we speak of the style and spirit of the work given that the work is so dependent on the context of interpretation? It seems to me that we need to separate the ontological relativisation of the work-concept from the requirements of a hermeneutic understanding of the interpretation of the musical score. The latter still presupposes the musical work as a given if its intention is to restore authenticity of performance and not just authenticity of original performance. To be sure, the score is written for an interpretative community and thus for a particular context. If this context changes the “meaning” of the score and the realisation of the music will change most probably significantly. But why would we be troubled by this change and not accept it as inevitable, entirely natural and even desirable? Goehr implies that pre-19th century musical practice precisely thought this way and did not concern itself with restorative intentions. Yet, at the same time, work-affirmative practices emerged and composers in particular took charge of detailed and unambiguous definitions of their works. Thus musical work are allegedly established in their autonomy and the ontological dependency of the works on their performances becomes limited and an original, perhaps naturally transformative mode of conception of the work in performance is replaced by demands for faithfulness to the composer’s intentions.

It seems clear that a project which assumes a preservative and restorative perspective to musical works assumes the existence of an autonomous work which it wishes to restore. Otherwise, why would we be bothered by restorative ambitions? However, this tacit assumption remains unclarified and its subsequent practice of reconstruction remains ontologically mysterious. If we assume instead that there is or was a musical practice which relies or relied on an important and original dependency of the work on its mode of performance and on musical practice as a whole we are troubled by the issue why we should return to authenticity considerations altogether. After all, if the musical work is merely a regulative concept, why is there a need to return to origins other than as a source of personal ideas and inspiration?

We could take the view which seems also practically cogent that the restorative intentions relate to the unity of performance and work, that is, to the unity of musical practice in question. This would make (also practically) perfect sense. It would allow us to affirm a dependency of musical notation and musical practice. It would in its entirety show that the musical work is not a preconceived and ideal object and the score is not an immutable performance blueprint. However, burying the assumption of an independent and autonomous musical work within musical practice still leaves some major ontological issues unanswered: How come we are bothering at all with works of the past? It seems that all we have done is to widen the scope of the musical work. Restoration of this kind simply reifies the unity of performance and score in the same way as one may re-enact the landing of the first fleet in Sydney Harbour. The perception here is one of fiction and invented reality and has on the surface a merely entertaining character. If we assume on the other hand that

91 The music historical correlates to this view are examples of the direct appropriation and transformation of the musical works of the past by composers of future times without concern to preserve work authenticity. Thus, Mozart readily transcribed and re-orchestrated works of past masters (Handel’s “Messiah”, Bach Inventions, Fugues). However this attitude is by no means limited to the 18th century. It prevailed into the 19th century (Liszt, Brahms transcriptions) and even the 20th century (Schoenberg’s Brahms transcription, Reger’s Bach transcriptions, Stokowski’s Bach orchestrations, etc). Composers did not necessarily feel the need to preserve a musical work in its “original” characteristics. Exceptions are restorative attitudes towards Bach by Mendelssohn (St. Mathew Passion), Beethoven by Berlioz and Wagner, etc. Despite this, the attitude of transformation or preservation is not necessarily limited historically and is perhaps not so
performances of this kind restore authentic insights then we will be entitled to question what is being experienced or understood. The musical work emerges as the obvious candidate, with the difference that its realm of definition has been widened to include the concretisation of notated suggestions. In any case, we find a seemingly necessary ontological separation between the performance and the work. There is an apparent need to maintain a distance between the work and performance which can perhaps be mediated by the score but which remains essential for performance even in the case where we wish to maintain authentic, improvisatory characteristics.

Goehr’s discussion of the contingency of the musical work achieves a relativisation of the way in which we need to understand musical practice and the relationship between performance, notation and that which we may call the “musical work”. Pointing to a musical practice which challenges a traditional work concept at the heart of the traditional canon of musical artworks, namely the Beethoven symphonies, Goehr makes a point for reconsidering the concept of the musical work on a fundamental level. She does not prove that there are no musical works before 1800 as the very notion of the musical work is precisely in question. However, she unsettles our confidence in a straightforward and autonomous definition of the musical work in the context of musical practice.

A focus on musical practice has a further potential to challenge naïve ontological conceptions. This is particularly evident if we consider the practice of musical improvisation. In discussions of the relativity of the musical work the case of musical improvisation is frequently cited. This is predictable as the practice of improvisation incorporates a number of elements that appear to run counter to the autonomous, enduring existence of a musical work. In the first instance few improvisations are encoded in a score and if so only in the most basic and sketchy manner. Secondly, improvisation tends to establish semantic coherence without a premeditated structure. Thirdly, improvisation seems to be a paradigm example of musical practice in which the transient characteristics of music are experientially maintained and in which the particularised and fleeting experience of music becomes a topic of music making itself. Finally and summarily, improvisation appears to challenge all that we understand the musical work to represent: the ability to constitute an explicit and permanent structure, an object of disinterested attention, discussion, analysis, eventual transformation and re-creative interpretation. Given this direct challenge to the concept of the musical work from the practice of improvisation (a challenge which is implicit in the 18th century improvisational practices of much an outcome of a historical period but a reflection of artistic or creative activity and its appropriate place in musical culture.

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92 See Furtwängler: “Every work carries within it its own ‘distance’, from which one must consider it. To discover this distance and act accordingly is the principal duty of the performer” (Furtwaengler, 139).
93 Davies also suggests this in Davies (2001), 90.
94 A single-minded concern for musical practice is the already cited conception of “musicking” by C. Small. Musical practice (embracing listening, performance, rehearsing, practicing, dancing or providing material for a performance) is seen to be primary and accordingly the focus of questioning is shifted from a concern for music and any works of music to the meaning of the practice of music making. According to Small: “Using the concept of musicking as a human encounter we can ask the wider and more interesting question: What does it mean when this performance (of this work) takes place at this time, in this place with these participants? Or to put it more simply, we can ask of the performance, any performance anywhere and at anytime, What’s really going on here?” (Small, 10). In my view the difficulty with Small’s approach is its susceptibility to become readily contaminated with tacit sociological or political premises. To be sure such contamination is the danger of any abstract enquiry, but to preserve a philosophical- as distinct from any other- view point we need to attempt at least to keep the perspective clear. That is, we need to preserve the distinctiveness of the questions. Small’s question invites potentially immediate and undifferentiated conflation of political, philosophical and aesthetic perspectives and this creates potentially a momentum of difficulties. This notwithstanding, the approach to isolate and investigate the practice of music making in itself is potentially productive in showing up the relevant phenomena.
musical performances cited by Goehr) it seems important to consider further the relationship between the musical practice of improvisation and the musical work and to ask if indeed (and in which sense) improvisation denies the existence of the work concept.

4.4 The process of improvisation and the musical work

I have suggested so far that the contextualisation of the musical work suggested by Goehr need not deny the existence of a musical work but only relativises its ontology and establishes its dependency on interpretative practice and attitudes. I will take a similar view in relation to improvisation, a view which however seems much harder to defend given the fact that musical improvisation (at least in its most extreme form) excludes many traditional work-characteristics by its absence of notation and pre-meditated composition and through its reliance on spontaneity and unpredictability. Improvisation or extemporisation is the paradigmatic case of music making in the moment and appears to show the transient nature of music in its fullest light. However, not all improvisation is alike and the boundaries between planned performances, the recreation of notated music and the free improvisation of music are clearly fluid. Many performances which are highly regulated and codified contain aspects of free improvisation and vice versa. This means that the separation which is often strongly drawn between improvisation and performance is perhaps less significant than it seems. In fact there seems to be a sliding attitude which can see improvisation become re-creative performance when the work concept and the demand for “faithfulness” to the work are introduced. On the surface, it seems, the stronger the emphases of the work concept on this practice, the more important become explicit and comprehensive notation, faithfulness to the “text” and questions of permanence and authorship to the relevant musical practice. With such attitudes, the spontaneity, freedom and variability which characterises improvisation disappears. Does this mean, then that improvisation and performance which is interpretative and re-creative are incompatible?

If we look at attitudes from practising musicians, we see frequently an advocacy that all performance is to include an improvisational aspect for fundamental, artistic reasons. Benson\(^\text{95}\) for example cites numerous examples of practicing musicians (Steuermann, Harnoncourt, Furtwängler, Brendel and others) who have emphasised the need for musical performance to contain elements of surprise, spontaneity and improvisation in order to create a living art work and vivid performance. It seems then that much depends on how ultimately we conceive of the relationship between the activities of composition, performance or interpretation and improvisation. Improvisation is a complex activity with many layers of possible application to musical performance\(^\text{96}\) including interpretative performance. The inevitable lack of complete determination of the musical work in notation suggests that improvisation is a necessary and inevitable part of interpretative and re-creative musical practice. In this sense improvisation does not so much define a separate musical practice but qualifies an aspect of our attitude towards performance. Since the musical

\(^{95}\) Benson cites Vaughan Williams among others, who claims that a score “has about as much to do with music as a time table has to do with a railway journey” (see Benson, 82 and 123/24).

\(^{96}\) Benson (Benson, 26-29) distinguishes eleven different practical senses of improvisation reminding us of the important contribution that improvisation makes to traditionally conceived work-performance in for example the interpretation of classical and pre-classical music. The performance of figured bass is a case in point where improvisation plays an integral part in the performance of an incompletely notated work. The incompleteness of notation is according to Ingarden the feature of all notated works and thus it would seem that improvisation is by necessity an aspect of the realisation of Unbestimmtheitsstellen in performance.
notation presents us with a schema which defines possibilities for performance only, the concrete reality in performance is even in the case of a notated work in each and every concrete case “unforeseen.”

However, how does the matter lie in the case of music which is not notated and freely conceived in performance? If we conceive of the work as musical form only and in the most general sense as the ontologically “other”, as the ontological point of “resistance” and form of our listening or performing consciousness, we realise that even where a work is not pre-conceived and does not exist in a notational schema but is seemingly freely created (discovered or invented) in performance the work-performance paradigm can still apply. In other words, the fact that a musical work is not notated or designed ahead of the performance does not exclude the performance constituting a musical form and thus being an instance of a “work”. The possibilities of the form are just not revealed in advance and there are peculiar conditions which may attach to the re-creation and interpretation of it. But there are methods to establish an ontological work identity and presence in the form: The improvised performance is in-principle notatable. The performance displays formal and logical principles which qualify the total, heard phenomenon as an organic and logical structure. While the original performance of a work freely conceived in performance is not reproducible (except in phonographic form) this is also the case for any composed work and indeed for any performance. No two performances are exactly identical. If we record a freely improvised performance, though, we would be able to point out relevant formal features in principle and the performance would be proven to reveal features of logical musical progression, structured form and development. Naturally, it would be difficult to distinguish between features of the performance and features of the form or supposed “work”. But that is the case with a conventional performance as well if we compare the circumstances appropriately. A conventional performance of a work which is unfamiliar to us and has perhaps never been performed will make it just as difficult for us to assign relevant attributes to the performance or to the work itself. However, that does not mean that the performance does not reveal work-characteristics in the form of an enduring structure or “other”. Without such in principle objectifiable features of an “other”, without an ontological deposit left by the performance, the performance itself would appear to lack meaningful attributes. The fact that we may not readily be able to point to an ontological entity separate from the performance while the performance unfolds does not imply that there is no musical form or that such a form is not intended.

4.5 Improvisation as an approach to performance

One way to illustrate this latter point would be to consider the sight-unseen performance of a conventional work. This will illustrate that improvisation qualifies an attitude towards performance rather than an ontological modality.

In the case of “prima-vista” performances a performer unfamiliar with the work discovers the structure of the work intuitively while the performance unfolds. The performer does not simply ‘read off’ the work from a schema in a successive way. At all times, the performance is guided by an intuition of- and empathy for the work as a whole. Within such an intuition the work becomes comprehensible and thus ‘predictable’ to the performer. However, while the work could be said to be predictable in some respects, this is only a function of some aspects of the work such as harmonic, melodic and rhythmic progression with

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97 See Benson’s reference to the etymological origin of “improvisation” in the latin improvisus, ie. unforeseen.
98 These are occasion in which performers read a musical score for the first time (also referred to as “sight reading”).
which the performer is becoming increasingly familiar as the performance progresses. Repetitions or variations of material and the conformity to traditional formal conceptions (e.g. sonata or rondo form) enable the performer to contain the realm of indeterminacy and thus establish a meaningful profile. The predictability does not extend to the detailed experience of the musical dialogue or argument unfolded by the work itself which is subject to the actual articulation by the performer. In this respect the performer is in no way different to the composer with the exception that the latter articulates forms of musical experiences and the former actual musical experiences themselves. In the case of a “prima-vista” performance this is evident to us emphatically in the subjective experience of a performer who discovers simultaneously the given possibility and actuality of musical experience.

The discovery which we experience in “prima-vista” playing appears more original than the rehearsed musical performance with its familiarity. However, this depends on our conception of the force of determination that we ascribe to the forms of musical experience. Ontologically, the musical work remains elusive in respect of its ability to determine concrete performance even if we are familiar with its structural, musical properties. The “prima-vista” performance just highlights a fact of indeterminacy that is part of the ontology of the musical work in its living being. The difference in experience is that familiarity builds a performance tradition and can transform the musical form into a predictable form or cliché. But a cliché does not reflect the authentic nature of musical form which is revealed in “prima-vista” performance. A performance tradition starts to determine the way in which the areas of indeterminacy become defined in performance and so it seems that such areas become diminished. However, if we recover the work in its primordial originality we do not only recover our musical experience of the originality of the work but we also recover the aspects of unforeseen detail which make up the essence of a musical work as we have seen. The work or musical form itself does not lose its originality. Our performance traditions fill its “gaps” but these gaps are in principle recoverable and in spontaneous performance of the kind outlined they often emerge.

This experience of the work is to be distinguished from the ontological reality. The first musical utterance, be it composed or improvised or a performative venture into the “unknown” creates conditions and structures of reference. Composers and improvisers react to the very material they have created in the process of creation. They may deny the material, disappoint its inherent expectations to the point of randomisation. However, the passing material of the musical practice becomes inevitably a manifestation of a musical work, a possibility for re-creative, reflective consciousness. Musical practice is always formative.

We thus need to separate two points:

(1) Musical activity – be it composition, improvisation or the performance of a rehearsed work-always forms a (the) musical work. The work is the sediment of working.

(2) All Musical activity qua activity contains aspects of an unforeseen or improvised experience. These aspects are dependent on a number of interpretative circumstances and attitudes. They are modifiable and while the improvised attitude to the work may diminish on account of our familiarity with the work, material or musical history in question, the possibility for spontaneity is grounded in the essential openness of the musical work as a possibility itself.

As occurs in avant-garde music.
The musical work itself is a temporally unfolding form and thus only conceivable as a structural whole from an a-temporal, transcendental point of view. From such a viewpoint, that is one in which both actuality and possibility would be accessible in their totality, we could become familiar with the musical work in all its logical and structural connections and in its originality at the same time. However, no such viewpoint is available, except in the sense that we can experience both the presence and absence of determination in the practice and reflection of the process of musical performance.

Re-creative performance can recover an original attitude of work conception in the process of prima-vista reading where it discovers the work in its detail from an intuition of its overall ontological unity and aesthetic character. This discovery takes on the characteristics of an original revelation. This presumed originality and indeterminacy creates attitudes of suspense, spontaneity and unpredictability which are characteristic of originally creative activity. With the first searching for the work, with the first structured articulation of music and with the introduction to what the performer surmised is the musical form(s) the work takes shape. This concrete constitution of the musical form occurs in all examples of authentic music making—be it primarily interpretative and re-creative or improvisatory. It depends on two aspects: the ontological characteristics of the musical form itself and the ontological characteristics of the process in which the musical form is created or constituted.

Both sets of characteristics require further discussion especially in regard to their temporality which— as we have seen—emerges as a major constituting factor in the evolution of the musical form as an organic structure with homogenous ontological characteristics. If we take up our above point that music is self-referential and that this self-reference establishes the musical form as a work (the pieces of music), we can see that the musical work is—in Kant’s sense—a totum and not a compositum. This means, that its conception is a matter of progressing from the synthetic-universal to the particular. Such a conception is non-discursive and requires intuition. The music making processes of composition, performance and improvisation overlap in their characteristics. They “reveal” rather than construct the musical form through the creative and re-creative activities in an organic way. This is possible because the musical form has an essentially organic structure: musical ideas, motifs and phrases become the elements which determine entire work-structures and—in reflective consciousness—vice versa: the musical logos and structure grants musical detail the possibility for concrete meaning. Identifying meaningful musical structures, motives and phrases as well as rudimentary harmonic progressions establishes form as there is a necessary, organic relationship between the musical details and its overall structure and shape. This is experienced powerfully in the activity of prima-vista reading: The demand to reveal the form of a known work in an original way is not a matter of making listening an interesting experience but follows directly from the structure of the work as a synthetic universal.

To be sure a second reading can take a different attitude to the details of the work. Having established the organic unity of the musical work and the relationship between parts and whole in concrete performance,
the improvisatory aspects may become reduced in a subjective and perhaps aesthetic sense in some respects. However the intuited overall form needs to unfold in exactly the same searching manner as the first and improvised performance or composition. While re-creative performance transforms the performance experience, the ontology remains unaffected. The musical form is just as present (or absent) in advance in cases where the performer ventured into the concretely unknown possibilities of a work within the acts of composition and improvisation then in instances where such a possibility has already been realised and the work is “merely” interpreted. The question of possibility and actuality is in this case an epistemological issue and may effect the subjective consciousness of the performer and perhaps listener. It does not determine a difference between improvisation, composition and performance on a fundamental level. On this level, it seems to me, the appropriate modes of music making would refer to music as a possibility and actuality.

We can summarise that the distinction between improvisation and so called re-productive performance and composition is not as clear cut as it initially seems. An experience of spontaneity and lack of determination is not restricted to improvisation. Any form of performance (and indeed any activity) may be characterised by this experience. In musical practice musicians have suggested that creative performances must in fact include the kind of risk, spontaneity and surprise which is ordinarily so characteristic of improvisation. The performance of a composed work is thus in principle just as unique, free and unpredictable as a performance of a free improvisation if we focus solely on the ontological attributes of lived form and on the point that performance realises possibilities qua possibility. The freedom of a performance is not determined by an absence of structural pre-determination but rather by the difference between abstract conception as a possibility (work) and concrete realisation in actuality (performance). Wherever such a difference exists the realisation itself is necessarily “free” as no particular can fulfil the demands of its abstract possibility fully.

In turn a free improvisation is never completely devoid of form nor does it always abandon premeditated paths or plans. In fact a complete absence of a structural form or plan (which does not need

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103 This view seems to be inherent in the music-analytical view of Heinrich Schenker especially articulated in the conceptions of fundamental line (Urlinie) and progression (Zug) which establishes principles of organicity across the different layers of musical composition.

104 Arguments for a separation between improvisation and conventional musical performance of a composed work are frequent and can be found in e.g. Wolterstorff and Scruton (438). Arguments for a closer link of these activities can be found in Godlovitch (83), Benson and Alperson (1984) who points out that improvisation can be seen to merely temporally collapse the distinction between composition and performance. Alperson also argues that interpretation, a “prime feature of conventional musical performance” (26) is crucially absent from improvisation. Benson (2003) goes further and suggests against Alperson that improvisation includes aspects of interpretation. His concept of interpretation is widened to include a historical dimension. Rather than interpreting a single pre-conceived work the improviser interprets the tradition of a given style or genre of music.

105 Identified by Alperson as a characteristic distinguishing conventional performance and improvisation (Alperson, 1984, 23).

106 This is particularly true in performances which desire to inspire the listener to listen actively. It seems a psychological fact that predictability leads to diminished attention. Surprising the listener will keep the attention and auditory participation alert and active. In view of this phenomenon experienced performers will use their spontaneity and unpredictability to capture attention as this assists them in being heard by the audience.

107 In certain circumstances improvisation has been alleged to be quite determined and subject to the mere application of formulas. Adorno (Adorno, 1986) famously argued against the common conception of jazz as “free” by alleging its musical cliché nature and pointing to its purely commercial character (Warencharakter). While Adorno’s criticism of jazz is not the issue here and is in any case most certainly historically overtaken by more recent musical developments, his points imply that an absence of a notated composition does not per se lead to ‘freedom’ and spontaneity. This seems straightforward to me. The argument is also interesting in so far as it reminds us that the subjective illusion of freedom and spontaneity has nothing to do with real determinations and may in fact disguise very real (and for Adorno ultimately material) determinations. Some improvisation may well be regressive in that sense and can be characterised by
to be explicit of course) may well result- as we have argued- in the loss of meaning and musical logic per se. This will result in creating the equivalent to musical babble which – while senseless is not nevertheless nothing.

The conception of a musical *logos* leads to the constitution of a musical work. It is insubstantial for my point if this *logos* is externally manifested (notated work) or immanently conceived (improvised work). What is simply required is that music consists of an articulated form and is on account of this form audible and comprehensible. At the point where we encounter music as structured, where we intuit and perhaps conceive a form we encounter a musical work. The absence of a *logos* and thus the absence of a musical work would seem to imply an absence of musical meaning. If music making is such that it reveals the presence of a musical *logos* either through creation (which may be performative or compositional) or recreation and interpretation, then music of necessity reveals a musical work. When we reflect on the concrete modes of existence in which the musical work is revealed we need to remain mindful what is revealed: Since the musical performance determines the areas of indeterminacy and “gaps” which exist in the musical work as an aesthetic object, the work is not revealed qua work but as an aesthetic object. In fact the work as determined by musical *logos* and form cannot be revealed in itself. The performance will only show us aspects. The work’s ontological mode of existence is the possible. Our acts of comprehension and performance reveal and determine the work as actual, that is, in particular performance. At the same time we leave the possibility for further determination of the work open.

4.6 The aporetic character of music

The above discussion shows that the musical work is ambivalent as it has supposedly determined, formal (and perhaps potential) existence and at the same time a concrete indeterminate presence. While it is intentionally existent, the musical work is fully present as a possibility only. This implies a potentially complex dialectic governing the existence of music which has been affirmed by Adorno. Music and the musical work exist for Adorno in the forcefield of *logos* and mimesis, form and gesture. It is in one respect the subject of historical and socio-political determinations. In this sense Adorno speaks of music as “part of society through and through.”

The sociological determination of the musical work has broadly speaking two aspects: Adorno shows this in his cultural critique of the commodification (and reification) of music and the corresponding destruction of the work concept in the developments of contemporary music. In his *Philosophie der Neuen Musik* Adorno speaks of a “sickness of the idea of the work” which may be caused by the “conditions of a society, which allows nothing that guarantees sufficiently a commitment or confirmation to the harmony of the autonomous work.” Music as “sedimented society” hides much of the semantic possibilities within the musical material available to concrete musical practice.

At the same time, concrete music making strives to establish an autonomous structure and form. This occurs in a process which denies or critically reflects the material available to it. The work becomes a “form

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diminished freedom, absence of risk or mere pretence of spontaneity. The involvement of risk seems less a function of improvisation as such but rather dependent on the complexity in the task of conventional interpretation versus the simplicity of some forms of improvisation determined by cliché.

110 Adorno (1978), 39.
of cognition without concepts“111 which transforms the boundaries of the musical material in turn. Tonal language and formal principles become modified in this forcefield of pre-formed, historically determined musical material and its subsequent recontextualisation in the musical work in a process of “second reflection”.112

This dialectic of material and form implies that musical activity has a language character, however not in the referential sense of spoken language. The language-character of music, its dialectic determination by form (logos) and gesture (mimesis) presents us with the difficulty that music does not signify anything.113

The philosophical question of musical meaning and reference, of a definite substance and content of music, collides with the difficulty that there “is no universal moment, which would extend beyond music itself and indicate its meaning (Sinn) and justification (Rechtfertigung)”.114

We are faced with an ambivalence of defined form of cognition115 and incomprehensibility as a totality. The work of music is, like the work of art, embedded in the dialectic of constructive and mimetic elements. This “original sin of the aesthetic spirit”116 creates the aberrations of meaning in music and is responsible for its ultimately “aporetic-nature” (Rätselcharakter):

“All works of art, art in itself, are riddles; this has irritated the theory of art in the past. That artworks say something and in the same breath conceal it names the riddle character under the aspect of language… the more one understands a work of art, the more it may become clear (enträtseln) in one dimension, the less it discloses about its aporetic constitution…. If a work discloses itself fully its aporetic nature is achieved and it compels reflection; it becomes remote in order to assault the person who was so sure of the subject matter in the end with a renewed “What is this?”117

Despite the dissolution of the musical work the meaningfulness of music is confirmed by the mere and evident distinction between the “musical and unmusical” which is seemingly “urged on by music itself”118 and embraces human as well structural characteristics. Yet, music has “no being, to which it could refer”. The engagement with the riddle of music occurs in the process of music making as a whole- in the processes and history of interpretation:

“The appearance of the aporetic character of music seduces us to ask about its being, whereas the process to this point forbids this question. Music does not have an object, it is not able to name, but longs for it and aims precisely with this for its own decline. If music had succeeded only one moment in gaining that which the tones encircle, its completion would be its end. Its relationship with that which it cannot show (abbilden) but only address (anrufen) is accordingly infinitely mediated…. It has no being, to which those could refer who are tempted by the riddle, but it draws its name through its unfolding totality through the constellation of all its moments. The mere being of music, which could be targeted by a primordial question if only it reduced the layers of concealment and inauthenticity and contemplated the matter without distraction, is an apparition, not unlike

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111 Paddison (1998), 82/83.
113 „The true language of art is speechless“ („Die wahre Sprache der Kunst ist sprachlos“) Adorno (1973), 171.
114 Adorno (1953), 6.
115 The 19th century music-critic Hanslick created the famous qualification of music as absolute music or “sonorously-moving forms” (tönend bewegte Formen) in response to the mimetic or emotional-representative conception of music thus establishing a single minded concern with musical logic.
117 Adorno (1973), 182-84.
118 Adorno (1953), 8.
the being where philosophy is trying to come to rest tired from its laborious mediations."\textsuperscript{119}

Adorno appears to imply that in music and music making dialectical ontological principles collide without a possibility of evident reconciliation other than that of music making itself. This collision is a function of the temporality of music (a point to which we will return later) as much as the result of the authentic definition of music itself which is situated in a realm where human activity, imagination, social interaction and cognition overlap. Before we suggest that this dialectical, aporetic character of music may reflect the more fundamental Aristotelian ontological distinction between \textit{energeia} and \textit{ergon} we need to, however, consider a further attempt to account for the phenomena in the form of the intentional analysis of the music and the musical work. This analysis seems important to demarcate the question of the relationship between human consciousness and music and to clarify the role of temporality in relation to musical form further. It is a question which is not contained- as will become clear – to a psychological or experiential discussion but needs to extend into the ontological dimensions of the subject matter itself, namely into an explanation of how consciousness qua consciousness forms, perceives and plays with music.

\textsuperscript{119}Adorno (1953), 13.
5.1 The separation of musical activity and the musical work

The phenomenologist Roman Ingarden discusses the fundamentals of a musical ontology in his book *The work of music and the problem of its identity.* Ingarden’s perspective originates from a firm distinction between the musical work, its performance and the score. This perspective is naturally subject to the kind of criticism advanced by Zofia Lissa who points out that the notion of a “work” can only be extended to

“the kind of music, in which the category of a “work” is evident; it concerns the section of musical culture and that part of history in which music was indeed a collection of “opera”. On the other hand, it cannot embrace all kinds of musical realities, which are – albeit not musical works nevertheless music, that is the music of non-European civilisations, some forms of improvised music that follows certain models, some types of avant-garde music.”

Despite Lissa’s reference to these limitations, which have already become the subject of discussion above, Ingarden’s approach is worth considering for a number of reasons. In the first instance it will enforce the need to align any ontological understanding with the phenomena themselves. From that aspect it seems important to remind us that much (if not most) of our musical culture relies heavily on the musical experience through the musical work. The work concept informs the creation and presentation of music even in musical areas which do not overtly appear to conform to this concept. Thus, particularly music as culture and business has resulted in the conversion of all kinds of music into tradeable objects and ‘works’ of kinds.

Even original modes of creation and presentation which originally do not rely on a work concept have become adapted to a model of music making that is heavily impregnated with a particular work-performance distinction. This is particularly true with the introduction of recording which has the capacity to transform even the most transient musical performance or improvisation into an object by fixing its elusive characteristics within a reproducible and characteristic mould. How is such a dominance possible? What are the characteristic aspects of music that allow it to become the object of a public and tradeable musical culture?

Naturally the immediate suggestion is that the ability to constitute itself in musical works and thus present us with a commodifiable presence is crucial to the contemporary experience of music. The broad perspective in which Ingarden approaches the phenomenon has in other words become a concretely dominating perspective of contemporary culture. At the same time, Adorno’s argument that such a development is ultimately regressive creates the need to explore the basis of this phenomenon further. What is an adequate phenomenological conception of the work-performance paradigm in the first instance? We have seen that a position which ignores the ontological challenges in this question and focuses on the aesthetic object only does so at the risk of hiding its assumptions and avoiding the questions. We have further...
seen that commonly accepted paradigms of the relationship between the musical work and its notation, improvisation and performance and the aporetic dialectic reflected in musical praxis raises questions of the ontological modality of this praxis in its inevitable orientation towards the musical form. Thus, the question of the musical work continues to “assault us”. We are always already confronted with an experience and presumption that performance and musical work are separated and separable. What are the aspects of this separation?

5.2 The phenomenological aspects of the separation between musical work and performance

Following Ingarden, we distinguish four aspects through which the musical work and its performance become distinct. These can be captured in the following statements:

1. Work and performance differ temporally.
2. Work and performance are dependent on different ontological conditions.
3. The work transcends the particularity of a performance.
4. The musical work has a unique identity, whereas the performance has multiple identities.

(1) The temporal existence of a musical work is distinct from that of its performance. A performance occurs (in the case of a live performance) only once and is a unique, unrepeatable process. The temporal characteristics of performances of the same work differ from performance to performance and are not identically repeatable. The temporal characteristics of the musical work are identical to the work itself.

This point seems to imply that even in circumstances where a performance is primarily self-sufficient and no ‘work’ is identified or identifiable as being represented in the performance, the absence of such a ‘work’ is notable because there is an absence of a reflection of temporal existence distinct from the temporal existence of the performance process. The distinction of the temporal existence of the work from the temporal existence of the performance is not merely a matter of duration or absence of simultaneity. The musical work exists in a different temporal stratum than the performance. A way in which one may capture this is to refer to the musical work as an (Aristotelian) universal and to the performance as a particular. One of the distinguishing aspects between these two ontological entities (if that is what they are) is their temporal definition and reference. The universal (work) is temporally transposable on account of its universal character. The particular (performance) remains determined by the temporal definitions of the given moment and occurrence and subject to the tripartite division of time into past, presence and future. The particular performance remains an “event” and its temporal characteristics are unique. This makes it strictly speaking undefinable. The work itself is defined and its temporal characteristics are abstract or general- it is “timeless” and temporally self-sufficient in that it itself is not subject to the temporal definitions of past, presence and future. The performance occurs and its temporal characteristics are concrete and particular. Works define possibilities for concrete performance and thus their temporal characteristics are transposable. Performances instantiate, discover, transpose and realise these possibilities and thus their temporal characteristics are concretely fixed in a presence.

123 Brown draws attention to the aesthetic and ontological changes that may result from the introduction of “phonography” (Brown, 1996, 365).
124 Ingarden excludes here the issue of recorded performance. His book (The musical work and the Problem of its identity) was written in 1927. While mentioned, the relevance of recorded or filmed performance was less significant to Ingarden himself, perhaps. In any case one may need to argue further if and how a recorded performance constitutes a performance proper.
(2) The difference in temporal structure has wider ontological consequences: The performance distinguishes itself from the musical work by ontological conditions which constitute the existence of the work. The musical work is “conditioned in its creation and continued existence” by processes different to those that create and condition a performance. For example, as distinct to its specific performances, the work of music has no “defined spatial localisation.” A performance of the work occurs in a venue and in concrete spatial circumstances. The work itself does not require such concrete spatial circumstance. It seems that the work is founded on a different ontological realm or level to the performance.

(3) The work transcends any particular performance of it. Its defining characteristics exceed those experienced by the listener in any one performance of it. Ingarden argues that the work does not “change as a result of the performances”. Were we to allow that the performance defines the characteristics of the musical work we would be settled with the absurdity that the musical work changes (arguably in contradictory ways) from performance to performance:

“Were we to agree that the work is thus affected, at the same time we would have to agree that it possesses possibly mutually exclusive properties: that it is both what it would have to be as a consequence of acquiring certain properties in one performance, and also what it would have to be with properties flowing from other performances given us through experience of other aspects. This too appears glaringly false with reference to the musical work itself, nor is it, so to speak, pure theory. The matter has consequences in musical practice.”

This aspect appears somewhat controversial as we have seen from the discussion of Goehr and Adorno. It seems clear from musical practice and tradition that works do absorb performance traditions and at least in some cases derive their constitution from tacit traditions of performance which may change over time. It is naturally questionable if these transformations affect only the musical characteristics of the work or if they extend to its ontological character. How would we be able to tell? This question seems dependent on the more fundamental issue if and how we can have access to the musical work independently of any of its performances. If we can, then the autonomy of the work from its performances can be strictly maintained. If we cannot, then the question arises to what degree and in what respects performance indeed impacts on the work. In the latter case, we will need to give an ontological account of the relationship between work and performance that shows a mutually co-extensive ontological realm in which work and performance – as it were- interface.

Ingarden seems to insist on the autonomy of the musical work, however, in a complex way and describes the ontological constitution of the work in the following way: The musical work

“originates in specific, creative, psychosomatic acts by the composer. Those may culminate in the work’s being notated in a musical score, as has been the practice for centuries, or in the immediate performance by the composer, in which case we speak of improvisation. Because of the imperfection of musical notation, the score is an incomplete, schematic prescription for performance. It fixes only certain aspects of its sound-base, whereas the remaining ones and especially the non-sounding ones, are only partially defined and within certain limits open to various interpretations. Both the fixed and the

125 Ingarden (1986), 17.
126 Ingarden (1986), 18.
127 Ingarden (1986), 19.
128 See Benson’s point that “Ingarden wants to defend at any cost the ergon that remains beyond the reach of the effects of musical energeta. But what is remarkable about Ingarden is that he is so unwilling to simply ignore the tensions that threaten the very autonomy of the work he doggedly wishes to defend that his account ends up being in tension with itself” (Benson, 126).
open elements have been conceived by the composer as fully defined and fixed, but he does not command a musical notation that would do them justice.”

This view contains a number of important points and difficulties: Firstly, Ingarden affirms that the work “originates” in the act of composition. This does not necessarily imply that it is completed in this act. It is conceivable that the notion of the work encompasses the creative and re-creative possibilities allowing us to distinguish the existential origin and completion of the work further. This distinction appears crucial to me and clearly in need of further discussion. Secondly, Ingarden seems to collapse the concepts of composition and improvisation. The latter is seen to be merely an instance of composition in performance—an alternative to notation. Despite our discussion so far, this view is not without problems particularly when we consider the complexity of the phenomenon of improvisation. Such a view seems to raise the question of a further investigation of the phenomenon of musical notation as well. Ingarden seems conscious of the importance of this issue when he believes that the common realm in which the work is defined is the score. However, the definition of the work through the score contains areas of indeterminacy (Unbestimmtheitsstellen), “gaps” or “blurrings” which are as Ingarden points out not only the result of the non-sounding elements of the score (e.g. tempo markings, rubato) but also originate “from the various sound base”.

Interpretative details such as balance, voicing, accentuation and tone colour cannot be determined in full detail in the score and are subject to the realisation in performance. How does this view harmonize with the simultaneous assertion that all the elements of the work are “fully determined and fixed”? As Ingarden seems to imply this problem depends largely on the perspective under which the work is considered. As an aesthetic object the musical work is subject to the interpretative variation in performance. These variations constitute what Ingarden terms the work’s “profile as an aesthetic object.” In addition to their individual variation, musical performances are determined by a history of musical interpretation and style. As a result of a general aesthetic taste of a given period and the influence of powerful interpretative personalities, the approach to the interpretation of musical work changes and the various aesthetic profiles are constituted. It makes little sense to conceive in this context an “ideal profile” as not even the composer knows “the profile in all its qualifications; at best he imagines it more or less precisely and at times he may merely be guessing at it”. By introducing a multilayered perspective and separating ontological, ontic, epistemological and aesthetic perspectives Ingarden can maintain that the musical work is ontologically autonomous while aesthetically dependent on performance.

However, a difficulty remains: When we speak of a performance of the work we have in mind an intentionally referential relationship. What prevents this relationship from becoming reciprocally and

130 For a summary of the different senses of improvisation see Benson, 26-30.
131 Ingarden’s Vom Erkennen des literarischen Kunstwerkes introduces the term “Unbestimmtheitsstellen” (Ingarden, 1997, 13 also 59).
132 Ingarden (1986), 139.
133 It seems to me that Benson (Benson, 69) who draws attention to the contradiction in Ingarden’s view does not sufficiently consider the context which Ingarden establishes in his discussion. The indeterminacy in the composer’s knowledge relates to the “profile” of the work in performance, that is, to the work of music as an aesthetic object. One could argue that considered as an intentional object there is no indeterminacy, the indeterminacy itself is for Ingarden determined on a different or higher level. The contradiction thus only emerges if we conflate the aesthetic and intentional perspective. When Ingarden says that the “fixed and open elements have been conceived by the composer as fully fixed and determined” he is referring to the work on an intentional level.
134 Ingarden (1986), 149.
ontologically definitive? Let us consider the example of language and textual meaning for a moment: the use of language and the habits and perspectives of interpretation reveal the meaning of the autonomous text. However, communication and interpretation also have the possibility of transforming the use and meaning of language itself. The case in point is that no text is absolutely autonomous when it comes to the use of language and we may find that a given interpretation has an ability to both interpret a given text and change the use of language and the practice of interpretation to the effect that a future approach would of necessity reveal the text in a different mode of being. Thus the change in use and practice involves a change in ontology rather than “meaning” alone. This self-evolving dialectic which embraces text, interpretation and use of language extends, it seems to me, to the relationship between work and performance in music beyond the aesthetic level. The work naturally determines the performance. However, the performance also determines the work essentially, but in a different sense and in a different temporal, namely historical context.

Furthermore, performance ontology also impacts on the way in which we conceive the ontology of given works. We only need to think of the extensive transformation of the musical work which has occurred as a result of recording technology, multi-media dissection and changing modes of performance presentation. The cultural and historical development of music and our engagement with musical works implies that the mutually dependent relationship between work and performance embraces different levels of interaction, including aesthetic interaction, interaction on different temporal strata, that is interaction on different layers of ontological determination. We have discussed some of these levels of interaction above in the context of Goehr’s view that the musical work is a regulative concept and Adorno’s view that musical material is “sedimented society”.

(4) Ingarden’s final point asserts that the musical work is unique as opposed to the multiplicity of possible performances. The work thus transcends the differences that qualify the individual and different performances of it. While we have seen that this uniqueness does not necessarily extend across all modes of conception of the work, it seems important to qualify an ontological distinctness within the work conception. From an ontological point of view, the differences of the performance “cannot appear in the musical work itself (and the very thought seems absurd)” and “it is clear that the work is not identical with its performances and is an individual, while any number of performances of it are possible.”

This point is a simple reference to the ontological uniqueness and distinctness of the musical form. The definition of the musical work already emerges from its phenomenal and verbal identification which appears impossible if we remained unable to conceive of that which is different when considered in relation to the performance. On this level we refer to the musical performance as the activity itself whereas the musical form would stand out against this as the telos, residue or form of this activity- depending which perspective we take in our analysis. In the most basic sense the musical work is the form and “other” which seems required by musical performance. The very existence of performance implies this formed “other”. It stands aside, remains or becomes further disclosed once the performance has concluded and as the

135 See Brown’s comment that recorded music “may have an entirely different phenomenology from that of the living thing. Indeed, it may have a different ontology” (Brown, 366).
136 Ingarden, 21.
performance takes further shape in reflection, memory, definition, criticism, etc. While the importance of this “other” does not immediately strike us in the case of certain musical experiences, the musician needs to place some emphasis on its existence. After all, the absence of the “other” as a musical substance would leave the musician in a void. Without the “other” the success of a performance (we use the term with much caution as ‘truth’ may be more appropriate) seems solely determined by the audience. What could be an indicator for an accomplished or successful performance in the absence of the work as the “other”? It seems little more than commonly recognised standards of virtuosic execution and/or public acclaim. Neither aspect requires direct references to musical qualities unless we assume that the public functions as a sub-conscious reservoir and caretaker for such qualities.

I would suggest that the musician cannot accept this for the simple reason that accomplished execution and public acclaim qualify many areas which are evidently distinguished from artistic aspirations. Naturally, if the musician aspires to mere entertainment, the requirements may be easily reduced to those of accomplishment and acclaim. In these contexts it also seems that the question of the musical work becomes irrelevant as it disappears in the face of the (self-) indulgent activity of a particular practice or within a transformation of music turns into “muzak” (babble, background, entertainment and distraction). However in any context where we are seeking artistic insight and where performance is pursued as an activity of musical interpretation, the conception of the musical work as the “other” and focal point of musical practice appears crucially important to evidence the quality of the activity. At this point Ingarden’s identification of the musical work as the “other” within musical dialogue achieves its relevance.

5.3 The phenomenology of the musical score

In an attempt to answer the question about ontological properties of the musical work and to find a location for the ontological constitution of the work, one might argue that the score defines and constitutes most of the characteristics of the musical work which is complemented by the “possible various profiles through which a work manifests itself” or the history which comprises the various performances itself. Ingarden himself is not clear if he would allow that the history of various performances of a work constitutes the ontological nature of the musical work itself. It seems not as he maintains a strict separation between performance and work. He does allow for “spheres of irrelevance” in which “differences of specific performances are of no consequence” to the work. At the same time, however, he insists that the score has an “imperative” symbolic character. This does not imply, however, that the score defines the work in its entirety or that the work could be reduced to the symbols of the score. The characteristics of the work are clearly beyond the score. In this lack of congruence between work and score the reduction of the musical work to the score becomes problematic. Nevertheless, the notation and symbolisation of the musical work in the score appears to contribute importantly to the constitution of the work.

137 Stanley Cavell (Cavell (1969), 180) reminds us that the the importance and distinctiveness of art is established by the fact that such things as aesthetic (musical) criticism exists. The very fact that there is a discourse about music which requires expert understanding and terminology indicates the identity of the subject matter, namely the works of music. If we broaden this point of view it seems clear that the ability to reflect about music implies the presence of musical works. 138 My use of this term is purely phenomenological and not intentionally related to the way in which it is asserted by postmodernists such as Levinas (see Benson, 164).

139 Ingarden, 158.
140 Ingarden, 22.
141 Ingarden, 39.
What is the precise phenomenological relevance of notation? What kind of system of definitions and symbols does musical notation establish? In considering these questions we should firstly remember that musical notation relies (like any notation) on an intentional and interpreting consciousness. A score is written for someone and within the context of a readership of interpreters. This implies that there are active contexts which are presupposed in the notation which the notation itself will not reveal, namely the specific details of interpretation of the scored symbols. Without this context which consists in the ability to actively conceive musical notation as appropriate and particular sound, the notated score will remain mute. Being dependent on the interpretative consciousness of the listener (in the widest sense) and the inability to notate musical reality with complete directness and conformity it seems that no musical score is complete until it has been interpreted and brought to audible reality. Even in the act of interpretation the musical work and score become redefined as imagined possibilities and the intended possibilities experience confirmation or disappointment. For the act of interpretation to create a musical experience and not just a schematic projection it must present vital elements including surprise, spontaneity or disappointed expectations. The concretisation of the score exposes the indeterminacy which are themselves embedded in the score.

This fluid relationship between notation, interpretation, concretisation and the score itself calls into question a simply and straightforward concept of notation. A tempting approach would be to understand notation as directly and prescriptively symbolic of the reality of the musical work. There are two reasons which speak against such a direct and isomorphic symbolism: firstly the musical notation does not and cannot specify the complete reality of the musical work as the essential aspects of musical performance rest essentially in the realm of the particular and are to culminate in an experience of music in performance. Musical performance is fundamentally transient and – as Ingarden points out – particular. It is ultimately a reflection of life. The notated score, however, does not seem to be a particular but an abstract schema. One of the achievements of notation is, that it establishes the musical work in an abstract and intersubjective realm in which many different and particular interpretations can (and must) be formed of the one intentional object and the object in turn achieves ongoing existence or endurance. The ontological gap between the score and the performance cannot be bridged by a complete set of definitions simply because we are dealing with two distinct ontological realms.

The second point is that the definitions of a score remain dependent on historical contexts of musical experience or practice. As musicians have repeatedly pointed out particular readings are either suggested or even demanded by musical practices of the time. Taking this point even further, composers have frequently relied on the musical understanding and autonomous creativity of performers by leaving aspects of the score

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142 Benson (118) refers to Gadamer when he states: “Following Hegel, Gadamer argues that an essential ingredient in having a genuine experience (Erfahrung) is the element of surprise: it is precisely when we do not expect something that it affects us most, which means that genuine experiences have the character of reversal. As such they cannot be repeated again and again.”

143 This can occur on any level. If we conceive (with Thom) the musical work as a “directive” then the “content of this directive” would seem to be represented in the notation. To what extent is this possible? The content of a directive is never representational because a directive is referential in the context of a decision towards executive activity. That is: the directive is as good as the action performed by the person in return – it is what it does. The contact between the ontology of language and action means that the directive is not representational. It is a proposition in the sense that it proposes. Ontologically, refusal is just as much part of the directive than directed activity. The symbolic representation of a directive requires an interpretation of action which exceeds the information given in the directive. The musical form in this sense is thus always more than its symbolic presentation in notation.
intentionally undefined and much music would accordingly not be comprehensible if it were interpreted and performed simply “literally”.  

The suggested incompleteness and context dependency of the score has substantial ramifications for the ontology of the musical work. Not only does it challenge us to perhaps incorporate the interpretative consciousness as an ontologically constitutive factor in any account of the musical work it also puts a reifying ontology of the musical work into question. Even if we say (as Ingarden and others do) that the musical work is an intentional object we would need to specify further the ontology of intentionality and the particular notion of objectivity which is implied here. We cannot simply assume that the musical work remains an object in the ontological realm of intentionality in the same way as it does in the realm of reality or ideality as we cannot establish any direct and positive characteristics of identity independently of a creative or otherwise active experience.

The discussion so far has drawn attention to a number of aspects: Firstly, the relationship between notation (score) and interpretation implies a dialectical horizon which clarifies the way in which notation and interpretation of notation contribute not just to a constitution of a musical performance but to the condition of the musical work as a living being. Secondly, the relationship between work and performance requires further clarification from a phenomenological point of view. Thirdly, the ontological characteristics of the musical form require further discussion particularly in regard to the musical unfolding and the temporality of musical form. I will discuss the second and third aspect further before turning to a summary of the relevant ontological points.

5.3 The musical work as an intentional object

As we have seen, Ingarden identifies four different aspects in which the musical work and the musical performance are ontologically distinct: the temporal determination of permanence, the history of creation and composition, the identity of the work and the uniqueness or distinctness of the musical work as it stands out from - and is represented by the activity of performance. So far, these aspects have been brought into view while looking largely at the difference between the musical work and its performance. We have approached the work through the modality of music making. While this context has brought some distinguishing characteristics of the work into view a more difficult question now concerns the issue what the musical work is considered for itself. What are the phenomenological characteristics of the work itself? Does it make sense to approach the musical work itself further and independently? Does the concept of the musical work make sense without conceiving it through the phenomenon of performance?

Ingarden sets out demarcating features for the musical work and he is at pains to explain that the musical work is neither a real nor an ideal, but an intentional object. In the context of phenomenological understanding, the notion of an intentional object and intentionality is not without difficulty. In the Husserlian sense “intentionality” seems to mean simply the directedness of consciousness and while fundamental and very important to the phenomenological project, it also remains puzzlingly vague as Husserl himself states:

“The concept of intentionality, taken in the indefinite manner in which we have defined it, is an indispensable starting point and foundation for the beginning of phenomenology. The

144 We have referred to Harnoncourt, Furtwängler and Brendel above.
universal (Allgemeine) to which it refers may be however vague before it is closely inspected, appears in however many and diverse appearances; however difficult it may be to reveal it in clear and strict analysis what the pure essence of intentionality actually is, which components of its concrete appearance it contains in itself and which remain foreign to it – in essence we consider experience under a particular and highly important perspective when we consider them to be intentional and refer to them to be conscious of something.\footnote{Husserl (1992), 191.}

The concept of intentionality appears to reflect a difficulty and question inherent in Kant’s concept of aesthetic judgement: In which way is the judgement purely subjective and how much is the directedness of consciousness also a directedness towards the realm of objectivity? In the context of music this problem takes on a further dimension. When Ingarden points to the musical work as an intentional object he seems to suggest that the musical work is the focal point of the creative intentions and perceptual activities of musicians and listeners alike. This can mean in principle that the intentionality is simply a function of the subjectivity of the creative or perceptive consciousness – a free and harmonious play of cognitive functions in which the musical work functions as a pre-text. However, Ingarden believes that intentionality is not simply and straightforwardly subjective. Musical activity includes the concern for the musical work itself. Music is after all the encounter and engagement with musical forms and structures. The musical work has a direct bearing on the intentional consciousness. Music making and musical perception establish direction towards- and concern for the work which is in fact intersubjectively identical for the composer, performer and listener:

“The work itself remains an ideal boundary at which the composers intentional conjectures of creative acts and the listener’s acts of perception aim. The work thus seems to be an intentional equivalent of a higher order, belonging to a whole variety of intentional acts. These acts, of course, are formed by real people possessing real sense organs, who employ these organs either in the composition of musical work or in its realisation in new performances or in listening to successive new performances. At that ideal boundary, the work remains one and the same in contrast to the many concretions in specific performances and thus, as I have already shown, it is in some respects de-individualised, although it does not cease to be an artistic individual in the sense previously defined.”\footnote{Ingarden, (1986), 119.}

The conception of the work as an intentional object seems to suggest an ontological ambivalence: As the reference for the concrete intentions in regard to composition, performance and listening, the musical work is a “supra-individual and supratemporal” structure\footnote{Ingarden, (1986), 120.} which is rooted in a real object (the musical score) and grounded in the ongoing existence of a multiplicity of other real objects (the performances). At the same time the work appears to be “of a higher order, belonging to a whole variety of intentional acts”. This ambivalence which locates the work in a double aspect of object and act gives clearly rise to further questions. Before we consider these, however, it is important to draw a clear distinction between the work as an “intentional act” and a conception which sees the work constituted by conscious or otherwise psycho-physical acts alone.

The qualification of the work as an intentional object is no psychological qualification but an ontological one. Ingarden is insistent that the intentional nature of the musical work does not imply that the work is constituted by subjective experience:
“This object, as purely intentional, is neither purely the perceptual experience in which it is given nor an experience that creatively designates the object nor yet any part or element of these experiences. It is solely something to which these experiences refer; it is neither mental nor subjective”.\footnote{Ingarden, (1986), 121.}

The designation of the musical work as intentional object thus aims to sublate the distinction between perception and creation. As an object of perception the musical work would appear to be enduringly located in the real world. As an act of creation, the work would transcend the real world and share in the characteristics of ideal possibilities. What are the difficulties which arise from the ontological ambivalence of the musical work as an act and as an object? We need to recall, that in the first instance, Ingarden’s qualification of the musical work as an intentional object maintains the ontological originality and autonomy of the work and its performances. Secondly “intentional objectivity” is not to be confused with real or ideal objectivity. The musical work is a “limiting” phenomenon. From a point of view of reality the work exists on many levels and in many real manifestations, none of which represent the musical work itself. In the perspective of ideality the work is an “ideal boundary” which determines the relationship between the various modes of music making. The fact that the musical work is no ideal object potentially determines our attitude towards it in a specific way: Rather than seeing the performance of the work as an activity of matching the representation to the work, the performance is potentially much more original than this. The absence of a concrete ideal object suggests that the performer searches for and perhaps discovers the musical work. As the work itself remains elusive in its ideality, a negative phenomenon in this case, this discovery can never be strictly speaking completed. The conception of the musical work as an intentional object gives us a minimalist definition. It holds advantages for actual musical practice over a strictly and naively objective conception of the musical work as a represented structure or “thing” which a naïve conception of the activity of performance as representation could suggest.

However, we still face some lack of clarity. The musical work is said to be a complex and compound notion which is described by Ingarden as (1) an intentional object, (2) an intentional act of a higher order and (3) an ideal boundary, limit or aim of musical activity. A number of questions arise from this characterisation:

(1) When we think of ideal or real limits we have definite conceptions of concrete and particular existence in mind. These conceptions inform finite understanding and activity. However, in the case of the musical work, the conception of the work as a limit does not appear to be a finite conception. The musical work is simply never reached in any performance. Its possibilities of interpretation are infinite and to regard it as a limit or boundary would mean that we would need to be able to conceive examples of performance of the work which no longer count as performances of the work. Now, while this is possible on a crude and very basic level of consideration, ordinary (and even not so ordinary) musical practice cannot establish such a definition or identity unambiguously. There may well be performances which will leave us wondering if these are performances of the work or not. The reason for this is that an intentional object seems to possess very few characteristics of objectivity from the outset and independently of the particular way in which consciousness is directed towards it. Instead, the active conception of an intentional object suggests a potentially infinite number of possibilities to direct consciousness towards the musical object. This lack of finite determination may not be a problem for musical practice which can in its searching nature accept that
the musical work remains ultimately elusive to its attempts to disclose it. However, it could seem an issue for a philosophical conception which attempts to give an account of the defining aspects of a musical work (such as notation for example) or justify the criteria of aesthetic quality.

(2) A further question arises from Ingarden’s characterisation of the musical work as being an object, an act and a limit. What is meant by such a characterisation in relation to the temporality of music? It seems that the temporality of an “act” is inherently different to that of an object. An object distinguishes itself by its “stayed-ness”149 and the fact that it confronts the “subject”. An act has dynamic properties and is itself consistently immersed in the temporal flow. An object and a limit may have a history, but they are somewhat ontologically separated from the temporal flow. Objects stand out against the temporal flow and become subject to the temporal determinations of past, present and future. Given this difference in temporality, how can an act be understood as an object or limit?

Both questions converge on the issue of the relationship between music and temporality. In the concluding part of this section I will try to clarify the temporality of music. I attempt to discuss the relationship between time as it is measured, experienced and manifested in music. I will then briefly discuss the relevance of the phenomenological insights formulated by Husserl and Alfred Schütz in relation to the time consciousness of music to the question what constitutes music as a temporal object and activity.

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149 See the German Gegenstand or “that which-stands-against”.
6.1 The phenomenological unity of music as temporal form: music and time

In the philosophical discussion on music, the phenomenological relationship between music and time and the ontologically constitutive role that time appears to play in the existence of music has been widely discussed. In particular it has been argued that music constitutes its own immanent temporality which results in the view that music itself is not strictly speaking “in time”. In the words of one commentator, music “is a temporal structure; it is not a structure in time”.\textsuperscript{150}

The temporality of music has been linked to time as it is subjectively experienced and lived. Lived or experienced time is characterised by a number of inconsistent experiences, which put lived time into contrast with the continuity, linearity and consistency of measureable, ordinary ‘clock’ time. Some of the resulting temporal dilemmas are summarized by Newell.\textsuperscript{151} Newell identifies dissonances between subjective and objective time in (i) the commonly experienced “conflict between subjective and objective time”, (ii) the “discontinuity of time” which shows itself in the occasional inability to connect past and future of our experience, (iii) the “impossibility of establishing a concrete identity, given the perception of time as transitory”, (iv) the linear reference of time based on the immanent connection between temporality and causation as distinguished from a circular reference of time as for example implied by the concept of “karma”\textsuperscript{152} and (v) the ontological definition of finitude which time establishes in relationship to natural objects and processes including such fundamental processes as life itself. Music can be seen to transcend and sublate the temporal dissonances which are experienced when we particularly contrast lived time and objective time. Newell argues that intense musical experience leads to a transcendence of the consciousness of temporality in particular in relation to these five aspects and thus eases “man’s temporal dilemma”. The experience of time in music and the accomplishments of musical time is characterised by the following conditions:

“1. The ability to make subjective and objective aspects of time coincide, either by modification of desires or by immediate fulfilment of desires;
2. Awareness of a temporal continuity whose field structure is ever apparent,
3. Continuing awareness of a perceptual field that is ‘timeless, nonchanging, devoid of relativity;
4. The experiencing of time as non-linear, i.e. free of causality based on a series of events;
5. Repeated awareness of a perceptual field that transcends boundaries (i.e. is devoid of objects, demarcations, differences, etc).”\textsuperscript{153}

This apparent transcendence of ordinary temporality through the temporal experience in music is reflected in a discussion if time is in fact experienced merely differently in music or if music deals with a different ontological form of time and temporality altogether. Suzanne Langer argues that music in fact deals with “virtual time” as distinguished from “clock-time”. This form of time becomes solely evident through listening and experience and is related to experienced time or “the passage of life that we feel.”\textsuperscript{154} It remains fundamentally individual and does not lend itself to an abstract form of measurement as it occurs in the

\textsuperscript{150} Stambaugh, 266.
\textsuperscript{151} Newell, 358/59.
\textsuperscript{152} It seems to me that kairological understanding of time belongs to this category of dissonance as well.
\textsuperscript{153} Newell, 366.
\textsuperscript{154} see Alperson (1980), 412.
measurement of clock time. Its account is given in terms of experiences and expectations, tensions and emotions and it possesses an “entirely different structure from practical scientific time.”

“The semblance of this vital, experiential time is the primary illusion of music. All music creates an order of virtual time in which its sonorous forms move in relation to each other—always and only to each other for nothing else exists there. Virtual time is as separate from the sequence of actual happenings as virtual space from actual space.”

Because music constitutes its own temporality and is itself temporal it is not an object contained within time.

However, how does this fit with our ordinary experience that musical works do indeed have a concrete (and measurable) duration and that such a duration is manifested in a structure which even lends itself to formal and temporal analysis? And how does it fit with our intuition that music – while making time topical – is not exclusive in distinguishing these particular ways of experiencing time and temporality?

In the first instance, pieces of music or musical structures are clearly perceived to be extended in time and are so in a defined way. The mode of this definition through meter and rhythm has been described as a “metrical wave”, a sequence of pulsations requiring a principle of renewal. So, while music creates its own dynamic of temporal propulsion, it does not deny the kind of temporal progression which is experienced in ordinary time. This seems to suggest that music is at least in some respect subject to an ordinary experience of time. However, upon closer inspection of our listening experience we see that the experience of ordinary time in music takes on another form. The crucial point is that we do not only experience time as “ordinary” time in music but that the listening consciousness establishes a dual consciousness between so-called subjective and objective awareness of time. To be sure, an individual piece of music is experienced as a rhythmically and metrically ordered succession. But this succession is not subject to the ontologically homogenous flow of ordinary time. It rather establishes its own flow built on musical properties alone. Music uses time in an original sense and constitutes its own temporality which embraces and captivates the listener (or performer alike). This shows itself clearly in the intense experience of music which leads to a falling away of our ‘objective’ consciousness of time. Through listening we forget and simultaneously experience time directly. This interesting point has a reflection in the experience of time in music as expressed by the composer Karl-Heinz Stockhausen:

“If we realise, at the end of a piece of music—quite irrespective of how long it lasted, whether it was played fast or slowly and whether there were very many or very few notes—that we have “lost all sense of time”, then we have in fact been experiencing time most strongly.”

In listening to music we merely experience that our listening consciousness is filled by a temporal flow, however, we do not become aware of a represented time as such. In fact as soon as we do, the

155 See Langer (1963), but also Lissa (Lissa (1969), 52-57) who points to the importance of “experience” as a reflection of the temporal constitution of music in a number of contexts.
156 Langer (1963), 110.
157 “The temporal character of musical material requires a principle of renewal. This renewal does not happen at random. It is articulated in its inner matrix as rhythm. Rhythm is not a pure flowing extension, pure duration, but rather a pulse, a kind of punctuated force. In order to have rhythm, the ‘material’ in question cannot be massively, continuously present. It must be such that it renews itself constantly” (Stambaugh, 270).
158 Stockhausen quoted in Barry (1990), 253.
159 see also Lissa (Lissa, (1969), 59) who draws attention to the fact that this immersion in the autonomous temporality of the musical work will depend on the genre of the music. In opera for example the presence of the text constitutes a
authentically musical experience gives way to a loss of attention to music as music. This tendency of consciousness has been used to argue that an authentically experienced musical time is immanent to music itself. In particular Hegel's qualification of music as "subjective inwardness" (subjective Innerlichkeit) which does not achieve spatial objectivity comes to mind here. According to Hegel, the content of music is the subjective itself and its absence of presented substantiality (Gegenstandslosigkeit) a function of the temporal flow in which music presents itself and is uttered. The content of music

"is the subject in and for itself, and at the same time the expression does not achieve spatially enduring objectivity, but shows itself through a free, structure-less expiration (haltungslos, Freies Verschweben) as a message, which rather than be presented in itself is solely supported by inwardness and subjectivity and only present for subjective inwardness. To be sure the tone is thus an utterance and a manifestation, but an utterance which precisely because it is uttered disappears instantly."  

This phenomenological description with its reference to "inwardness" (Innerlichkeit) makes again reference to music in its distinctiveness from 'ordinary' experience. The ontological backdrop given is one of a distinction between subject and object or between perceiver and percept. In turn there is an assumed contrast between the ontological modalities of time and space. This contrast serves to distinguish music as a temporal art and sets up a contrast between spatial, external and objective extension and subjective, inner continuity of flux. The step from subjective inwardness to Langer's contrast between virtual and clock-time is not far. Ordinary time is conceived in spatial metaphor and appears to us as a function of movement or velocity. It is measured through the application of spatial concepts. This seems different in music where the primordial conception and constitution of time occurs as we have seen through its intensity of stimulus.

The question nevertheless remains if this difference is fundamental or if it merely signifies different aspects or representations of time- objective versus subjective representation for example. This question has two dimensions: Firstly, we ask if the ontological modes which determine the temporal "extension" of a piece of music in time are also responsible for the organisation of the musical process itself? In other words: is the temporal form which becomes in reflection the piece of music a direct projection of the musical activity itself and its temporal characteristics or do we import at this point notions of ordinary time changing the authentic musical temporality? We can then extend this question further: Is there such a thing as musical time and does this differ in regard to ordinary "ontic" time or are musical time and ontic time ontologically homogeneous? I will consider these two questions in succession by looking at Alfred Schütz's reflection of the temporality of music in his Fragments on the phenomenology of music and Husserl's Phenomenology of internal time consciousness.

6.2 The polythetic constitution of music

Time consciousness emerges from the direct awareness that we experience stability in the given flux of successive experience. What constitutes the unity in the flow of musical experience with which we are confronted? One may be tempted to point to the "work of music" as a quasi stable object. However, we have already seen that no such stable object can be established compellingly and fully autonomously or independently of the perceptual act or the performance itself. The very need and presence of musical represented time which contrasts somewhat with the musical time and constitutes an “antinomy of temporal consciousness”. The listener becomes aware of a heterogeneous, dual structure of temporality.
performance puts the ontological stability of the musical work into question. In his Fragments on the phenomenology of music Alfred Schütz points out that one of the fundamental characteristics of music which in fact necessitates its temporal unfolding is its “polythetic” composition. This refers to the constitution of musical meaning as temporal, that is, lived form. The creative process of musical form implies the need for an activity of recreation or re-constitution in order to participate in the full meaning of the original creation and understanding in question. This means that unlike some other polythetic compositions (Schütz cites the Pythagorean theorem) music cannot be simply represented or reconstructed instantly or monothetically:

“In one single ray we cannot grasp the constituted meaning of a work of music… The work of music itself, however, can only be recollected and grasped by reconstituting the polythetic steps in which it has been build up, by reproducing mentally or actually its development from the first to the last bars as it goes on in time. By necessity this process will be a process in time … And it will take “as much time” to reconstitute the work of music in recollection as it will to experience it originally in its unfolding, polythetic constitution while listening to it for the first time.”

161

The polythetic character of music implies that any concrete musical presence is a presencing in the inner time of our stream of consciousness. That is, it requires the activity of listening to not only create but also to (re-)constitute it. An alternative way of expressing this characteristic is to say that “music is not related to a conceptual scheme.”

162

In this music is of course not alone: The temporal consciousness which is at work in constituting music appears to be identical to the time consciousness which is at work in any experience of lived time. Life itself seems to have a similarly polythetic constitution and its understanding consequently appears to demand similar re-enactments in the understanding consciousness. Yet within this understanding which demands the temporal unfolding to gain full actuality, the passing flux seems “rested” as Gadamer expresses in a short essay entitled Musik und Zeit:

“And yet, where someone understands, some thing comes to a stand. Whoever understands, creates a stand, in the middle of the flux (Zug), the passing flux (Vorbeizug) which we call life and which in all its duration does not cease to have a temporal form. However, what comes to a stand is not the famous “nunc stans”, like the moment of inspiration. It is rather like a rest, in which not the now but time itself comes to a stand for a while. We know this. Whoever becomes immersed in something forgets time.”

164

160 Hegel, Aesthetics III, 136.
161 Schütz (1976), 29. Bergson makes a similar point when he asks: “How will the expressive or rather suggestive power of music be explained, if not by admitting that we repeat to ourselves the sounds heard, so as to carry ourselves back into the psychic state out of which they emerged…?” Bergson, 44.
162 Schütz (1976), 30.
163 The phenomenon of “empathy” (empathie) seems to be relevant here. Empathy can be defined as being “emotionally and cognitively ‘in tune’ with another person” in relation to the other person’s lived experienced as lived experienced, that is, not simply in relation to the outcomes or manifestations of this experience. (See “empathy” The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy, Simon Blackburn. Oxford University Press, 1996. Oxford Reference Online. Oxford University Press. Sydney University. 4 March 2007 http://www.oxfordreference.com.ezproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t98.e782). Such an attunement presupposes that the conditions of the other persons existence are not simply read-off and established but re-enacted and presenced in an internal (em-) process of “suffering” (pathos). Empathy (German: Ein-fuehlung) thus precedes sympathy (agreement). Listening to music would suggest the need for empathy on a fundamental level.
The flux of inner time which gives birth to the musical experience “originates in the suggestions of movements.” Schütz refers here to Bergson’s conception of durée which identifies the dual character of movement:

“One on the hand movement means the ongoing motion, the perceptual change of place of an object, an event which happens in time and which can only be grasped as a unit by our sense of inner time- the durée. On the other hand, for the movement as an ongoing occurrence our mind substitutes the spatial trace traversed by the moving object.”

Movement can clearly be considered in a dual sense, as ongoing flux of movement or as accomplished motion. Depending on this sense movement will exhibit different temporal characteristics. Understood as movement proper, the time consciousness will experience movement as inner flux, as the stream of consciousness or as Bergson’s durée. As accomplished motion, the relevant movement will be represented in the “spatial trace”. It is the latter sense which initially is reflected in the attribute of music as “polythetically” constituted. Such polythetic constitution only shows when “we bring the flux to a standstill” and “step out of the stream” of temporal unfolding. At this point the stable unity of our experience in the flux of time consciousness is seen to be an unfolding in time. However, what constitutes this stability and unity in the first place and prior to its synoptic understanding of unfolding? Why and how do we experience a unity and stability in our experience of music in the internally heterogenous flux of time even prior to any consciousness of music as “polythetically” constituted?

6.3 The phenomenology of internal time consciousness

The answer to these questions would appear to lie in the characteristics of time consciousness itself. Husserl’s phenomenological analysis of time consciousness shows how the experience of flux which is original to our experience of temporality is nevertheless already an experience of unity and stability. According to Husserl, time consciousness is characterised by phenomena of retention and protention which variously connect the expiring temporal consciousness of the moment to the past and future. Husserl’s point is that temporal consciousness reaches into the succession and retains the expiring moment. In this extension of consciousness the “flux of consciousness constitutes its own unity”. Retention reflects the “continuous shading off” of the present now and protention assimilates the “continual welling-forth of a now” creating a unity of a flux which “is in continuous unity of coincidence with itself”. Husserl’s analysis becomes clearer when we reflect on the difference between recollection or reflection of flux and the experience of the flux itself. Through the difference between retention and recollection, protention and expectation we become aware of the dual intentionality at work in the experience of time consciousness. The recollection of an activity, process or flux already demands an experience of the unity of this activity in the first instance which cannot be the unity of recollection itself. Instead, the phenomena which constitute the unity of experience must reside in the original constitution of the flux as immanent aspects of consciousness. Thus the first experience of stability and unity is the recognition of the flux as a flux.

165 Schütz (1976), 30.
166 Discussions of Husserl’s phenomenology of inner time consciousness in relation to music can be found in Ferrara, 61-63 and Clifton, 50-65.
167 Husserl (1964), 106.
168 Husserl (1964), 70.
169 Husserl (1964), 97.
Husserl’s analysis shows that the ontological principles which govern the unity of music in our musical experience are immanent to the process or activity through which this unity unfolds itself, for

“what is in time is continuous in time and is unity of the process, which inseparably carries with it unity of what endures in the procedure. In the tonal process lies the unity of the tone which endures during the process and, conversely, the unity of the tone is unity in the fulfilled duration, i.e. in the process. Therefore, if anything whatsoever is determined as existing in a temporal point, it is thinkable only as the phase of a process in which the duration of an individual also has its point.”

It becomes clear in reflection and recollection that this must be so as the flux of music is experienced as a unity of musical structure. In other words: we experience music always already as a unity and whole, rather than as a succession of tones. This corresponds to the fact that music is experienced within a temporal horizon and not simply in a “now”. In his phenomenological analysis of the temporality of music Clifton characterises the temporal horizon as follows:

“The horizon may be regarded as a field of presence, filled with a content which may be purely phenomenal, as opposed to the more factual filling-out of a space horizon. This indicates that the temporal horizon has a dilatory character: in everyday language we speak of “the business day”, “the working week” or “the fiscal year”. These terms help define the limits of what we mean by “now”. Rather than defining “now” by how many random numbers we can repeat without error (or by similar psychological tests), the “now” is determined by the work of consciousness receiving the meaning of a situation.”

The further question emerges now how such a characteristic of (musical) temporality relates to the determination of (musical) flux. Husserl’s analysis of time consciousness repeatedly affirms the distinction between a concern for what is phenomenologically given and what may be “objective” in content. Husserl is clear that his analysis of time consciousness is concerned with reality “only insofar as it is intended, represented, intuited, or conceptually thought”. This constitutes particular challenges when understanding the processes of reflection or recollection: What is apprehended in reflection and recollection is already a recovery of an original presentation within consciousness. There is a difference between the immanent processes of consciousness and the act of recollection or reflection. This difference plays a decisive role in regard to the determination of the consciousness of temporal unfolding. On the surface the reflective concern reveals structures of temporally unfolding activity that appear ontologically vastly different from the simple, compelling temporal unity which emerges in the original conception within the stream of consciousness. As we have indicated above, the unity of flux is experienced in the dual intentionality of protention and retention as a dynamic unity, a unity of immanent direction but not as an objective structure of external material. The latter becomes visible in reflection and with the original flux being transposed into an evident succession of objective states. At this point, the immanent directedness which was originally experienced to be unique and compelling is translated into an articulate schema of activity, an analysis of process and succession which can

170 Husserl (1964), 107.
171 Husserl (1964), 99.
172 Ferrara cites critical discussion on Husserl by Shearer and defenses of the view of the unity of musical, temporal perception by Miller. He summarizes the question how the “now” of consciousness is related to the past and future as follows: “Although Miller does not use this analogy, just as waves can be particles and particles waves, within the inner motion or flow of time, consciousness does in fact experience successions of “nows” within the simultaneous experience and intuitive awareness of the past and future of those “now” points.” (Ferrara, 63).
173 Clifton, 57.
be re-constructed “polythetically”. It is important to note that this translation removes the originally active (musical) experience from its source and establishes a reflected description which is unable to recover the freedom of progression of the original activity unless it is re-submerged into the process of original and free temporal unfolding.

6.4 Music as pure duration

Schütz has already referred us to a dual nature of temporal consciousness in particular in relation to movement. In particular we have seen a dichotomy between the temporal horizon as it is constituted in relation to the achievements of movement versus the temporal horizon suggested by the activity of movement itself. In regard to the latter experience of time, the relevant musical experience relates to an experience of music within “inner time”. As Schütz states:

“Music, however is a process that goes on in the dimension of inner time, within the durée, as Bergson calls it. In listening to music we immerse ourselves in the continuous flux of our consciousness, and participate simultaneously and immediately in the ongoing musical process – with our feelings, emotions, and passions- in an attitude that Nietzsche has called Dionysiac.”

If music is understood as an experience of “inner time” or as an activity similar to the ongoing activity of movement, we can see a reflection of the dichotomy of temporality in the “original consciousness” of music as the consciousness of inner time or durée and the derivative, reflective consciousness of musical unfolding which considers music in its dynamic but nevertheless accomplished character. This schism between the determinations of the reflective consciousness and the original experience of temporal duration has been identified clearly in Bergson’s own analysis of the connection between time and free will. Bergson’s description of duration is closely connected to the experience of music:

“Pure duration is the form which the succession of our conscious states assumes when our ego lets itself live, when it refrains from separating its present state from its former states. For this purpose it need not be entirely absorbed in the passing sensation or idea; for then, on the contrary it would no longer endure. Nor need it forget its former states: it is enough that, in recalling these states, it does not set them alongside its actual state as one point alongside another, but forms both the past and the present states into an organic whole, as happens when we recall the notes of a tune, melting so to speak, onto one another.”

Like Husserl’s inner time consciousness, duration as it is described here is not amorphous or devoid of unity. While it refers to a progress or succession “without distinction” it also suggests an immanent constitution of unity where qualitative change of one aspect will change the characteristics and identity of the unity itself. This way of looking at duration echoes Husserl’s view of time consciousness as consisting of protention, conception of the “now” and retention. Both conceptions affirm that the determination of the flow of succession is immanent to the progress of consciousness itself. Duration (as immanent time consciousness)

“might well be nothing but a succession of qualitative changes, which melt and permeate one another, without precise outlines, without any tendency to externalise themselves in

175 Schütz (1964), 196.
176 Bergson, 101.
relation to one another, without any affiliation with number: it would be pure heterogeneity.”\footnote{Bergson, 104. Susanne Langer refers to Bergson as “the artists’ philosopher par excellence” for his ability to bring “metaphysics very close to the musical realm” (Langer, 113). At the same time Langer argues that Bergson does not fulfill the promises of his intuition by withdrawing from any attempt to articulate ‘duration’ symbolically. Bergson’s argument is that any representation (symbolic or otherwise) leads to a spatial transformation of time. However Langer argues that music symbolizes temporal experience and in this non-discursive symbolism well avoids the dangers of the direct, “spatial” representation of time. One could also say that the polythetic character of music which makes re-enactment of musical activity necessary in order to participate in the meaning of music preserves the originality of presencing which characterizes pure duration as experienced in music.}

At the same time, the entire analysis and effort which Bergson extends to the grasp of the concept of duration is focussed on the need to establish the concept of freedom within the context of human activity. Bergson’s central concern is that the temporal viewpoint of human activity is responsible for the transposition of the originally free and heterogenous progression of experience in duration to the determined and homogenous experience of states and things in extended (spatial) time. Interpreting time as “spatially” extended allows us to break up primordially free and spontaneous activities into stages and transforms the activity into formed acts. Bergson summarizes a crucial shift in ontological perspective which is responsible for the mistaken view of many essentially ‘free’ human activities in a simple formula: “In place of the doing we put the already done”.\footnote{Bergson, 219.} Prioritising the achievements over the activity does not only transform the relevant ontology but changes first and foremost the temporality in question. The translation of temporality from the originally experienced “duration” to a spatially representable order of past, present and future is achieved through an ontological turn in regard to the activity itself. Where music is considered to be active and unfolding its very process of unfolding remains free. As soon as music is manifested in musical form, determinations of its progression are born. This ontological transformation is effected within a horizon of past, present and future which is no longer able to account for the original experience of self-referential or kairological temporal relationships or for an essential unity of the musical flux, but instead seeks to understand this unity in an external, reflective or descriptive sense.

6.5 Conclusion and outlook

The discussion of the temporal aspects of music concludes my discussion of the phenomenology of music and my discussion of musical activity and the musical work. Before considering music further under a substantially different perspective, I would like to summarize six main points and indicate their relevance for the subsequent discussion:

(1) The musical work can be described as a topos. This ontological paradigm conceives the musical work as a place and realm of musical activity (composition, performance, improvisation and listening). Phenomenologically, the musical work as topos can also be described as an intentional object, that is, as an act, limit and object of musical discovery.

(2) The topos or work of music is a living form. This implies that the musical work contains active principles which transcend its form. In a historical context this could imply that the musical work concept has a regulative function only. The possibilities of the musical work form and are formed by historical as well as personal traditions of encounter. As a living form the musical form or topos is subject to social, cultural and personal interpretation. Such interpretation brings the
musical topos to life and transforms the possibilities of the topos into the actuality of a living performance (bios).

(3) The musical work is a temporal form. The experience of the musical work as a living entity (bios) implies that the musical form is not subject to temporal determination but determines temporality. Musical temporality is congruent to the temporality of lived experience. The essential connectedness of present, past and future within the musical work is experienced as a unity of the musical work in performance or as the logical progression of musical formation in improvising musical activity.

(4) Musical activity is a process of polythetic formation. The musical work is itself polythetic. This implies that music is always original. The constitution of music as temporal form and forming implies that the unfolding of music is only achieved in original modes of activity. Music as cognitive or re-creative activity not only requires a temporally extended process which mirrors the original, narrative process of constitution but also requires an enactment of lived experience originally experienced.

(5) Musical activity is a form of dialogue. This aspect extends to the interpretation of musical works and to the ontological constitution of musical form itself. It is a result of the polythetic constitution of music and of the ontology of music as temporal form. The dialogical aspect of music implies that music and musical form remain incomplete and open. As well as fulfilling opportunities for dialogue, music also leaves many such opportunities unfulfilled or alternatively seeks to artistically disappoint dialogical expectation in order to maintain and rekindle an original dialogical momentum.

(6) Musical activity is self-referential. This implies that its propositional dimension and meaning is unfolded through itself. It remains separate to ordinary life- a metaphor and analogy of life rather than a directly symbolic representation of lived experience.

These six brief points are naturally interrelated, but they indicate my main ontological findings which have emerged from the discussion. I will now turn to a substantially different way of looking at music. This will enable me to clarify some of these points further and to return to the phenomenon of philosophy.
PERIAGOGE

“Even so this organ of knowledge must be turned around from the world of becoming together with the entire soul, like the scene-shifting periact in the theatre until the soul is able to endure contemplation of essence and the brightest region of being”

(Plato, Republic, 518 c-d)

7.1 The importance of music for the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle

The discussion of the contemporary philosophy of music has shown that considerable difficulties arise when we attempt to articulate the ontological circumstances that ground the phenomena of musical performance and the presence of music. We have tried to clarify difficulties which arise from the way in which we account for music in terms of works or pieces and from the temporality of music, the experience of time in music and the experience of music as temporal form. This discussion has focussed on music as it is experienced, created or discovered, performed and heard in contemporary culture. While there is within this approach a large diversity of musical encounter we have tried to show the underlying ontological characteristics which embrace this diversity. Following this discussion, we are now in a position to discuss music in a substantially different sense. We hope that through an interpretation of the importance of music to the philosophy of music in Plato and Aristotle we will turn some basic ontological concepts around and thus clarify our understanding further.

The classical conception and practice of music differs considerably from today’s use and practice of music to the point where presumed distinctions between art-forms (eg. poetry, music and dance) become sublated and questionable. To be sure, such distinctions are not firm even within contemporary musical culture. As we have seen, the practice of music determines crucially any philosophical and ontological questions which may arise in regard to the presumed realm of music itself. We cannot assume readily and from the outset that “music itself” is a meaningful concept which has a corresponding, well defined and clear ontological identity. In this absence, we are compelled to look at musical phenomena such as the performance and the improvisation of music, the notation of music, the listening and creation of music, etc within their cultural context. In addition we can attempt to clarify the musical phenomena of harmony, rhythm and formal structure. Even these phenomena and their identity are challenged, though, by the inventions of particularly recent, but in general historically contingent musical practice. We only need to think of the challenge to our understanding of musical harmony which has occured as a result of inventions such as Schoenberg’s “Twelve Tone Technique”. It seems that at no stage can we readily assume that we are now talking about “music itself”. The inquiry rather seems to proceed as follows: The look at musical phenomena provides us with an opportunity to consider musical practice in a wider sense and allows us to identify those aspects of this practice which are distinct from other realms of human experience. With this music as a meaningful subject matter of philosophical thinking becomes a much wider concept than can be assumed from a mere look at specific musical practice. The resulting ontological divisions may well include

179 Wagner’s “Gesamtkunstwerk” is a case in point.
activities, experiences and phenomena which do not appear to be straightforwardly “musical” at all, but which are so only by virtue of their ontological characteristics.

In the following part of my thesis I wish to discuss music in such a wider context which I believe can be found in Greek philosophy and in particular in the writings of Plato and Aristotle. There are a number of reasons for this which I intend to discuss:

1. The practice of music in Greek culture includes a range of activities which commonly are believed to belong to different art-forms, such as dance, poetry and theatre performance. I discuss this wider understanding of mousike briefly and ask what qualifications may need to apply before we can draw any conclusions as to the relevance of classical conceptions of music to contemporary musical practice. Through an examination of Plato’s view of music I will argue that despite the qualifications the classical understanding of mousike provides us with an opportunity to establish a wider ontological paradigm of music. Such a paradigm includes potentially a clearer view of the mimetic attributes of music, its temporality of lived experience and gesture and its harmonizing properties. I consider this latter aspect to be particularly important when discussing further the congruence of music and philosophy in the last section of my thesis.

2. The Greek understanding of “art” as techne is not necessarily congruent with a contemporary understanding of art. I will attempt to show what a conception of music as techne would imply. As a preparation to this discussion, I suggest that Greek philosophers on the whole and Plato and Aristotle in particular consider music on many levels and not primarily as an art in the modern sense. They rather focus on music as an activity with strong relevance to the formation of ethos and the conditions of the human soul. Mousike is consequently relevant to the structure and content of education and to political and social life. Mousike and musical phenomena also figure strikingly in cosmological and ontological explanations, especially in the context of the fundamental music-ontological phenomenon of harmony. These dimensions of music are largely absent in more recent discussions of music. While they re-emerge in the philosophy of Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche to some extent, their absence has naturally important implications for the philosophical and ontological conception of music.

3. Both points imply that discussions of mousike refer to a complex horizon defined by the relationship between art (techne) and nature (physis). I will try to show how mousike becomes relevant as an ontological bridge to both realms in the context of a discussion of Aristotle’s philosophy of music. In addition, I argue that Aristotelian ontological divisions which relate to both areas become transformed within a modern understanding. As they do not relate to modern uses and practices, their ontological analysis becomes ignored and displaced by the modern use. Cases in point here include the Aristotelian distinctions of praxis and poiesis and dynamis and energeia. I will discuss these concepts in relation to mousike and music. I argue that a qualified appropriation which preserves the phenomenological authenticity of these concepts would shed considerable light on music as it is practiced in contemporary culture.

In the following section I address the above points through a discussion of the philosophy of music in Plato and Aristotle. The first part of this section outlines Plato’s ambivalent approach to music within a context of Pythagorean and Orphic traditions of musical practice. Plato takes a seemingly contradictory position in regard to music: On the one hand music is supposedly educationally useful and important. It constitutes a paradigm for ontological coherence between thinking and doing (Laches). Music contributes to the formation of character (Gorgias) and the improvement of the condition of the soul (Republic, Laws).
Music is an expression of inspiration and through the muses we receive inspiration and divine madness from which even philosophy profits (Phaedrus). In addition, the abstract and formal aspects of music reflect the order of the cosmos (Timaeus). Through the notion of harmony (Philebus) music essentially overcomes and harmonises the divisions of appearance and thus directs us towards a view of truth (Phaedo). On the other hand, the erotic dimension of music with its seductive and imitative potential is potentially corrupting and untruthful (Symposium, Republic, Laws). Casual and unrestrained imitation may also corrupt human character. This means that music has to be subject to legislation for Plato and its use needs to be restricted to imitation of order and good disposition. On this level music appears to be entirely instrumental to the ethical content that it imitates. It does not possess inherently and absolutely valid attributes as implied in its power to form human disposition and attune the soul to cosmic harmony. An important issue arising from Plato’s discussion of music is the ambivalence between music as imitative and corrupting and music as transcending appearance and establishing and revealing harmony and order. I will attempt to show how this ambivalence may be explained in the context of Plato’s conception of music.

In the second part I wish to consider Aristotle’s view of music which appears to be initially more straightforward as it is focussed on the educational relevance of music. A major question in Aristotle’s philosophy is the relationship between a life of theoria and the practical and political life of the human being in society. Aristotle seems to suggest in some contexts (Nicomachean Ethics) that the highest form of life is the theoretical life (bios theoretikos). In other contexts (Politics VII) Aristotle suggests the superiority of the active or practical life (bios praktikos). According to Aristotle, music contributes to both ideals: It improves the ability of a person to become a theoros or spectator of what is good and beautiful. At the same time, music also provides us with relief (anapausis) from practical activity and contributes to the purification of the soul (katharsis) within the context of practical life.

However, how does Aristotle presume music achieves this? What type of ontological constitution does music itself have in order to interact with- and influence life? Aristotle characterises life itself as an energeia. I consider the possibility here that music can be understood in a twofold way: As a techne it is a form of poiesis. This sense would appear to be related to the modern notion of music as an “art”. However, if we consider music as a praxis music is better understood as an energeia. The distinctions between poiesis and praxis and the closely related one between dynamis and energeia are central to Aristotle’s ontology and can help us to understand music within a dual ontological paradigm in a more effective way.

In addition to being part of human activity music is also significant to the constitution of nature and physis. Aristotle is not concerned with this to the extent that Plato and the Pythagoreans were. I will nevertheless attempt to raise the question what the relationship between music and physis may be especially in view of the fact that music may not be sufficiently explained as a techne.

7.2 The context of Plato’s philosophy of music- Pythagorean and Orphic traditions

Before trying to gain a clearer direct understanding of Plato’s interest in music, it seems important to at least briefly indicate the context in which this interest is located. Within the classical tradition we can distinguish initially two distinct approaches to the reflection on music: the Pythagorean formalism which understood music ultimately within intellectual and abstract concepts and the Orphic understanding which

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180 Aristotle also characterizes eudaemonia and theoria as energeiai which will become important below.
seems to highlight musical practice and originally emphasises the seductive and magic powers of music primarily evident in the performance of music. The mathematisation of music undertaken by Pythagoras and subsequent Pythagoreans is well known and endures in today’s musical and acoustic theory (eg. Pythagorean comma, Pythagorean intervals). The philosopher Pythagoras (c.570- 520) is reputed to have experimented with a monochord and is said to have discovered the harmonic relationships between musical intervals and vibrating lengths of string. Thus certain intervals (octave, perfect fifth, perfect fourth) were discovered to correspond to very simple mathematical proportions. The aim of the Pythagoreans was to “realise harmonia, the fitting together of rhythms and tones to produces holistic musical characters or ‘modes’.”

The extensive numerology which was applied to music allowed Pythagorean theory to create an extensive musical cosmology and provided the basis for a metaphysical extension of the concept of harmony in particular.

It is not surprising that the formalisation of mathematical and musical beauty inspired wide-reaching cosmological and ontological speculation in subsequent Pythagorean thinkers including Plato and the Neo-Platonists. In fact the connections between Plato and Pythagorean thinking is so close that some (notably Erich Frank) have suggested that the source of many Pythagorean ideas is in fact Plato himself, explaining why Aristotle refers to Plato and others as “so called Pythagoreans”.

Be that as it may, Pythagorean thinking – whether authentic or assimilated- occupies an important place in Plato’s work. It is of obvious importance to the Timaeus and the Phaedo on account of their central Pythagorean topics: the harmony of the universe and the immortality of soul. We find references to the mathematical musicology of the Pythagoreans in the Republic and the Gorgias makes reference to the Pythagorean psychology via the allegory of the “leaky jar and sieve.” While generally accepting of the formalisation of music, there seems to be, however, an important criticism Plato levels against Pythagoreanism. In an ironical description of the empirical ways in which Pythagoreans inquire into the nature of music, the conclusion is drawn that these forms of enquiry are quite useless as they “do not ascend to generalised problems and the consideration which numbers are inherently concordant and which not and why in each case.” For Plato seems to demand an a priori form of musical mathematics of the kind demonstrated in the Timaeus. It seems as if music in the platonic-pythagorean context must conform to rational principles from the ground up and that the structures of music and sound pre-cede the actual reality and beauty of the sensuous experience.

As distinguished from Pythagorean formalism, the orphic tradition is rooted in the mythological figure of Orpheus and tends to emphasise the primordial and instinctive powers of music. This extends to associating Orpheus with therapeutic, prophetic and magical powers of music. Orpheus who is reputed to have descended into the underworld to regain his wife Euridice from the realm of the shadows possesses such seductive powers in his music making that he variously enchants Charon, the ferryman, Cerberus, the watchdog and Persephone, the companion of Hades. His singing and playing is reputed to have been so magical that it charmed trees and rocks and calmed the elements. The primordial force of his musical powers is further emphasised by his original connection with Dionysos whose powers include ecstatic and

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181 Stolzfus, 22.
182 Frank, 159.
183 Republic, 530d.
184 Gorgias, 493a.
185 Republic, 531c.
186 There is debate if Orpheus was primarily associated with Dionysos or Apollo (see Linforth (1947), 53).
intoxicated states within musical performance (drama and dance). The gruesome details of Orpheus’ death provide further indication for the elementary and transcending power of music: Supposedly outraged by Orpheus’ turn towards Apollo Dionysos sends the maenads to dismember his body. Even in the dismembered state his head continues to sing before floating (together with his lyre) towards Lesbos where it finds its final resting place. Following from the myth of his life and death the classical tradition attributes mystical powers and the practice of secret rites to Orpheus and his followers. He is in particularly known for initiating sacramental rites and purifications (teletai) whose purpose was not primarily religious but intended to “procure peace for the soul of the participant.”

Orpheus is in this closely associated with Musaeus (allegedly his student) and explicitly so in a number of contexts by Plato if often in a critical sense. A particularly noteworthy reference occurs in the Republic in which Adeimantus attempts to further weaken the case for justice in citing the “bushel of books of Musaeus and Orpheus, the offspring of the Moon and of the Muses” designed to support the widespread belief through their “ritual” that “there really are remissions of sins and purifications for deeds of injustice, by means of sacrifices and pleasant sport.” While this reference is clearly contemptuous and derogatory of orphic practices as well as of Socrates’ view of the predominance of justice over injustice, it shows that Orphism was concerned with spiritual writings and their use in rituals of purification. One might wish to draw parallels here between Socrates own claim that philosophy is a form of purification, of course. Be that as it may, it is not surprising that the Protagoras refers to Orpheus (and Musaeus) as sophists or teachers in disguise. It is also notable that Plato makes reference to the Orphic life - an indication that ritualised practices extended beyond the ordinary contexts of mythology and religion into existential commitments.

The Orphic and Pythagorean musical traditions – while not always completely separable within Greek musical tradition- reflect nevertheless two distinct paths within the Greek philosophy of music. Orpheus seems to represent the primordial and intuitive power of music and musical performance. This power is seductive, powerful and irrational. It has ambiguous qualities and effects. While Orpheus succeeds in gaining access to his wife in the underworld, he loses her in turn prompting Plato to comment that being a mere minstrel, he “lacked the spirit to die as Alcestis did for the sake of love.” Phaedrus’ accusation in the Symposium which alleges this lack of courage, need not be taken as a statement of Plato’s own position. As it happens, the criticism of Orpheus may correspond to a similar criticism of Socrates by Alcibiades as being unsusceptible to the forces of ordinary love and in this context may be seen to be the expression of the second form of love espoused by Eryximachus in his speech- a higher form of love or courage than the one that is immediately espoused by the criticism.

While Orphic tradition and practice reflects the transitory powers of music, Pythagoreanism draws attention to the reflective and abstract formal structures which underpin music and the musical form and which have an all-encompassing relevance to the reflective understanding of the cosmos and the human place within it. The Pythagorean tradition variously ignores or absorbs the irrational aspects of music which appear to be most evident in performance to highlight the structural, ontological and metaphysical concepts of the
musical forms themselves. This varied focus on the process or even ritual of music making (Orphic) and the structures and forms created by music (Pythagorean) appears to be important when we think further about music and its connection to philosophy. It appears to be captured within the classical dichotomy of the work (ergon) and the performance or the “being at work” (energeia). In the following I am interested in establishing to which degree Plato engages with these ontologically distinct aspects of music and how he conceives the synthesis of these two aspects and traditions, which in the final analysis constitutes music. The relevant corresponding, contemporary question appears to be here: What is music if it is both, a class of acoustic works and the domain of a specific and transient human practice and realm of performance?

7.3 The broader concept of music as mousike

While the Pythagorean and Orphic traditions seem to split the phenomenon of mousike, Plato’s repeated engagement with music can be only partially explained within this dual paradigm. For Plato’s engagement with music appears to be characterised by an attempt to synthesise these traditions and to interpret them in such a way that they can become philosophically productive rather than merely mythologically revealing. In addition Plato clearly broadens the concept of music to take account of the ontological power which is inherent within music as both “being at work” and as a realm of works. The ontological ambiguity which makes us variously regard music as an activity and form at the same time provides the strongest analogies to philosophy itself. It will thus be interesting to see how Plato extends the concept of music and related topics in order to capture philosophical aspects and an understanding of philosophy itself.

A survey of the references to music in Plato’s work shows that Plato refers to mousike in a number of contexts: On the one hand music seems to be a wide concept to encompass anything from music proper, to poetry and even philosophy. In fact it appears that anything that is inspired by the muses should be properly subsumed under the term mousike. It is in this sense that Plato refers to the cultured and wise person in the Republic as musical:

“Then he who blends gymnastics with music and applies them most suitably to the soul is the man whom we should most rightly pronounce to be the most perfect and harmonious musician, far rather than the one who brings the strings into unison with each other.”

Similarly, in his discussion of the contentious character in book VIII of the Republic, Plato refers this state of character to a “neglect of the true muse, the companion of discussion and philosophy” and implies that this neglect leads to an imbalance in a character which becomes “self willed and lacking in mousike”. Mousike assumes here the status of “culture” and must be blended with reason in order to create and preserve virtue in the human soul.

On the other hand, music is discussed in a narrower sense and at times highly critically for its potentially irrational, decadent and harmful effects. Music is considered to be imitative and hence twice removed in Plato’s view from truth itself. Especially in the context of purely instrumental music, music

193 The intertwined nature of Pythagoreanism and Orphism is highlighted repeatedly in the literature, in particular by Burkert, 39 and Kahn, 53 “Thus in Plato’s conception of philosophy the Orphic and Pythagorean streams merge, and both traditions find their hypnoia, their deeper meaning in Plato’s own theory of the soul and its transmundane destiny.”
194 Republic 412a.
195 Republic 549b.
seems to be “aiming only at our pleasure and caring for naught else.” Since it is seen to be imitative the mere performance of music without a grasp of the truth of the ideas of which music is the imitation amounts to nothing more than “flattery” of the senses and involves no skill but a “knack”. In this context music is not practiced for a serious purpose but merely for play.

It seems that the ambiguity which we find initially in Plato’s engagement with music can be directly related to the more frequently discussed issue of Plato’s relationship with poetry. There may well be good argument to suggest that Plato’s discussions of music and poetry should be really seen as one discussion as the two subject areas are not clearly distinguishable from each other in the classical and Platonic context. The evolution of music as an autonomous art is a fairly recent development. Greek music (mousike) – as Eduard Lippman points out - refers originally to a unity of poetic performance involving language or recitation, dance and instrumental music:

“Greek music worthy of the name necessarily involved language. Wordless music was regarded as inferior, and instrumental performance can be distinguished as techne (which is in no wise different from the craft since it lacks imitative capacity) from the more elevated mousike (which generally designates vocal music)…..melody with word and gesture produced an art of extraordinary definition, especially since the uniting factor, rhythm was identical in all three components; there was no complex interplay of three patterns, but a single rhythmic expression, which was apparently the most important aspect of Greek music…the unity of Greek rhythm was further solidified by unison singing and "unison" dancing.”

It is thus clear that the wider concept of mousike and the concept of instrumental music may need to be distinguished when we discuss Plato’s view of mousike. As we have seen Plato’s positive disposition towards music results from a wider and more encompassing view of mousike as activities inspired by the muses. Mousike in the sense of culture encompasses logos and activities such as philosophy. In contrast, the emancipation of purely instrumental music as a pursuit focused on sensual pleasure occupies Plato on a different level and appears to have been historically determined by corresponding cultural developments at the time. These developments lead to a division between music as a unity of poetic recitation, melos, rhythm or dance and purely instrumental music and are reflected within Plato’s discussion of music on a number of occasions. We thus find an implied condemnation of autonomous instrumental music and virtuosity in Plato’s critical references to the panharmonic instruments of Marsyas (aulos, flute).

According to Plato, these are licentious in character and likely to invoke irrational and unrestrained pleasure. This coincides with Plato’s insistence that speech and logos must determine music and rhythm and not vice versa and that accordingly music must remain imitative of rational character. Where it does so, music assumes a more positive value. The Laws suggest clearly that “matters of rhythm and music generally are imitations of the manners of good or bad men”. Music is approved as long as it imitates good character and especially temperate and rational character. This extends to all its aspects including tonality (modality), instrumentation and rhythm. Rhythm and harmony are to “follow the words and not the words these.”

196 Gorgias 501e.
197 Statesman 288c.
198 Lippman (1964), 54.
199 see Republic, 399d and Symposium 215c.
200 see Republic 398d.
201 Laws 798d.
202 Republic 400d.
speech” (eulogia) and is completely dependent on – and interpretative of the rational characteristics of the logos and the moral characteristics of the originals it imitates.

A further explanation of Plato’s critical attitude towards music would suggest that he may have held views in relation to music similar to those in regard to certain types of poetry. These views focus on the role of imitation (mimesis) in regard to both artforms. This explanation would gain currency from passages which approve or censor directly certain musical modes.

As the effect of music on the soul is a result of particular “songs and tunes” and even more so particular modes their character becomes important in the musical education of guardians. While the Lydian and mixed Lydian modes are “useless even to women” the Dorian and the Phrygian modes are declared suitable by Plato to inspire bravery and temperance. It is in this context that any innovations of music have a profound effect on the city as a whole.

Depending on the imitative reference, on the vision of the ideas accompanying them and on the effects on virtue and character music or poetry are either truthful and productive or caught within – ultimately deceptive- appearance. Furthermore, some of the critical aspects of Plato’s view of music relates to the state of mind of its creator: the poets create without consciousness and in any case his intentions are to please the multitude and are not governed by the “better part of the soul.” This is even clearer in the rhapsodist who creates his improvisations under the influence of higher powers and remains ignorant in his rapture. Both the creative process and the predominance of sensual forces over reason, however, imply a lack of temperance in the work and a lack of knowledge and understanding in the process of creation. The “mimetic and dulcet poetry” while exerting a powerful spell must demonstrate its relevance to good governance or in the absence of such rationale be banned from the city.

The “old quarrel between philosophy and poetry” however is not a straightforward affair. Similarly, the seductive powers of music are not to be simply rejected. And in addition, Plato’s censorship of poetry needs to be put into the context of referring to certain kinds and uses. This is even more pronounced when it comes to music.

The first difficulty is that we cannot reduce Plato’s philosophy of music to its mimetic character nor can we reduce it to the characters of the creative process. We would have to ignore a range of passages which speak about music in an entirely different manner, including such passages that suggest that the irrational element of music is in fact vital to the encounter and conception of truth itself. The second issue relates to the relationship between the rational and the irrational. Music is said to exert powerful spells – however, so does Socratic philosophy if we are to believe Alcibiades’ account, especially in relation to the personality and charisma of Socrates who is clearly not simply an “all-accomplished logic chopper.” The irrational effects Socrates has on his companions and the insights he draws himself from dreams, inspiration and “divine madness” are important in completing the picture of philosophy itself. For a differentiated view of music, the role of the irrational and the important forces leading to “attunement” need to be further understood.

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203 Republic 399a.
204 Republic 424c.
205 Republic, 605a.
206 “For if you grant admission to the honeyed muse in lyric or epic, pleasure and pain will be lords of our city instead of law and that which shall from time to time have approved itself to the general reason as the best” (Republic, 607a).
207 Lysis, 216a.
7.3 Music and education

To start with, the supposed subordinate role of music to reason and the condemnation of large aspects of music make it a little surprising why Plato affords music a highly elevated role in the context of education. The second book of the Laws suggests that music (“choristry”) is to be a most fundamental focus of education able to impart original truth which transcends the mere imitation of a given rationality. Reference to musical education in the Republic suggests that in fact “education in music is most sovereign, because more than anything else rhythm and harmony find their way to the inmost soul and take strongest hold upon it, bringing with them and imparting grace”.208 The issue is here that the soul is “attuned” properly through music and contributes to the creation of a balanced, virtuous character and harmonious adjustment. Without proper musical attunement, the soul is said to become “cowardly and rude”. In the case of a lack of musical education, the character becomes initially “very fit and full of pride and high spirit” developing contentiousness and rudeness while the excessive exposure to music “melts and liquefies” the spirit and has the potential to create feebleness. Music then appears to be able to influence and mould the relationship between the active and reflective aspects of the human character through attunement.

This view is also repeated in the Laches where we find a definition of the “musical” person as having “tuned himself with the fairest harmony, not that of a lyre or other entertaining instrument, but has made a true concord of his own life between his words and his deeds.”209 This definition of “musical” clearly suggests an extension of any acoustic concept of the musical realm towards a fundamental ontological realm of abstract “consistency” particularly in regard to the diverse ontology of action and reflection. Congruence or harmony between word and deed would suppose a frame of reference according to which such congruence is achieved and such a frame of reference is clearly not acoustic but abstract and – to follow Plato – situated within the intelligible realm of ideas.

However, the relevance of music to education is not limited to inspiring character traits and consistency between words and deeds. Two further fundamental aspects need to be highlighted:

In the first instance education and music contribute to the “turning of the soul” as outlined towards the end of the cave allegory.210 Following the description of blindness towards ideas which is variously the result of either insufficient vision within the cave or excessive light outside the cave, the allegory alleges that the soul is inherently reluctant to “endure the contemplation of essence and the brightest region of being” and needs to in fact be “turned around from the world of becoming… like the scene shifting-periact in the theatre”.211 The conversion and turning of the soul and its ascension to reality is affirmed by Plato to be true philosophy.212 It is achieved through music “imparting by the melody a certain harmony of spirit that is not science and by rhythm measure and grace.”213 It seems thus that music provides a fundamental basis and existential direction, a prelude to dialectic214 which makes true philosophy possible.

The second aspect which needs to be highlighted is related to the question how music achieves these educational objectives. What powers within music achieve the turning of the soul towards the truth and the

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208 Republic 401d.
209 Laches 188d.
210 Republic, 518c.
211 Republic, 518d.
212 Republic, 521d.
213 Republic, 522a.
214 Republic, 532a.
ideas? In the most general sense the cultivation of music (and philosophy) provide the “soul with motion”\textsuperscript{215} which is further qualified as follows:

“Music too, in so far is it uses audible sound, was bestowed for the sake of harmony. And harmony, which has motions akin to the revolutions of the soul within us was given by the Muses to him who makes intelligent use of the Muses, not as an aid to irrational pleasure, as is now supposed, but as an auxiliary to the inner revolution of the Soul when it has lost its harmony, to assist in restoring it to order and concord with itself. And because of the unmodulated condition, deficient in grace, which exists in most of us, Rhythm also was bestowed upon us to be our helper by the same deities and for the same ends.”\textsuperscript{216}

7.4 Music and Harmony

Plato’s identification of harmony as a moving and ordering principle is in accordance with the elevated ontological importance which is attributed to harmonia already by the pre-Socratics.

Plato himself refers us to this with a reference to Heraclitus in the Symposium.\textsuperscript{217} For Heraclitus musical metaphors of the bow and the lyre serve to indicate fundamental, ontological connections within a perceived reality unyielding in its opposition to the reflective consciousness. As the Heraclitean fragment 51 states:

“They do not understand how what is at variance is in agreement with itself: a back-turning form\textsuperscript{218} (palintropos harmonie) like that of the bow and of the lyre.”\textsuperscript{219}

Harmonia (here translated as ‘structure’) indicates the reconciliation and transcendence of opposition. It is significant that Heraclitus uses the musical analogy of bow and lyre – their ontological connexion being provided by movement - opposing movement to be more precise which once accomplished transcends that which is at variance and reveals a concealed harmony. The harmony and agreement between the bow and lyre is thus one of application and performance. Without activity (energeia), movement and life bow and lyre would not be in harmony. Looking at it without fully understanding the process (musical movement) which reveals such a harmony makes the harmony appear invisible. However, ultimately the invisible harmony is stronger than the visible one (Fragment 54) when we come to realise that even the process that brings harmony to the fore is itself part of a greater harmony. This most fundamental transcendence of ontological opposition is perhaps indicated in the Heraclitean fragment 10:

“Conjunctions: wholes and not wholes, the converging the diverging, the consonant the dissonant, from all things one, and from one all things.”\textsuperscript{220}

The musical paradigm of consonance and dissonance leads us ultimately towards the phenomenon of transcendence. In music it seems we find audible oppositions which are understood and reconciled within a transcendent framework through affirming or establishing harmony. Harmony becomes symptomatic for universal thinking in its revelation of a shared logos.

\textsuperscript{215} Timaeus, 88c.  
\textsuperscript{216} Timaeus, 47e.  
\textsuperscript{217} see on this Burnet (1930), Kirk & Raven (1957), Hussey (1972), Diels-Kranz (1951).  
\textsuperscript{218} Hussey translates “structure”.  
\textsuperscript{219} Hussey, 43.  
\textsuperscript{220} Hussey, 45.
For Plato, *harmonia* has a profound significance. It does not only provide an explanation for the alignment of the soul with the vision of the ideas, the entire order of the cosmos is achieved on the basis of harmonic, mathematical principles and proportion and the human soul itself is ordered according to harmonious principles as outlined in the *Timaeus*.\(^{221}\) The *Philebus* explains that where harmony is “broken up, a disruption of nature and a generation of pain also take place at the same moment”. And where harmony is “recomposed and returns to its own nature, then I say pleasure is generated”.\(^{222}\) While the notion that the soul is harmony is rejected in the *Phaedo*\(^{223}\) because it becomes unclear how musical harmony can persist independently of its constituents (the lyre and the strings) the concept of harmony which sustain the *Timaeus* is of a divine nature and transcends the mere fitting together of disparate elements. In the *Republic* it is suggested that justice bears a likeness to concord and harmony.\(^{224}\) These references suggest that harmony (*harmonia, symphonia*) is a fundamental principle and force not only closely related to *logos* and reason\(^{225}\) but as a matter of fact explicative of-and foundational for reason.

To gain a clearer view of this foundational phenomenon for Plato, it will be necessary to clarify how harmony is established or affirms itself within the different realms of cosmos, the human soul, political life, discourse, dialectic, medicine and thought in general. On many occasions the concept of harmony as the fitting together of disparate elements- provides Plato with a philosophical reference point to ontological fundamentals in line with those positions quite possibly inherited from the Pythagoreans or Heraclitus. A passage, which seems to reflect the nature and fundamental relevance of harmony well, is the speech by Eryximachus in the *Symposium*. Here, the medical practitioner Eryximachus, draws a parallel between medicine and music as arts which draw opposites together through love:

"And so not merely is all medicine governed, as I propound it, through the influence of this god\(^ {226}\), but likewise athletics and agriculture. Music also, as is plain to any the least curious observer, is in the same sort of case: perhaps Heraclitus intends as much by those perplexing words 'the One at variance with itself is drawn together, like harmony of bow or lyre'. Now it is perfectly absurd to speak of a harmony at variance, or as formed from things still varying. Perhaps he meant, however, that from the grave and acute which were varying before, but which came afterwards to agreement, the harmony was by musical art created. For surely there can be no harmony of acute and grave while still at variance: harmony is consonance (*symphonia*) and consonance is a kind of agreement (*homologia*); and agreement of things varying, so long as they are at variance, is impossible."

What is remarkable in this passage is the conception that agreement (*homologia*) is created or drawn together from things at variance with each other (*diapheromenon*). Agreement (*homologia*) or the same (shared) *logos* is formed by introducing "a mutual love and unanimity. Hence in its turn music is found to be a knowledge of love-matters relating to harmony and rhythm".\(^ {227}\)

Harmony is the reflection of an erotic relationship to a shared *logos* (*homelogos*). The shared *logos* acts as the frame of reference and point of transcendence providing an ontological foundation which draws

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\(^{221}\) see Lippman (1964), 36 and *Timaeus*, 69b-c.
\(^{222}\) *Philebus*, 31c. Socrates emphasises these points with the qualification “…if I may speak in the fewest and briefest words about matters of the highest import…” highlighting the importance of these points.
\(^{223}\) *Phaedo*, 86a-d.
\(^{224}\) *Republic*, 430e.
\(^{225}\) *Republic*, 500c.
\(^{226}\) Ascelepius, who is notably the son of Apollo and thus of particular relevance to Socrates. See also Socrates' final statement at the end of *Phaedo*.
\(^{227}\) *Symposium*, 187a/b.
\(^{228}\) *Symposium* 187 e.
disparate elements together with a force akin to that of eros. This harmony-creating power of the logos is a musical power. Whatever searches for and establishes a harmonious relationship in relation to a homologos is called music—hence the reference to music as a “knowledge of love-matters”. As Erixymachus suggests, the conception of harmony expands beyond a narrow musical meaning. As a matter of fact it only unfolds its full significance in the context of discussions about the cosmos, the Gods, the soul and any other ultimately philosophical concern. The concept of harmony and the homologos become the features through which music is extended towards anything that contributes to the creation of harmony. In this context it appears quite clear why Plato identifies at times music and philosophy: Like music philosophy is a “knowledge of love-matters” and able to take a higher point of view focusing on the homologos of disparate elements. How does this search for harmony progress, how is the drawing together in the homologos achieved?

In the Philebus Plato suggests that harmony is discovered by "conjecture (stochasmos) through skillful practice." Plato implies that one hits upon harmony like the archer hits his mark. The path leading to the actual success of the archer remains in the final analysis mysterious and elusive. Just as there can be no comprehensive account why and how an archer hits the mark, there can be no comprehensive account how harmony is established between things at variance except to say that the "homologos" is aimed at, guessed and established through skilful practice. Finding the shared logos and creating harmony remains a mysterious, erotic act. We are unable to provide a detailed, comprehensive discursive analysis of it.

A passage in the dialogue Cratylus can help us further to clarify and deepen our understanding of the forces which contribute to the establishment of harmony. The passage occurs in the context of an investigation of names and their application to objective realities. The dialogue has established that "names possess a certain natural correctness" and following this abstract argument Socrates and his interlocutor (Hermogenes) investigate the essence of the name of the God Apollo. Apollo is of major significance to Socrates being the God with whom Socrates associates and identifies himself most. The Phaedo, the dialogue arguably most concerned with the person of Socrates, is rich in references to Apollo: In a symbolic association Socrates gives his own swan song proving himself - like they- as one of Apollo's fellow servants. The dialogue opens with a reference to Apollo: The festival for "Apollo" (the return of the ship from Delos) directs the time of Socrates' death. It closes with a reference to the son of Apollo and God of healing, Aesculapius, in the famous last words of Socrates to Crito. In the mythical figure of Apollo, it appears that Socrates' existence and the characteristics of music and philosophy are most closely drawn together.

In the Cratylus Socrates points out – albeit somewhat ironically- that in his view Apollo's name is admirably appropriate to his powers and functions:

"…no single name could more aptly indicate the four functions of the god, touching upon them all and in a manner declaring his power in music, prophecy, medicine and archery…His name and nature are in harmony; you see he is a musical god. For in the first place, purification and purgations used in medicine and in soothsaying, and fumigations with medicinal and magic drugs, and the baths and sprinklings connected with that sort of

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229 Philebus 56a.
230 Cratylus, 391b.
231 "And you seem to think I am inferior in prophetic power to the swans who sing at other times also, but when they feel that they are to die, sing most and best in their joy that they are to go to the gods whose servants they are…And I think I am myself a fellow servant of the swans, and am consecrated to the same God and have received from our master a gift of prophecy no whit inferior to theirs and that I go out from life with as little sorrow as they." (Phaedo, 84e/85a).
thing all have the single function of making a man pure in body and soul...this is the god who purifies and washes away and delivers (apoloun) from such evils...and because he is always by his archery the controller of darts (bolon) he is ever darting (aei ballon). And with reference to music we have to understand that "alpha" often signifies together and her it denotes moving together in the heavens about the poles, as we call them, and harmony in song, which is called concord. And this god directs the harmony, making them all move together, among both gods and men."232

It is significant that the four functions of harmony, purification, ever-darting and prophecy are drawn together in one divine persona and thus enlighten each other. As we have seen above this is certainly the case in relation to harmony and the ability to take aim (toxike). Harmonisation can be seen as a process of purification – an initially opposing relationship is drawn together and brought into balanced agreement, eliminating contamination and strife. As Eryximachus’ speech suggests, harmony in the areas of medicine especially or in relation to the nurture of the soul in philosophy and music can be conceived as purification and has therapeutic qualities in line with original orphic conceptions. Harmony also appears to require an intuitive, inspired and "prophetic" (mantike) ability to intuit the homo-logos. In light of the discussion so far, this latter aspect is particularly relevant if we wish to understand Plato’s complex attitude towards music further.

7.5 Philosophy and Music- the role of the muses and inspiration

One of Plato’s most remarkable references to music and its connection with philosophy occurs in Phaedo 61a. Socrates who spends his final day in prison is visited by his friends. The discussion commences with a description of the extreme emotions experienced by the group in the context of the initial presence of Socrates’ wife and baby son and draws attention to an ambiguity of emotions in the concurrence (or near concurrence) of contradictory experiences of pleasure of pain.233 This provides the context for a reference to music and its relationship to philosophy when Socrates is questioned by his friends about reports that he has been composing metrical versions of Aesop’s fables and a hymn to Apollo.234 Socrates replies with a general reference to a persistent dream:

"The same dream came to me often in my past life, sometimes on one form and sometimes in another, but always saying the same thing: ‘Socrates’ it said, ‘make music and work at it.’ And I formerly thought it was urging and encouraging me to do what I was doing already and that just as people encourage runners by cheering, so the dream was encouraging me to do what I was doing, that is, to make music, because philosophy was the greatest kind of music and I was working at that. But now, after the trial and while the festival of the god delayed my execution, I thought, in case the repeated dream really meant to tell me to make this which is ordinarily called music, I ought to do so and not to disobey."235

The central claim of this statement is that philosophy is the greatest kind of music. With its reference to hymns and fables, the reference is here clearly to mousike in the wider sense and as a part of poetry, however, the main aspect to highlight appears to be Socrates’ identification of “making music” and “working at it”. Socrates emphasises the active dimension of music, namely, musical activity and not just accomplishments and songs of mousike.

232 Cratylus, 405a.
233 Phaedo, 60a-c.
234 Phaedo, 60d.
Socrates takes the term music initially in a generic sense as anything that is inspired by the muses as it were which includes philosophy. However, the dream inspires the making of “ordinary music” in Socrates. This aspect has lead Nietzsche to comment that Socrates (the ”non-mystic” par-excellence\textsuperscript{236}) engages with music out of a bad conscience and fear that there is a realm of truth from which the rational person may be banned.\textsuperscript{237} However, Nietzsche is suspicious beyond justification as he does not only ignore that dreams are an important and clearly productive source of Socratic inspiration but also fails to see Socrates intent to establish an explicit connection between music and philosophy which serves to clarify the supposedly purely rational nature of philosophy.

In his discussion of this passage Kenneth Dorter comes to the conclusion that philosophy is the greatest music

“because it resembles music in its origin and sources but transcends it in its progress. The emphasis in music is that the intelligible element enhances the sensuous experience, while in philosophy the sensuous is the vehicle to transport us to the intelligible.”\textsuperscript{238}

Dorter argues that Plato is interested in music merely as a prelude to philosophy. While music derives its meaning from the same sources as philosophy and is able to potentially impart this deeper meaning to us it is unable to transcend the sensual and thus human realm in its form of presentation. So, while music is a form of “divine madness” it is ultimately unable to lead us to the intelligible realm and –as it where- liberate us from the cave because it actually directs our attention towards the sensible and traps us within it. While Dorter’s interpretation confirms the importance of the sensual and its relationship to the intelligible realm and the role of “divine madness” in music and philosophy it does not seem to explain why music is in certain aspects prioritised over philosophy. We need to raise some further issues:

The first relates to additional, important aspects of music and philosophy which remain so far unacknowledged in Socrates’ reference, namely, the fact that both music and philosophy share a performative dimension. Neither pursuit appears meaningful unless it is part of an enacted process: making music and doing philosophy. In the context of the \textit{Phaedo} one could suggest that to highlight this performative aspect of philosophy with the help of a dream about making music serves to justify the dialogical activity or performance as a whole. Socrates’ impending death would suggest that philosophy or philosophising take a backseat while the more important phenomenon of death or potential survival takes over. However, with the reference to music Socrates suggests that philosophy – like music – cannot be suspended and at the same time retain its meaning. It rather requires ongoing performance, reflection and care to remain meaningful. With Socrates’ own absolute commitment to the examined life, the decision to philosophise does not pose itself. It occurs as a matter of course. This clarifies to an extent the relationship between music, philosophy and meaning. Meaning manifests itself in music and philosophy in a peculiar ontological dependency between the form of expression and the active formation of expression.

The second issue is somewhat trickier: What are the “divine” aspects through which Plato or Socrates can refer to philosophy as music (the greatest music)? Are these really lost within the concrete presence of

\textsuperscript{235} \textit{Phaedo}, 61a.  
\textsuperscript{236} Nietzsche, \textit{GdT}, 77.  
\textsuperscript{237} Nietzsche, \textit{GdT}, 82.  
\textsuperscript{238} Dorter (1982), 200.
music and if so, does philosophy have an ability to preserve them? How can philosophy then still qualify as music?

7.6 The divine aspects of music and philosophy

I will conclude my discussion of Plato with a sketch of some possible answers to the latter issue that may recall the Orphic and Pythagorean traditions outlined earlier. On the question of meaning in music and philosophy one may be tempted to refer to Pythagorean formalism which attributes rational structures to both and which demands that the cosmos and human soul conform to a logos or given set of ideas and ultimately to a kind of highest idea - the idea of the Good. When it comes to making adequate sense and conceiving this transcendental formalism, the limitations of human consciousness come into play. The ascent towards truth cannot take place without a transcendence of the human existence and an extraordinary performance of the human mind based on a harmoniously ordered existence as a whole. Music, dialectic, courage and temperance as well as the serious conduct of an examined life play a unified role in this process which, it appears, is not easily and perhaps never completed. Philosophy as the search for wisdom remains suspended between the divine and the mortal reflecting the particular position of the “spiritual” as an intermediate realm. This characterisation by Diotima in the Symposium\(^{239}\) appears to be also applicable to music. Poetry and music are spiritual in that they interpret and transport “human things to the gods and divine things to men”. At the same time, poetry (and one may equivocate music) is “more than a single thing”\(^{240}\) and it is no longer productive at this point to restrict it to the ordinary type of music which is distinguished by Socrates in the Phaedo. If we accept that the fundamental power of music is its ability to uncover and create harmony, to attune the human being to the divine, then the most general opposition between the divine and the mortal is also its most profound challenge. What constitutes the harmony between the divine and the mortal? Diotima implies that the love and search for wisdom, the yearning for immortality lead progressively towards the ultimate vision of “essential beauty”\(^{241}\) which in turn reconciles the dissonance between the mortal and the divine and transcends finite existence. In the Phaedo the most fundamental dissonance between mortality and immortality is approached within a more personal context, namely, that of the death of Socrates himself. The question of “harmony” here is pressingly important. With his own death imminent, it would be a most obvious thing for Socrates to ignore the fundamental issue and instead create an appearance of harmony through a philosophical testament of doctrines, formalised, theoretical structures and works which will endure when his own existence has ceased. Instead, the dialogue embarks on the path of philosophical performance or an activity of purification implying that no such static testament can exist. It affirms the project of philosophising itself and shows that philosophy and music do not leave works behind but are primarily “at work”\(^{242}\). Showing philosophy at work creates the invisible “harmony”, a vision of essential beauty in itself, necessary to transcend the ultimate and most challenging dissonance - the one between life and death.

\(^{239}\) Symposium, 202e.

\(^{240}\) Symposium, 205c.

\(^{241}\) Essential beauty entire, pure and unalloyed (Symposium, 211d).

\(^{242}\) I suggest that this is the reason why Socrates is encouraged to make music and work at it.
I hope it has now become clearer that any ambiguity in Plato’s references to music\footnote{Anderson speaks of “sweeping contradictions in Plato” in relation to music (Anderson (1966), 109).} are a reflection of the complex ontological dissonances faced by music itself within a dual dimension of structure and activity. These dissonances challenge the traditional onto-metaphysical separation of the sensual and the intelligible realms, the mortal and the divine as within such a strictly dualistic framework there appears little sense in their harmony. Plato’s exposure of music does not only make music a suitable analogical device to explore fundamental questions about philosophy further but it actually exposes the foundations and directions of philosophical thinking itself. His references to music reveal the processes of transcendence which are so fundamental to the human engagement with philosophy and which place music and philosophy within the realm of the spiritual. At the same time, musical phenomena play a crucial role in turning the soul towards truth, an event that is important in Plato’s conception of philosophy. In particular the attunement of the soul and the phenomenon of cosmic harmony play a role here in guiding the path of philosophy. In the final section of this thesis I will attempt to further characterise the performative character of Platonic philosophy as an activity and journey. In this characterisation I will attempt to establish that the morphology of this journey has musical characteristics in accordance with those outlined in the first section of this thesis and that its guiding forces are ultimately congruent with those that guide musical phenomena.
8.1 Aristotle’s conception of music

Like Plato, Aristotle refers to *mousike* in a wide sense as encompassing music, poetry and dance. Two aspects are directly relevant to Aristotle’s philosophy of music: The imitative nature (*Poetics*) of music and the role music plays in education (*Politics*). Aristotle does not share the speculative ambitions of Plato in regard to music, however. Not only does he not believe in the cosmo- and ontological significance of music, he also confines music clearly to the concrete practice of music making. Music remains initially an “art” (*techne*) for Aristotle with its own rules and achievements. Aristotle does not seem to support the conviction of a Pythagorean, cosmic significance of music. Harmony becomes an ontic phenomenon, which is natural to human beings and confined to the natural, practical and productive sciences.\(^{244}\) The natural delight in imitation and in melody and rhythm and not an onto-metaphysical significance form the basis of man’s preoccupation with poetry and music:

“...two causes seem likely to have given rise to the art of poetry, both of them natural. Imitation comes naturally to human beings from childhood (and in this they differ from other animals, i.e. in having a strong propensity for imitation and in learning their earliest lessons through imitation); so does the universal pleasure in imitations. What happens in practices is evidence in this: we take delight in viewing the most accurate possible images of objects which in themselves cause distress when we see them... imitation is natural to us and also melody and rhythm (it being obvious that verse-forms are segments of rhythm).”\(^{245}\) Unlike Plato, Aristotle does not condemn the imitative character of music. Imitation contributes to learning and music imitates character (*ethos*) which makes it relevant to education\(^{246}\) no matter what content is being imitated. In addition to the representation of character, the ultimate aim of music within education is not to train a practising musician, but to acquire the practical and first-hand knowledge which will allow us to judge music well at a later stage in life. Thus music making is something which is done by the young (who require an occupation). It is not appropriate to be continued professionally or in later life as it renders the performers vulgar (*banausos*) “...since the object at which they aim is a low one, as vulgarity in the audience usually influences the music”.\(^{247}\) For this reason Aristotle concludes that professional musicians are “vulgar people, and indeed we think it not manly to perform music, except when drunk or for fun.”\(^{248}\)

However, conditioning the judgement of prospective audiences is only one aspect of the rationale for including music in education. Aristotle cites his predecessors’ views when he affirms that the educational value of music is to learn the appropriate “pastime (*diagoge*) in leisure (*schole*)”. This latter point appears very important as it also raises interesting questions in regard to music itself and I will return to it below.

Initially Aristotle identifies some difficulties in relation to our understanding of music and its aims:

“For it is not easy to say what potency (*dynamis*) it possesses, nor yet for the sake of what object one should participate in it- whether for amusement or relaxation, as one indulges in sleep and deep drinking ...; or whether we ought rather to think that music tends in some degree to virtue (music being capable of producing a certain quality of character just as

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\(^{244}\) see Schueller, 67.

\(^{245}\) *Poetics*, 1448b.

\(^{246}\) “Pieces of music on the contrary do actually contain in themselves imitations of character.” (*Politics*, 1340a 34).

\(^{247}\) *Politics*, 1341b 15-17.

\(^{248}\) *Politics*, 1339b, 8-9.
gymnastics is capable of producing a certain quality of body, music accustoming men to rejoice rightly); or that it contributes something to intellectual entertainment.”

The suggestion here is that the function of music is difficult to determine and may in fact be manifold. The original inclusion of music in education, however, is not based on any useful function of music. Music is rather included

“not as a necessity (for there is nothing necessary about it), nor as useful (in the way in which reading and writing are useful for business and for household management and for acquiring learning and form many pursuits of civil life…) nor yet again as we pursue gymnastics, for the sake of health and strength (for we do not see either of these things produced as a result of music); it remains therefore that is is useful as a pastime in leisure.”

As has been indicated by Nightingale, the characterisation of music as “useless” and “unnecessary” may appear to contradict Aristotle’s other assertions in book VIII of the Politics that music and education are necessary and useful in creating virtuous citizens. Indeed the tensions may go further: the definition of music as important to leisure reflects the importance of the bios theoretikos which is identified as the superior form of life at the end of the Nicomachean Ethics. The understanding that education is to serve useful purposes by contributing to the creation of virtuous citizens, however, appears to reflect the predominance of the bios praktikos or the practical life. How is this dual and seemingly opposing emphasis to be reconciled?

One way to solve this contradiction is to discard the characterisation of music as an end in itself and as a leisure activity altogether and to affirm the predominance of the bios praktikos. Another interpretation would attempt to reconcile both aims in an education that serves both a bios theoretikos and a bios praktikos. This would assume that Aristotle takes a differentiated view of the importance of both forms of life depending on circumstance. On this account, music could be seen to variously serve all three of the characteristics that Aristotle identifies, namely amusement and relaxation, creation of good character and fulfilment of pastime and wisdom. One argument to make the use of music dependent on appropriate context is indicated by Aristotle himself in the context of education: Leisure and “intellectual entertainment” is not deemed suitable for boys and the young, for “a thing that is an end does not belong to anything that is imperfect.” The latter reason suggests that in the context of the bios theoretikos the function of music most notable would be its self-sufficient nature and its ability to condition the critical ability of the spectator (theoros), whereas in the context of the bios praktikos its most relevant function would relate to conditioning of character and influence on providing relaxation.

8.2 The distinction between praxis and poiesis?

The identification of music with leisure (schole) raises a fundamental Aristotelian question, namely whether music is a praxis or a poiesis. In the Nicomachean Ethics Aristotle makes this distinction which appears to have some relevance to the question of music. We need to cite Aristotle in full to understand the context and train of thought adequately:

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249 Politics, 1339a 18-24.
250 Politics, 1338a 14-24.
251 Nightingale, 246.
252 This argument is made by Nichols and Lord (1982) 76-77.
253 Politics, 1339a 19-24 and Nightingale, 248.
254 Politics, 1339a 32-34.
“The class of things that admit of variation includes both things made and actions done. But making (poiesis) is different from doing (praxis) (a distinction we may accept from extraneous discourses). Hence the rational quality concerned with doing is different from the rational quality concerned with making. Nor is one of them a part of the other, for doing is not a form of making, nor making a form of doing. Now architectural skill, for instance, is an art (techne) and it is also a rational quality (hexis meta logon) concerned with making; nor is there any art which is not a rational quality concerned with making, nor any such quality which is not an art. It follows that an art (techne) is the same as a rational quality, concerned with making, that reasons truly. All art deals with bringing something into existence; and to pursue an art means to study how to bring into existence a thing which may either exist or not, and the efficient cause of which lies in the maker and in the thing made; for art does not deal with things that exist or come into existence of necessity, or according to nature, since these have their efficient cause (arche) in themselves. But as doing and making are distinct, it follows that Art, being concerned with making, is not concerned with doing.”

I would like to make a number of points in relation to this passage:

(1) In the first case Aristotle distinguishes “the class of things that admit of variation”. This class would appear to include all being subject to change, including things in the natural (physis) and human (techne) realm. In addition Aristotle affirms that this class includes completed actions as well as things.

(2) The class of the “things that admit of variation” is further divided into things and actions which are found within the realm of human activity and the rest which is by implication anything else in nature (physis).

(3) Aristotle’s main concern in this passage, however, is to draw a distinction between poiesis and praxis in so far as this applies to human activity. The introduction to the passage highlights that this distinction is drawn in the context of an already established distinction between the realms of nature (physis) and human activity. Poiesis refers to an aspect of human activity and in particular to a process of production where the end is in some sense situated outside the process itself.

(4) Poiesis is a “making” which includes a techne or skill which can be articulated. Techne (art) is a hexis meta logon or a condition within a logos. This qualification indicates that poiesis as human techne is an activity involving design and productive realisation. Poiesis brings to presence that which it aims to bring to presence. Praxis on the other hand refers to human doing and a mode of presencing where the process itself is the end. Praxis does not allow us to articulate a techne which would separate the activity from its achievements qua activity. This makes praxis a self-sufficient activity as the end of the activity is inherent in the activity itself.

(5) Aristotle makes a further distinction: Techne (art) brings things into existence. However, it only brings things into existence through human design. Techne does not bring into existence what comes into existence necessarily. When we think of making, we could initially conflate the creative activity of nature with that of human activity. However, Aristotle distinguishes the creations of nature from those of human activity according to the ontological location of the efficient cause (arche). Like art, the realm of physis also creates things, but of necessity. This means, that created things in nature have their arche (efficient cause) within themselves, whereas in techne the “arche lies in the maker”. This point returns to the initial statement that being as it is subject to change includes on the one hand things and actions accomplished by human activity and on the other hand things or processes accomplished by physis.

255 NE 1140a 1-18.
(6) The passage implies that there is no direct relationship between praxis and physis. In this context, Aristotle asserts that praxis refers to the realm of human doing as such and not to human activity in respect of things brought into existence. This would distinguish it from physis. Physis includes being as it is brought into existence through an efficient cause (arche) that is immanent in the created being itself. Despite the implied separation of praxis and physis they share an immanence of ontological principle, however: in the case of praxis the telos of the activity is immanent to the activity. In the case of physis the arche is immanent to the changing or created thing. Both realms appear to be ontologically self-sufficient.

8.3 The end (telos) of praxis and poiesis

Aristotle qualifies the distinction between praxis and poiesis further. Poiesis is said to aim “at an end (telos) distinct from the act of making, whereas in doing (praxis) the telos cannot be other than the act itself.” It seems that Aristotle’s distinction provides for an antagonism between means and ends in the activity of poiesis. In addition the fact that the end of the activity is extrinsic to the activity itself, means that poiesis separates the production and product and by implication the producer and the product in some sense. This is also reflected by Aristotle’s qualification that “works of art have their merit in themselves” and not in the process of making. Poiesis terminates and comes to rest when the end is achieved. It is thus a directed process and fundamentally unfree, that is under the dominance of the extrinsic telos.

Praxis on the other hand has its telos within itself and thus is a free and an ultimately infinite activity. In order to understand this clearly, we need to further consider the relationship between praxis and telos. The notion of telos is potentially ambivalent. If it is interpreted as a focus or a goal for the activity in question and as a terminating point at which being comes to rest the problem remains that there is a separation and similarly an antagonism between the process of praxis and the attainment of its end (telos). Praxis on this account would look very similar to poiesis. The conception of the telos as an objectifiable end does not maintain the identity of praxis as praxis. If however we conceive of telos as pure actualisation or as the energeia of praxis then we are looking at a completely different process. In this case, praxis is self-sufficient. It is “an act without potentiality (dynamis), and has no degrees of perfection” - praxis is simply itself and the end of praxis is eupraxis or good praxis. Because praxis (as praxis) does not bring anything into existence, it is not subject to the ontological determinations of potentiality (dynamis) which defines all created being. Doing is not defined by what is done but receives its original character in an ontologically self-sufficient manner and through itself. In terms of their ontological modality of immanence and self-sufficiency, then praxis is not unlike physis, with the fundamental difference that both realms refer to
different fundamental ontological categories. The former refers to human doing, whereas the latter to created being, that is being in the context of potentiality (dynamis) and actuality (energeia). Physis unfolds by necessity, whereas praxis does not strictly speaking unfold at all – it is always present as eupraxia. This last point clearly requires significant further qualification. Are the qualifications of dynamis and energeia applicable to praxis? Secondly, how is the temporal unfolding of praxis conceivable from within praxis itself? If temporal unfolding is conceived within the context of “bringing things into existence”, then the temporal understanding of praxis would present us with a challenge. What mode of temporal unfolding is applicable to praxis? I wish to consider both questions in succession before turning to an application of Aristotle’s ontological concepts to the ontological questions of music.

8.4 Energeia, praxis and poiesis

Looking further at the distinction between poiesis and praxis raises the question how both activities unfold within time. On first inspection it appears that both are temporal activities. However, in the case of poiesis the temporal unfolding seems to be a lot clearer than in the case of praxis. Poiesis explicitly brings things into existence. This process occurs in time and leads from a potential existence of the thing (dynamis) to its actuality (energeia). Interestingly, Aristotle’s discussion of the relationship between dynamis and energeia is conscious of the difficulty to qualify either terms with equal ease. Energeia appears to be more difficult to understand and is according to Aristotle best understood by analogy. Dynamis as a potentiality of change is more clearly recognised on account of its separation from a presence.

“Energeia means the presence of the thing not in the sense which we mean by dynamis. We say that a thing is present potentially as Hermes is present in the wood, or the half—line in the whole because it can be separated from it; and as we call even a man who is not studying “a scholar” if he is capable of studying. That which is present in the opposite sense to this is present as internal activity (energeia). What we mean can be plainly seen in the particular cases by induction; we need not seek definition for every term, but must comprehend the analogy: that as that which is actually building is to that which is capable of building, so is that which is awake to that which is asleep; and that which is seeing to that which has the eyes shut, but has the power of sight; and that which is differentiated out of matter to the matter; and the finished article to the raw material. Let energeia be defined by one member of this antithesis and the dynamis by the other.”

Dynamis distinguishes itself because it can be separated from pure presence. It is the energeia as the not-yet-present. This seems to me an important qualification and one through which the conception of energeia proceeds further as well. Energeia is not separable from the presence in the same sense as dynamis because in some sense energeia is more fundamental than dynamis and the latter receives its meaning from the former. Dynamis refers to a being in its potential state and thus by inference to being in its potential presence. It is most obvious when looking at the process of production (poiesis) in which things which have been planned and designed are brought into presence. Possibility and potency are aspects of making and readily recognised so in a productive process where the means of the production can be separated from the product. The product exists potentially before coming actually into existence. The initial realms of being that are relevant to the phenomenon of dynamis are thus techne and poiesis. In the term of energeia, however, we

262 EN 1140b 6-7.
263 Metaphysics, 1048a 38.
264 Metaphysics, 1048a 33- 1048b10.
need to capture the pure presence of whichever activity is qualified. Wherever a process or activity is qualified as an *energeia*, this qualification implies that this activity is fundamentally and always present. The presence of *energeia* is presencing as an “internal activity.” In fact, one may say that an activity which is an *energeia* is a presencing without a potentiality and without a process of bringing into existence. It is in this sense that Aristotle qualifies elsewhere life, *theoria*, pleasure and *eudaimonia* as *energeia*. This immanent and self-sufficient constitution of *energeia* becomes clearer when we come to consider *energeia* directly “with its implication of ‘having the end within’” (entelecheia). Superficially considered *energeia* is *kinesis* (motion). However, this is a difficult statement to understand as *kinesis* (motion) seems to refer to the coming into existence and passing away of things, thus (in the realm of *poiesis*) to the relationship between *dynamis* and *energeia*. It can simply not be the case that an activity which “has the end within” (entelecheia) is a phenomenon which refers to the passing away and coming into existence of things.

Aristotle thus needs to distinguish *energeia* further. The distinction between *dynamis* and *energeia* is clear: *Dynamis* admits the separation of that which is present from that which is capable of presence. It is thus foreign to action itself (*praxis*) which has not intrinsic limit and is purely present. *Energeia* on its own terms does not admit the separation of the present from that which is capable of presence itself. However, *energeia* while being self-sufficient are still activities and appear to be “in motion”. They appear to unfold in time.

How can processes and activities unfolding in time be understood other than through the development from the potential to the actual? Aristotle makes this clear in his distinction between *kinesis* and *energeia*:

> “but we cannot at the same time learn and have learnt; or become healthy and be healthy. We are living well and have lived well, we are happy and have been happy, at the same time; otherwise the process would have to cease at some time, like the thinning process; but it has not ceased at the present moment: we both are living and have lived. Now of these processes we should call the one type motions (*kineseis*) and the other internal activities (*energeias*). Every motion is incomplete… and that which is causing motion is different from that which has caused motion. But the same thing at the same time is seeing and has seen, is thinking and has thought. The latter kind of process, then is what I mean by *energeia* (internal activity), and the former what I mean by *kinesis* (motion).”

This suggests that an *energeia* is an activity which exists both in the present and perfect sense. Seeing and thinking are complete activities at any time. If it is said that I am thinking it is also implied that I have thought at any time. Thus, the present actuality of the activity includes its past performance as a complete activity. This distinction or definition has been much discussed and has become known in some contexts as the “tense-test”. In the discussion it has been pointed out that the Greek use of the “perfect” tense is not necessarily a question of temporal attribution and may be related to an aspectual rather than temporal description of the activity in question. Using an example from Plato’s dialogue *Crito*, White argues that the

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265 see footnote 259 above on the relationship between *entelecheia* and *energeia*.
266 NE 1174b (pleasure), 1176b (*eudaimonia*), 1178b (*theoria*), 1175a (life).
267 *Metaphysics*, 1047a 30. Also see reference above to Blair’s translation of *entelecheia*.
268 *Metaphysics*, 1048b 27-35.
269 Discussions like those by Ross (1924), Ryle (1954), Vendler (1957) and also more recently Ackrill have contributed to making this issue a technical, academic concern known as the “tense-test”. It is questionable, however, if Aristotle was only interested in statements or predications about *energeia* or if he had a phenomenological analysis in mind.
270 Mourelatos makes the point that the “Greek perfect is originally an aspectual form specifically devoted to the expression of states. Hence the remarkable ‘perfect with present meaning’ that bewilders students beginning their study of Ancient Greek” (Mourelatos, 388).
“function of the perfect is not to connote the truth of the present form at some earlier time but to refer to the present effect … of the “semantically successful” completion or termination of a prior process”.271

He points to a number of failures of the “tense-test” conception of energeia including the fact that if Aristotle’s statement is interpreted temporally, energeia would be seen to possess a “non-developmental, homogenous character throughout their duration.” In addition it seems that there cannot be a first instance of an energeia since this would imply that there is no preceding instance and thus no perfect tense. Finally, the tense-test can be applied to any activity. It is equally true to say that a person that is running has run. However not every activity is also an energeia and this characterisation would run counter to Aristotle’s intention to distinguish an energeia from a kinesis. As an alternative to the temporal interpretation White (following Graham)272 suggests an aspectual reading. In this reading, an “energeia is a state of an agent, commonly the denouement of the “semantically successful” completion of a kinetic process.” Thus the difference between kinesis and energeia is a mere difference of viewpoint: in the first case the activity itself comes into view. In the second the “semantically successful” completion as a state of the agent is brought into view.

I would suggest that the interpretation raises considerable questions. Firstly, what is the “state of an agent” in the case of a praxis? If the agent is engaged in a praxis we cannot speak of his “state”. If the agent does not or no longer “does” we may not be able to refer readily to a doer. The case is, of course, entirely different in relation to poiesis as Aristotle also indicates: A maker remains a maker regardless if she is engaged in the process of making. Thus in regard to praxis activity (doing) and agent (doer) are ontologically co-dependent. If we mean by “state” the condition of the agent at the time of performing the activity, the attempt to understand the temporality of the activity has been merely shifted to the state or consciousness of the person performing the activity. It still stands to reason that we need to explain the possibility of difference in the conception of the self-same activity as activity and state. In addition, Aristotle explicitly distinguishes different kinds of activity and not different aspects of the same activity, as such. What is he trying to say with this distinction? It seems to me that one way of looking at this is by considering the notion of self-sufficiency more closely. Any activity can be undertaken as an immanent activity and may well become self-sufficient in the sense that Aristotle identifies energeia to be self-sufficient. A runner, who runs for the sake of running and not to complete a distance and arrive at the destination is engaged in just such a self-sufficient activity. However, the activity of running is primarily not understood in this way. The matter is fundamentally different in regard to “seeing” and “thinking”, particularly for Aristotle who argues for the self-sufficiency of theoria – the combination of both activities. Seeing and thinking are originally conceived as energeia because they are self-fulfilling or self-sufficient. This does not mean that they cannot be appropriated for certain uses. If seeing is employed in reading, for example, or thinking in mathematical problem solving the activities of thinking and seeing become dependent on the achievement of the end under which they are employed. When the text is read and the problem is solved, seeing and thinking as reading and calculation cease. This does not mean that seeing and thinking cease altogether, however. While both activities can be undertaken in such a way that they yield results and are instrumentalised towards an end, as immanent

271 White, 256.
activity in itself they are nevertheless authentically self-sufficient and continue to be present. The matter is of course different in other activities such as running. While running can also be conducted as a self-sufficient activity (at least for a limited time due to physical limitations) the primary understanding of the activity is instrumental. The perception of running as an energeia transposes it from its original mode of existence.

It seems to me that to ignore this distinction and speak about “states” of the agent instead would suggest that such states are manifested somehow objectively. However, the entire point of Aristotle’s distinction is the definition of activity. The interpretation of activity in terms of states leaves unclarified how states and activities relate to each other. The ontological leap from the activity (becoming) to the agent (being) requires a justification. Against this interpretation I assume that Aristotle intends to further clarify a phenomenology of the two types of human activities (praxis, poiesis) and their ontological roots in the energeia and kinesis distinction. This implies, however that we will need to take account of the temporality which is constituted by their performance.

The self-sufficient nature of energeiai suggests that immanent activities are not completed in time. Energeiai rather constitute forms of temporality themselves. Another way of expressing this would be to make the difference between time as condition of conscious experience and consciousness as a conditioning of temporality. Energeiai such as life, theoria and eudaimonia are not subject to objective time but form time themselves. Dependent activities of the kind Aristotle cites273 seem to not only unfold, but also be completed in time. The various temporal determinations of these two ways of temporal unfolding and becoming seem noteworthy to me. A process which is subject to temporal completion seems to be fundamentally different to an immanent activity which creates the form of such completion. To say that someone is running implies that the person covers a given amount of distance and material in a certain amount of time. We speak of a process, a temporally pre-given decay or evaporation (pro-cedere) of activity. In the case of an energeia (such as seeing or thinking) we refer to activity itself as the drive (actus) which leads (agere) the subject matter of attention through a temporal unfolding.274

The focus of Aristotle’s definition of energeia is then after all its relationship with time. Where the activity is considered to be an energeia the objective temporal dimension of the process is sublated. The activity does not cease at any time, however, this does not mean that it goes on indefinitely in reality, but that the activity qua activity is not subject to intrinsic temporal limits.275 An activity of this kind is simultaneously what it is and what it has been (and by implication what it will be). When we consider certain activities in virtue of their authentic ontological characteristics we are simply not able to distinguish ontologically meaningfully between what is and what has been: Someone who is seeing/living/thinking also has seen/lived/thought since the process which informs the presence cannot be meaningfully understood in separation from the past. This temporal characteristic is not established because the activity is eternal but because the activity constitutes itself a temporal form.

273 Surprisingly “learning” is among these, which would warrant further argument, it seems.
274 The etymological derivation of “process” and “activity” from their latin pro-cedere actus or agere is intended here as a preliminary indicator of conceptual analysis not as an “evidential proof” in the sense that this is identified by Gadamer, who affirms that etymological derivations are “even where they are applicable not pieces of evidence but preliminary indicators (Vorausleistungen) of conceptual analysis, and they only find in the latter its firm ground” (Gadamer (1990), 109).
275 see Balaban’s discussion of Ackrill: “According to Ackrill, Aristotle distinguishes, in this passage, between ‘activities which have a limit and those which have not…activities which are indefinitely continuable and those that are not’. But in
We can now summarize the understanding of *energeia* in relation to the earlier distinction between *praxis* and *poiesis* and the question of temporality as follows:

The incompleteness of a *kinesis* sets it apart from the completeness of an *energeia*. This is evidenced by considering such processes as seeing and thinking. The difference in completeness is also articulated as a difference in the relationship to- and consciousness of temporality, however, not necessarily in the way that the discussions of the “tense-test” suggests. The activities of making (learning, thinning, etc) which are characterised by a distinction between a process and a product are also characterised by linear and “ordinary” temporality. In other words: *poiesis* is subject to the temporality of past, present and future which is presupposed by this activity. *Poiesis* unfolds in time. It refers us to an understanding of time as “calculable measure or dimension of *kinesis* with respect to before- and afterness”.²⁷⁶ That which is potentially “coming to pass” is subject to the temporal determination of not having been, being present and coming to pass. The concept of temporal flow appears to condition the ontological distinction between a “thing” and its process of becoming.

In the case of an *energeia* no such ontological distinction is evident. We only encounter immanent activity (energeia) itself and no presentation or representation. Without being able to identify an autonomous telos of making, immanent and self-sufficient activity does not reflect the tri-partite temporality of past, present and future. The temporality of past, present and future appears to require a “thing” that is presented (or represented) and changes in time. This characteristic is responsible for Kant’s definition that time is a “formal a priori condition of representation as such.”²²⁷ When the ontological qualifications which characterise re-presentation as such fall away the formal determinations of past, present and future or the ontological characteristics of clock-time become meaningless.

In the context of an *energeia* no generation that is part of the ontological constitution of the activity as *energeia* is extrinsically established. Immanent activity (energeia) simply endures itself and eludes the realm of representation. As soon as an *energeia* is represented in objective modalities it ceases to be what it is. In this regard time does not apply to an *energeia* in the sense of being a “condition of representation”. Thus, rather than establish a temporality of virtual or lived time, *energeia* (and *praxis* in its pure form) sublates ordinary temporality. Both are not “in” time but constitute themselves time and temporal form.²²⁸ This latter point is reflected in the fact that our experience of time becomes subject to the *energeia* as for example in the case of lived time.

8.5 Is music an *energeia*?

We are now in a position to apply some of the Aristotelian ontological foundations to music. It must be clear here that in this appropriation we leave the context of Aristotelian philosophy somewhat behind. We no longer endeavour to direct attention to Aristotle’s understanding of music (although we will return to some aspects of this particularly when we discuss the consequences of Aristotle’s identification of the

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²²⁶ Physics, 219b 1. See also Heidegger’s reference to the foundational importance of this definition of time in Heidegger (1986), 421.

²²⁷ KdV, A34: “Die Zeit ist die formale Bedingung a priori aller Erscheinungen uberhaupt.”

²²⁸ This latter point is reflected in the fact that our experience of time becomes subject to the *energeia* as for example in the case of lived time.
importance of music for leisure) but attempt to transpose Aristotle’s ontological understanding to a context gained by our analysis of musical phenomena in the first section. I propose to progress this transposition as follows:

(1) My first argument will be that the characterisation of energeia and praxis shows us significant reasons (especially in the context of temporality) that music can be understood as an energeia. I argue that the most appropriate form to think of music in this context is in terms of “playing music”. I will attempt to defend this against the obvious argument that music is a techne and that music making is a form of poiesis which is concerned with the creation of a musical work (ergon).

(2) My second argument relates to Aristotle’s characterisation of the relevance of music to leisure and to the education of a critical spectator. This characterisation suggests two reasons for a congruence with the (for Aristotle) supreme activity of leisure and observation, namely theoria. I will attempt to show that the attributes of music as an energeia support such a congruence whereas the understanding of music making as a form of poiesis does not. This argument gives also rise to the question if the consideration of theoria as a form of poiesis would be possible and what implications this conception would have.

We have argued in the first section that our original encounter with music and music making leads to difficulties when we consider the objective presence of the musical work and accordingly also the temporal existence of the activity of music making itself. If music as music is seen to be a purely transient activity any temporal organisation, manifestation or concrete determination is ultimately difficult to determine and to articulate. It appears to come to grief with the challenge posed by a divestment of an ergon from the energeia in the activity itself. In fact, we have come across this difficulty in the phenomenon that the lived or musical experience does not experience an objective time order, but becomes immersed in- and attentive to music only through its ability to suspend simultaneous and objective temporal references. There are strong coincidences here with the temporality of praxis and energeia as discussed above. An energeia does not unfold within a temporality of past, presence and future despite the fact that our reflective consciousness reveals that it is undertaken in such a temporality. An energeia becomes subject to ordinary temporality in reflection only. In addition any definition of the “presence” of an energeia refers to a context of an a-temporal presencing which is a direct function of the self-sustaining ontology of energeia as an immanent activity.

The ability of music to sublate and deny the ordinary temporal flow is both an outcome of its ontological determination and of the way in which this determination contrasts with “ordinary” experience, the experience of making and the “ordinary” experience of time as measurable past, present and future. The temporal sublation which music achieves is placed in question when music is understood and encountered in the context of the musical work as a thing or when the activity of music making is understood as a poiesis thus establishing an ambiguous ontological framework. The original experience in which music suspends ordinary clock-time and objective temporality indicates that music establishes its own temporality. This temporality is denied when the musical work is considered as a thing which extends from a past into a future. The temporal extension of music is only evident in reflection and in a transposed ontological framework. In our original experience music unfolds within continuous presence and as immanent temporal unfolding (pure

278 Kant’s point that there can be no time within time is important here. If we assume that immanent activity constitutes time we do so only in reflection, that is in considering immanent activity from a point of view of poiesis. This, as we have repeatedly argued, is a qualified view point.
duration) as we have pointed out in the first section. The formative experience of music is different from reflected experience of being in time— it is rather an experience of the actuality of becoming. This would confirm the ontological characteristics of music as energetia.

In addition to the general point that it is the immanent activity which constitutes music in its being, music does not allow us readily to separate a formal dimension of time from any substantial aspects of a musical material. Musical material and formal organisation (such as rhythmic organisation for example) constitute a unity which presents music originally as mere presence. As Stambaugh points out

“Musical time does not have an objective, abstract, “non-musical” future and past as its orientation. It sets up, so to speak, its own future and past, and it does this constantly in the process of its own motion.”279

In the self-referential activity of its actualisation music establishes a temporal horizon which is immediately experienced and recognised. However, the transposable format of this horizon only emerges in reflection and in a conception of music as presented and as present in a musical work. The temporal horizon of past, presence and future which in ordinary time is presumed to be given and which we assume to be able to objectify, however, does not determine music as energetia. One may be tempted to argue against this that the rhythmic and metric organisation of music precisely establish such a horizon in advance. However, this would misinterpret the nature of music and its relationship to rhythm and meter. Musical rhythm does not exist outside music itself directing the flow of music. It rather bounds the inner tension of music. Rhythm lends definition and character to musical material so that music can flow. In addition musical progression is dependent on a “renewal”280 and on processes of repetitive referencing which at the same time constitute a denial of its objective temporality. In all this music requires the formative activity of listening to be present at all. Without the creative, sympathetic presencing the temporality of music is not conceivable. Only where music is heard in its activity of “presencing” does it become of necessity temporally determined.

8.6. The limits of the conception of music as techne

The characterisation of music as energetia on the grounds of its temporal characteristics becomes immediately puzzling when we remember that music is supposedly an art. According to Aristotle this would imply that music is subject to a hexis meta logon. To be sure, such a structure or design is evident in formal properties of the musical work. In addition we speak of “making music” which seems to suggest that the musical work is made. All aspects suggest that making music is indeed a form of poiesis. In addition we could argue that the telos of music is the musical work. All musical activities terminate in the musical work. In this sense music would involve an art (techne) of production (making, composition, etc) and its form can be articulated (hexis meta logon). This account would fit perfectly with an understanding that the musical work is “brought into existence” by musical activity. It quite clearly coincides with the use of music in contemporary public culture as we have suggested.

There are, however, also a number of issues which complicate and place this approach to music in question:

279 Stambaugh, 276.
280 The temporal character of musical material requires a principle of renewal. This renewal does not happen at random. It is articulated in its inner matrix as rhythm. Rhythm is not a pure flowing extension, pure duration, but rather a pulse, a
(1) In the first instance, we recall the ontology of the musical work proposed earlier that refers to the musical work as a topos. This would suggest that the work of music while being a musical form is also the condition of musical activity. The musical work as topos is not made but discovered. It is thus not separable from the various processes of “making” in the same sense that a produced work is separable. Without a clear separation between maker, making and made, the process of poiesis will lack its crucial ontological determination. In particular we cannot unambiguously separate the excellence of music making from the excellence of the work especially when we consider the relationship between performance and musical work. However, in Aristotle’s understanding such a separation must be possible if we are dealing with a poiesis.

(2) In Aristotle’s understanding of poiesis we would need to be able to identify the dynamis of the musical work. However, it seems unclear what a potentiality of the musical form would be as this is characterised above as a living being. One of the obvious candidates would be the symbolic representation of the score. However, the score has many possibilities of interpretation and is in any case dependent upon a temporal unfolding through dialogue. This would imply that the dynamis of the work is ambiguous and indeterminate. If we assume a dual (stratified) ontology of music and suggest that musical work is potentially present as an open (intentional, perhaps regulative) concept only which receives its actuality in the moment of performance on a different ontological level as it were the presence of the musical ergon would be significantly complicated. The notion of a “work” in such an ontology would reveal aspects of form or logos only after the activity of presentation or representation has been completed. This account has one advantage in that it is able to accommodate a fluid relationship between performance, composition, improvisation and listening. But it would present challenges to Aristotle’s conception of techne.

(3) While we have argued that the musical work is and becomes present in - and through the process of music making and within a dialectic of logos and mimesis and that this would appear to separate the musical work from the process of music making, we also have seen that this is not the complete reality. The musical work does not stand out from any of these processes completely and in independent separation on account of its polythetic character. The musical work is necessarily subject to an interpreting consciousness – even where it is merely perceived. In addition any of the diverse modes in which the musical work comes to presence also contribute to the absence and concealment of the work as the meaning of the musical work can never be fully reflected in any of its performances or indeed any of its acts of perception. The musical work has - as we recall - an aporetic character. A strong focus on the objective nature of the musical work immediately calls forth significant ontological problems of the relationship between the work and its performance.

In summary we can say that a reduction of music to a techne suggests limits. The first issue is that music allows only incomplete or obscure separation between maker and made. A second and related difficulty is the independent temporal constitution (or lack thereof) of the musical work. A third problem relates to the many non-representative aspects of a musical performance. A fourth issue arises from the essential indeterminacy of the musical form (Ingarden’s “Unbestimmtheitsstellen”) and the necessary lack of absolute correspondence between musical form (musical notation) and musical activity (musical performance). This latter point leads to a fifth issue: musical performance is dependent on dialogical activity. This means that a work which is independent of interpretation does not exist as even listening is required to kind of punctuated force. In order to have rhythm, the ‘material” in question cannot be massively, continuously present. It
establish the work in its polythetic constitution. Without an independent work, however, it is difficult to imagine how music could be understood as a poiesis.

A further point appears worth mentioning: If music making was indeed only a form of poiesis the work in its independent and articulated presence would be its central raison d’être. According to Aristotle the excellence of the techne lies solely in the work. However, how would we then think about musical excellence? Would the most “efficiently” or effectively constructed piece of music guarantee the quality of musical performance? Clearly not, as a poor performance can leave little view of the structural magnificence of a work of music. And vice versa: a revealing and supreme performance of a structurally flawed work is thinkable. An interpretation of music in terms of Aristotelian techne alone thus seems limited to account for our intuitions and experience which affirm the necessity and fundamental importance of musical activity (performance, improvisation) for the constitution of musical meaning.

Following the discussions of these limitations, we re-consider the alternative that music is to be conceived as an energeia. In the first instance such a conception would require a re-clarification of music as a praxis. I will take a further look at Aristotle more complex approaches to praxis. What characteristics of musical activity would correspond to the conception of music as praxis? A further question relates to the conception of the musical ergon: If we conceive of music as an energeia, what happens to our understanding of the musical work as the ergon of musical activity?

8.7 Applied notions of praxis

When we refer to music as praxis, it seems important to note the generality of this statement and to refrain from assuming that this praxis necessarily refers to a specific activity such as composition, performance, improvisation or even active listening. For, a praxis may well be a compound of activities including activities of “making.” A case in point here would be the praxis of life which includes within itself many other activities (both poiesis and praxis). In the context of Aristotle’s philosophy the term praxis takes on at times a complex meaning and it seems that its concrete instances cannot always be restricted to a modal opposition with poiesis. The following passage seems to indicate just such a complexity:

“But if these things are well said, and if happiness is to be defined as well-doing (eupraxia), the active life (bios praktikos) is the best life both for the whole state collectively and for each man individually. But the active life is not necessarily active in relation to other men, as some people think, nor are only those processes of thought active that are pursued for the sake of objects that result from action, but far more those speculations and thoughts that have their end in themselves and are pursued for their own sake; for the end is to do well, and therefore is a certain form of action. And even with actions done in relation to external objects we predicate action in the full sense chiefly of the master-craftsmen who direct their actions by their thoughts.”

must be such that it renews itself constantly” (Stambaugh, 270).

281 A similar and important point has been made by Balaban in regard of life as a praxis. It is clear that life itself must be fundamentally a praxis in the sense that means and end cannot be separated. Assuming that telos has only one meaning across the two concepts, namely that of “end” as distinguished from means would lead to peculiar implications: “By nature and definition, poiesis requires the criterion of efficiency as a guide to action. If, on the contrary, we assume that the end is entirely relative to the means, we end up with the absurdity of a person trying every moment of his life to reduce to a minimum the time of every one of his activities. Life would become for him a means for living out his life efficiently – in other words his goal would be to die with the least effort and in the shortest possible time” (Balaban, 189).

282 Politics, 1335b 15-23.
This passage appears to refer to two types of orientation that an “activity” may have: a \textit{praxis} which is directed externally and a \textit{praxis} which is directed towards \textit{theoria} and thoughts which have their end in themselves (\textit{autoteles}). In addition, Aristotle highlights the presence of \textit{theoria} within the active life. There seems a sense then in which the \textit{bios praktikos} or \textit{praxis} encompasses the activity of \textit{theoria} while also maintaining a relation with external objects.

It seems to me we could consider music as a \textit{praxis} in a similar way when we consider musical activity as a whole. In that view the direction of our engagement with the \textit{praxis} seems relevant to the character of the activity as \textit{praxis} or \textit{poiesis}. Thus, if activity unfolds within productive intentions and aims to realise an external end we will be active in the sense of \textit{poiesis}. If on the other hand we endeavour most of all to “do well” (\textit{eupraxia}) and our activity is directed towards \textit{theoria} or self-sufficient attention we would be active in a sense of \textit{praxis}. Furthermore, an activity may well be an \textit{energeia} but at the same time be part of a wider activity which appropriates or uses it in some form. This point has to an extent been made above and is also made by Nightingale:

“The question of how and why we choose to engage in an \textit{energeia} at a given moment is a matter of motivation and practical reasoning rather than an issue that is determined by the mere fact that it is an \textit{energeia}. A single \textit{energeia}, then can be choosen for different reasons and disparate goals. There is only one case, in fact, where an \textit{energeia} can be chosen only as an end in itself: namely if the \textit{energeia} is the final end or \textit{telos} of all human pursuits and thus could never be chosen for the sake of ends.”

Music itself can still be authentically considered to be an \textit{energeia} while it is used as a part of a wider cultural project of production and business. In its use and in the way in which musical activity becomes a part of such a wider project music also becomes part of an appearance of \textit{poiesis}.

We have thus two possibilities in which we can develop the thought of music as a \textit{praxis} and an \textit{energeia} further:

(1) The \textit{praxis} of music encompasses a number of activities which themselves may not be themselves easily recognisable as \textit{praxis}. Cases in point would be the difference between musical improvisation and composition. The former appears to be more readily understandable in terms of \textit{praxis} whereas composition seems an activity in which a work is “made”. However, we have also argued in our first section that improvisation contains aspects of \textit{logos} (and consequently would appear to be a \textit{techne}) and that the musical work is not altogether completely defined in the process of composition (which would undermine our view of composition as \textit{poiesis}). Where does this leave an attempt to distinguish music making unambiguously as \textit{poiesis} or \textit{praxis}? We would need to look for an overarching and encompassing viewpoint which could synthesize the various forms of musical activity. I would suggest that such a viewpoint is the conception of music as “play” which sublates the difficulties at hand and enables us to understand music readily as an \textit{energeia}. Within music as “play” we could accommodate activities of both \textit{praxis} and \textit{poiesis}. Just as a play can create and destroy things without itself being a \textit{poiesis} (the \textit{poiesis} of play is subject to the \textit{praxis} of playing) music can be seen to create works or perform works which however remains only an aspect of musical activity. In addition the concept of play also exhibits ontological characteristics which appear to bridge the distinction of \textit{techne} and \textit{art}.

\[283\] Nightingale, 217.
(2) A second possibility is that the praxis of music making and the energeia of music are in reality variously (and culturally) appropriated leading to an appearance of music as poiesis and techne. It seems that music creates works because music making is part of a cultural business in which musical works are the main focus of musical experience. However, this appearance of music may not reflect the true nature of music. The matter of inauthentic appropriation within appearance is conceivable if we consider analogies in relation to the Aristotelian energeiai of leisure (schole), happiness (eudaimonia) or pleasure (hedone). All three energeiai are commonly appropriated by modern culture leading to the appearance that there is a techne that is able to produce works of leisure, pleasure and happiness which can secure or enhance these activities themselves. In a similar case, we may argue that music is absorbed into a world of techne and poiesis and thus unable to affirm its authentic character as energeia or praxis in its reality as a public, cultural and social activity.

While this possibility seems plausible from a culture-critical point of view there remains a further question about the telos or ergon of the musical activity if it is understood as an energeia. In the context of understanding music as a techne the view of the ergon is in principle straightforward (although, as we indicate above subject to further questions in the case of music). In the context of an understanding of music as energeia we are faced with the question how the ergon of music is to be understood and if perhaps the telos of music can be defined further at all? Before turning to the question of music as “play” I will try to clarify this question of a possible interpretation of the musical ergon.

8.8 The musical ergon

Despite its close association with energeia, the Greek use of the word ergon has a variety of meanings. Aristotle uses it prominently in the Nicomachean Ethics when he refers to the ergon of man. The “good of man resides in the ergon of man, if he has an ergon.” Translators have used the word “function” here suggesting that the discussion relates to the aim and purpose of man’s existence. This suggests an objective correlate or content for the concept of ergon. However, Aristotle argues that the ergon of man is a “certain form of life” and this is further defined as “the exercise of the soul’s faculties and activities in association with the rational principle”. If ergon is defined as a form of life (in the context of the human ergon) it must share ontological characteristics corresponding to the energetic and praxis aspects of life itself. This, however, would imply that the ergon is not objectifiable to the degree in which other uses of the word refer to it.

In a different context Aristotle explains ergon as follows:

“The ergon of each thing is its end (telos). It is obvious, then that the ergon is better than the state. For the end as end is best… But the term ergon is said in two ways. For some things have an ergon beyond mere usage, as the art of building has a house and just the activity of building, and medicine has health and just curing and treatment. But for the other things the use is the ergon, for example seeing for vision, and mathematical knowledge for theoretical activity. Hence it is necessary that in those cases where the use

284 It would fit nicely with Adorno’s critique of the commodification of music.
286 NE, 1097b25-28.
287 NE, 1098a 14.
is the ergon, the use is better than the state. Having made these distinctions, we say that the ergon of the action is also the ergon of the excellence, but not in the same way.\textsuperscript{288}

It is clear from this that Aristotle does not restrict ergon to the objective manifestations of the productive process and to instances of poiesis where the end is the work that comes into existence. Ergon is distinguished in two contexts as the use within a praxis (seeing, thinking) and as that which transcends mere usage in poiesis (building, medicine). Ergon is at times (and presumably depending on context) equated with energeia as in the following important passage from the Metaphysics:

“For the ergon is the telos and the energeia is the ergon. Hence the term energeia is derived from ergon and tends to have the meaning of entelcheian (having the end within).”\textsuperscript{289}

A possible identification of ergon and energeia in the context of praxis has important consequences for our discussion. It allows us to see how in the case of music the ergon can be intrinsic to the praxis of music:

Firstly, we can conceive the musical ergon as the telos or aim of music making and not as its product. This means that the musical ergon is not separated in advance from the activity of music making qua music making. The ergon is in fact the form of musical activity itself. This does in fact coincide with the ontological fundamentals where the very existence of the musical work is subject to the performance of musical activity. The work is not given (either potentially or actually) and simply heard and performed. Rather the hearing and performing aims at the work- the use of the musical activity establishes the work. The musical work is the form of musical activity. Not only do the activities of composition and performance require musical activity, even musical listening (as opposed to mere hearing) is crucially dependent on an active listening and use of musical energeia. Hence the ability of musicians to read and hear musical works without the assistance of acoustic representation. Listening is itself a form of music making.\textsuperscript{290} The musical ergon is dependent on this activity just as much as it is constituted by it. The individual musical work ceases with the praxis of music just as much as the praxis of music ceases with the individual work. The ontological unity between musical energeia and musical ergon is the unity of the Aristotelian telos and praxis. Any formal description of the musical work is a description of its characteristics as an energeia in the activity of listening. Secondly the concept of the musical work is broadened to encompass the activity of musical working.

The musical work becomes a realm for music making. Here then the work becomes ontologically similar to the way in which we refer to work as occupation. Within the context of an occupation, work provides us with a realm to work in a particular way. Heidegger has drawn attention to this dimension of meaning in the context of ergon:

“The Greek word ergon has the same ambivalence in which we also use the term ‘work’: Firstly, work as occupation, when we say for example: he did not use his time at work; 2. Work as that which is undertaken and accomplished in our occupation, as for example in the following: he did good work. Energeiai are the activities, the modes of working (ergain the first sense), which are engaged in the process of work (ergon in the second sense). The

\textsuperscript{288} EE, 1219a 8-20.  
\textsuperscript{289} NE, 1050a 23-25.  
\textsuperscript{290} The analogy between listening and thinking offers itself immediately as thinking implies dialogue and active participation in dialogue requires constitutive interpretation of thinking (mit-denken).
forms of ‘being-at-work’; it is important to hear the double meaning; to perceive its actuality and at the same time to being among something that is produced.”

The important point which I wish to highlight is the identification of a broad concept of work as a realm of activities. We could say that in the realm of work, working takes place. This wider concept can be applied to the musical work and music making. Music making takes places within the realm of the musical work. In a sense, however, music making also creates musical works and defines musical work itself, just as a particular mode of working defines the work or occupation. The mutual dependency of musical works and musical work(ing) itself reflects the fundamental nature of the ergon which is found within an energeria.

8.9 Theoria, leisure and playing music

A central aspect which is identified by Aristotle in regard to music is the relevance of music to leisure. Leisure (schole) plays an important part in the identification of self-sufficient activity and Aristotle identifies it explicitly in the Nicomachean Ethics (Book X) as a central characteristic of the highest form of life. Theoria is described as the only activity that is truly leisureed and in this attribution leisure is associated with the self-sufficiency of energeria. It is characterised itself as an “energia in accordance with the highest virtue”, an epitome of an energeria by virtue of its “marvellous purity and permanence.” The activity of theoria is “the most continuous, for we can reflect more continuously than we can carry on any form of action” and self-sufficient as it is “loved for its own sake”. The completeness of theoria is a function of its ontological and temporal characteristics. Unlike virtuous actions, the activity of theoria does not require “an external apparatus: on the contrary, worldly goods may almost be said to be a hindrance to theoria.” This independence from the ontic world also distinguishes it from “practical action” (prattein) which is usually directed towards something outside itself and is accordingly dependent on material conditions and focussed on practical achievement.

While Aristotle contrasts praxis and theoria particularly on this occasion in regard to “leisure” (schole), he is (as Dehart points out) quite clear to identify theoria with praxis at other times. There is no consistent opposition between praxis and theoria and in fact the very identification of theoria as an energeria also shows overlapping characteristics with praxis. The distinguishing element is that empirical praxis is ordinarily characterised as useful activity and thus in some sense directed at a purpose and an end. There is then an obvious tension between useful praxis as an activity that is directed towards external purposes and praxis itself that is said to have the end within itself. The distinction of theoria as “loved for its own sake” and as “pure” is perhaps telling here as it highlights the separation of these two viewpoints of praxis: The ontological view of the activity itself qua activity or the understanding of doing as doing and the empirical or ontic viewpoints which consider the activity (praxis) in relation to empirical reality. The latter includes the concern for praxis in its accidental or intended accomplishment. Everyday use of praxis makes praxis un-

292 “a space that is both created by and allows for musical activity.” (Benson, 148).
293 NE 1177a 27.
294 NE 1177a 24.
295 NE 1177a 23.
296 Dehart (1995), 15. For example in Politics VII (1325b15 ff) “the practical life is divisible into a praxis that is directed outward to others, comprising the life of the ethical virtues, and into a praxis which does not arise out of the things that come from doing (prattein), but which comprises the theoria and thoughts which are ends in themselves. It will be
leisured (ascholia). However, originally and purely conceived, praxis as praxis is free from a concern with accomplishment as we have seen in our discussion of energeia and as becomes clear when we consider the activity of theoria. Aristotle articulates this distinction when he states that theoria is said to produce

“no result beyond the actual act of contemplation, whereas from practical pursuits (praktikon) we look to secure some advantage, greater or smaller, beyond the action itself. Also eudaimonia is thought to involve leisure; for we do business in order that we may have leisure and carry on war in order that we may have peace. Now the practical virtues are exercised in politics or in warfare; but the pursuits of politics and war seem to be unleisured.”

In the ordinary and concrete engagement with a praxis our “doing” (as in the context of politics for example) may well need to pursue an accomplishment of external ends at various levels of intention. The accomplishment can be an accidental or essential concern of the “doing”. However, almost all activity ultimately manifests itself in an achievement. If this achievement is intentional and if in fact it constitutes the purpose of the doing, the ontological structure of praxis appears to come very close to a poiesis or a making as indicated above. The praxis which achieves an accomplishment does not necessarily “make” anything but it shares with poiesis the characteristic of potentially separating ends (telos) from means and may even focus its aspiration for excellence on its achievement – a characteristic of techne. The crucial and distinguishing factor is the notion of leisure: praxis which becomes concerned with achievement becomes “unleisurally” (ascholos). The activity loses its character of immanent direction and self-sufficiency and is now increasingly dependent, driven and directed by the accomplishment. The activity experiences a hindrance (ascholia) to itself and is shackled to a pursuit of the accomplishment. A separation between doing and what is being done emerges and in this separation the doing becomes determined by what is being done. This loss of ontological freedom is inherent in the concrete functioning of praxis. It appears to be a direct consequence of the ontological separation between the praxis and its accomplishments. The translation from self-sufficient praxis to a praxis concerned with accomplishment shows itself as a “loss of time” or as un-leisureliness (ascholia). It is interesting to note that the ontic instantiations of praxis transform its original characteristic of a form of temporality, a characteristic that is most properly experienced as leisure and letting be, into being temporally determination at the point where praxis is seen to be instrumentalised and moves towards the characteristics of a poiesis. While the activity itself becomes temporally determined, it also experiences a “loss of time”. In a peculiar sense the “having of time” is dependent on a temporal activity, whereas the loss of time is an outcome of temporal determination and organisation.

If we return to Aristotle’s conception of the role of music in education we find two associations with leisure: music is neither necessary nor practically useful but serves to accustom a free person to a fulfilment of diagoge (pastime) in leisure. Its educational aim is to develop the abilities of the musical spectator. In the first instance music is to directly contribute to the bios theoretikos as it represents a self-sufficient and essentially un-productive activity. In addition developing the ability to “judge what is beautiful and enjoy it advantageous to keep this distinction clear hereafter: there is a praxis exemplified in the ethical virtues that remains opposed to theoria, and again a broader usage that subsumes both this delimited praxis as well as theoria.”

297 NE 1177b 3-7.
298 See Liddell-Scott, 210. Definitions of ascholia include “want of time or leisure, a hindrance, occupation and business.”
299 There is an uncanny echo here to Bergson’s: “In the place of doing we put the already done” (see above).
300 See the origin of “leisure” from the latin licere: to be permitted.
rightly” does not aim at the capacity of practical wisdom (phronesis) (which would be the application of universals to particulars) but involves promoting the attendance to- and contemplation of the beautiful and good directly. This function of music in particular associates music very directly with theoria, which is also a form of contemplative “seeing” of universals. The theoretkos, originally a spectator at a religious festival is similarly not concerned with utility but participates in the festival as someone who contemplates universals directly. The absence of usefulness and business which characterises both activities as leisure implies that music too is an energeia which is to be pursued for its own sake. In fact, in the context of a professional engagement with music, Aristotle is clear that musical activity degenerates into vulgarity as it aims at the pleasure of the listeners and endeavours to conform to the expectations of the public.

8.10 Music as play

The characterisation of music as essentially leisured suggests a further attribute which has strong ontological and aesthetic relevance, namely the qualification of music as play. This qualification is in some ways long overdue. We refer after all to musical activity as “playing music” more readily than “making music”. In addition a performer in particular is a “player” and instruments as well as musical works are played. It is thus not far-fetched to attempt to develop an ontological account of music along the lines of its play-character. It should be clear from the outset that this character does not refer to (what Aristotle calls) the notion that music is an amusement (paidia). Aristotle in fact explicitly separates play from leisure and places the latter in an elevated position of containing pleasure (hedone) and eudaimonia. Play (paidia) on the other hand is a form of medicine and to be employed for the relaxation of the soul. The ontological understanding of music as play rather includes a “serious” dimension and a “sacred earnestness”. Such an ontological dimension of play is affirmed in a number of contexts including the philosophy of Heraclitus and Nietzsche where play becomes a central metaphor for the cosmos and the ontological constitution of being itself. While I will return to a discussion of play as of fundamental interest to philosophy at a later point, in the context of music a number of characteristics need to be highlighted that may allow us to transcend the difficulties which arise from an understanding of music as energeia.

Focussing on the activity of play in music allows us to contextualise the musical work which becomes both a manifestation of and context in which musical playing takes places. The end of musical activity is not the musical work itself. At the same time it would be equally unsound to discard the musical work as irrelevant to the playing. The work rather establishes the framework in which the playing takes place and in this playing the work achieves a distinct presence. Whatever representation is achieved in play encompasses the players (and this includes especially in the case of music the audience as well) and effects an existential transformation of those in play. Gadamer expresses this as follows:

“The ontological mode of play is accordingly not of the kind that there must be a subject which has to engage with the play. Rather the original meaning of play is its medial sense.

301 Politics, 1340b 35.
302 see Nightingale, 250.
303 Politics, 1337b.
304 see Gadamer’s discussion of art and play in Gadamer, 107 ff.
305 see Nietzsche’s Essay, Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greek and also Eugen Fink’s discussion of play in the context of Nietzsche’s philosophy in Fink (2003), 31-33.
We say for example that something plays here and there and then, that something is at play, that something is at stake (im Spiele ist).” 306

Music shares the characteristics of play in that it does not confront an isolated, existing subject. Rather, music is experienced in such a way that it transforms the person who experiences it. In addition the playing of music constitutes a community of players and listeners who all participate in the playing. Playing is not primarily an activity which the subject undertakes but the play has rules and intentions which transcend those of the player and listener and involve aspects of receptive and productive consciousness in the play. Ontologically, the play is not present and merely executed by the player, but playing occurs within the form of play, which articulates itself in the sense that a game or play is played. Playing is a self-sufficient activity according to a form (an ergon). It is essentially unproductive despite its ability to include productive aspects.

In the characterisation of music as play strong analogies appear to exist between music, life and theoria. All three activities are essentially self-sufficient. They embrace the person, effect a “pure presence”307 and lead to a forgetting of self and time (an extasis) when undertaken with full musical, lived or theoretical consciousness. As activities life, music and theoria are unlimited. They are not subject to external temporal limits but rather constitute their own forms of temporal determination and reflect that understanding itself is bound to temporal unfolding. The qualification of music as unlimited requires further discussion: Naturally, there would be a limit (peras) to the continuation of a particular instance of any praxis just as there is a limit to the continuation of an individual life. However, such a limit does not establish itself as the telos of this activity as such.

There is an analogy here with life which clarifies the nature of the telos further: Death is the end or limit (peras) of life only in a particular, temporal and formally external sense. It is not the purpose or telos of life. This would apply to music: The musical work taken as a particular musical composition is limited in so far as it is formed and determined in its duration. This, however, does not mean that the limits of the particular composition are also the telos of its music making and playing. The limitations of the musical work are extrinsic to the praxis of music.

The telos of music is the playing of music itself308 within the context of the work. Another way of putting this would be to say that the aim of making music is not to simply realise the work of music but to “play musically”. The reference to “musicality” is a self-reference and refers to the eupraxia of music as praxis. We can not explain musicality compellingly through an objectifying reference. We can only attempt

307 Gadamer refers to this in the context of theoria as “das reine Dabeisein bei dem wahrhaft Seienden” (the pure being with the truly real). Gadamer, 129.
308 Interestingly some commentators of Aristotle have used the case of musical perception as an example when discussing if an act of perception is complete or not in the actual activity of pleasurable perception. Liske (Liske (1991), 169-171) points out that the activity of perception is determined by the perceived object and refers us to a distinction between acts where an object constitutes the content of pleasure as opposed to activities where it is merely the catalyst of pleasure. This distinction could take account of Aristotle’s demand that pleasure is an energeia if we choose the latter option and regard the perception of pleasure as ‘autotelic’ (complete in itself) at any given time. However, the use of music as an example is questionable at this point as we are unclear if musical perception is perception of an object at all in the ordinary sense- indeed we have placed the “object” of music completely in question at times. Thus it is not just a matter that musical perception is the perception of a “changing object of reference” and this can simply give rise to the issue if we are dealing with this object as content of perception or as a catalyst of the “harmoniously free play of imagination”.

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descriptions of it as eupraxia. Thus musicality is not a question of finding excellence in the work and this suggests that the playing of music is no technē in the Aristotelian sense. The excellence of musical playing rests in the playing itself (its musicality). The musical work provides the player with a form of play.

The activity of play has important ontological attributes. These suggest that play constitutes a bridge between the ontology of art and nature (physis) in particular in regard to life. Play is referred to as both an aesthetic as well as a cosmic and natural phenomenon. As an attribute of nature play refers to the self-sufficient and self-referential character of nature. The “play of the waves”, the “play of light and shadow”, etc. suggest forms in which physis is self-referentially active. Initially it may seem that these references are metaphorical and symbolic only, transposing human aesthetic categories to the realm of nature. However, philosophers such as Nietzsche and Heraclitus have made an attempt to transcend the metaphorical nature of the reference and to establish an ontological congruence between art and nature in the activity of play. Heraclitus refers to play in this sense in the context of aion: “Eternity (aion) is a child at play, playing draughts – the kingdom is a child’s”. The ontological determination of aion as play indicates the fundamental cosmic significance of this concept.

Diogenes Laertius relates that in response to being asked to become a statesman Heraclitus

“withdrew to the temple of Artemis and played dice with boys and when the Ephesians approached him, he called out: ‘Why do you wonder, you unsavoury rabble? Is this not a more decent occupation than to lead your political business?”

As Heidegger suggests, the association with Artemis, the sister of Apollo, and Heraclitus and Heraclitus’ own engagement in leisureed play is rich with ontological symbolism. Artemis is fundamentally the goddess of physis and at the same time the goddess of play, hunting and light. Her sign is the bow (bios) and lyre- musical symbols and symbols of life (bios) and death. Thus the “play” of life and death, the fundamental dimension of nature, becomes directly associated with music. It seems that this mythical metaphor would ground a conceptual understanding of play which addresses the ontological alignment between music and physis.

A further attempt to align physis, music and play ontologically would be the Platonic and Pythagorean understanding of music and musical harmony as reflecting form and order in both cosmos and human life.

The connection between harmony and logos has been outlined above in the understanding that harmony requires the establishment of a homologos. An inverse congruence between logos and harmony could be seen

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309 Nietzsche “Songs of Prince Vogelfrei” (An Goethe) seems particularly important in this regard with its reference to the “cosmic game” “The indestructible/is but your fiction/God, the ineluctable/poet’s pretension ...

310 In the context of Nietzsche’s philosophy Fink refers to play as an “intuition for the grandly symbolic and metaphorical nature of the cosmos” (Fink (2003), 32). Nietzsche himself refers to the “play of life and becoming” (Nietzsche, UB III, 324).

311 Heraclitus, fragment 25 (Diels) as translated in Barnes (1987), 102. Barnes’ translation of aion would require further discussion. Aichele (Aichele, 20-22) argues against the translation as “eternity” as aion refers also to the “life as it has content as well as the lived time (Lebenszeit) and the human power of life”. He thus suggests that “cosmic time” (Weltzeit) may be more appropriate as it captures the understanding that aion is “lived occurrence which necessarily moves towards its end, which can be- and is perceived by the human being as such” (Aichele, 21).


313 Heidegger (1979), 16.
to be articulated by Heraclitus’ famous fragment 50\(^{314}\) which affirms that the homologos becomes accessible through listening. Applying the concept of harmony in the realm of nature assumes that just such a shared logos can be found within nature and – more profoundly- between the ontological realms of nature and human activity. Play aligns the realm of human activity with nature because it is itself an ontologically harmonious and self-sufficient activity.

The two aspects of music which have provided philosophers with a possibility for analogy between music and the cosmos are harmony and rhythmos which constitute order and harness temporal unfolding. While the former can be viewed as representative of stayed cosmic order, the latter captures the active and directed element of cosmic flow and the flow of nature, of a living force which is nevertheless bound by temporal unfolding\(^{315}\) and is seen to be an immanent force of music and physis alike.

8.11 Conclusion and outlook

With the fundamental characterisation of play I have reached a point from which I will return to a consideration of philosophy. Before doing so, the following summary of findings will help to clarify the direction:

1. Music is both a formative activity and created form. This suggests that music is an ontological realm where the work transcends the working and vice-versa. Work (ergon) and working (praxis) are essentially aspects of the same.

2. Music establishes harmony and homologia. On a fundamental ontological level this suggests that music transcends its sounding appearance and reveals ontological truth. Music achieves this – according to the Platonic conception- because of the essential congruence between soul and logos. Music “turns” the soul in the way required by the journey of philosophy.

3. Music is also and perhaps substantially an energeia. This is suggested by the limits of music as techne. The account of music as a techne does not satisfy the phenomenological reality of music as a polythetic form and form of temporality. At the same time, music as an energeia is self-sufficient, autotelic and self-referential.

4. The ergon of musical energeia is musical form. Since we consider music under the ontological modality of an energeia musical form is not a musical work in the sense of being a product of making (poiesis). Accordingly, we regard the musical form and work as a topos. Musical activity within the topos constitutes music itself as a form of life. The topos provides music with the opportunity and condition for musical play.

5. Music is leisured. Its fundamental characteristic as an energeia is that of play. Through play music plays within the musical form and at the same time constitutes it. Music as play transcends the ontological modality of objective representation. This makes it leisured: Music makes time and leaves being to be itself.

6. Music symbolises a bridge between the ontological realms of physis and human life in the concept of play. The conception of music as energeia and play establish the ontological

\(^{314}\) “If they did not listen to me but the logos, it is wise to say according to the homologos that all is one.” (translated from Diels-Kranz).

\(^{315}\) “The ancient Greek word rhythmos has an interesting and disputed derivation- either from hreo(flow) or hruo, hruomai (hold, restrain), or, quite possibly, from both!” (Rowell, 237).
significance of music in the context of physis. Physis as the realm of night and day, life and death is nevertheless harmonious when considered in regard to its musical – and play characteristics. Physis as ontological play expresses the congruence between human music making and the unfolding of nature.

The conception that musical phenomena (and thus by implication music itself) represent the most fundamental ontological realities in physis and human activity alike has given rise to a tradition of musical metaphysics which culminates in the conception of Schopenhauer (and to a lesser extent Nietzsche) that music reflects a fundamental ontological truth about the world more directly and truthful than can be achieved by philosophical reflection. Music transcends both physis and art, expresses the truth of cosmic essence and sublates a separation which is established by theoretical reflection by virtue of its temporal and harmonising properties. This view of music is established in direct contrast to an interpretation of theoria as critical and analytical reflection.316 In the final part of this thesis I wish to firstly show that the conception of theoria which is used to establish this contrast is limited. In fact, it is this limitation and not only the nature of music which is responsible for the contrast established between critical reflection and music. If philosophical theoria is conceived as praxis the contrast between music and philosophy becomes mediated. I will discuss three conceptions of philosophical theoria as praxis: Plato’s conception of the philosophical life, Pierre Hadot’s conception of philosophy as a “form of life” and the concern of Lebensphilosophie with the centrality and subsequent philosophical formation of life.

316Thus the early Nietzsche echoes the conviction and terminology of Schopenhauer when he credits music with the ability to lift off “the veil of Maja” and affirm “unity as a genius of species, yes nature.” (GdF, 28). This belief in the immediate powers of music remains consistent despite Nietzsche’s philosophical transformations. Thus the third part of Zarathustra concludes with the affirmation of the power of music above language: “This however said the bird-wisdom: “See there is no above, no below! Throw yourself around, out, back, you light one! Sing! Speak no more! Are all words not for the heavy ones? Don’t the words lie to the light one. Sing! Speak no more!” (Zarathustra, 476).
9.1 Philosophy and *theoria* as play

In the previous section I have suggested that a conception of music as play provides us with a model for the ontological constitution of music and with a bridge towards the phenomenon of *theoria*. The concept of “play” implies, however, on the surface a lack of seriousness in the approach to the subject matter. This lack is an expression of the presumed separation between play and real life. In the context of practical and productive life with its serious and pressing demands, play is viewed as mere play and as a childish affair. However, considered from a different perspective play can be seen assuredly within a serious dimension. Gadamer suggests as much in his attribute of the “holy seriousness” of play which refers to the self-sufficient constitution of play. Removed from the context of ordinary and everyday experience, play constitutes an independent realm of reference and is distinguished by its own and authentic context of rules. In play the everyday consciousness of the player is suspended in favour of a submission to the autonomous rules and references of play itself. Considered in relation to ordinary and everyday determinations, play is “free, is in fact freedom.” Thus play is not only closely aligned with respite from practical activity and with leisure but also with an immediacy and truth of insight. Play is necessarily separated from everyday or ordinary (real) life. This separation extends to location and temporal determination alike. Huizinga emphasises that play is “played out within certain limits of time and place.” While this seems so in regard to the relationship between everyday life and play, the temporal experience within play in particular appears to be closely related to the temporal constitution of music as temporal form. Like music, play does not unfold in a given succession of pre-determined temporality but on account of its autonomous and self-referential unfolding constitutes its own temporal form. The temporal and spatial separation of play affirms the self-sufficient nature of play.

The relevance of play to music has been outlined above: Aristotle emphasizes the importance of music to *diapopho* and *schole*. In addition the ontological questions which we encounter when we reflect on music as *praxis* or *poiesis* can be sublated within an overarching conception of music as play. Thus we can think of music as a *poiesis* within the context of music as play and *praxis* and retain the *energeia* of playing music while accepting that music plays with and “within” musical works. However, in which sense can we think of *theoria* and in particular philosophical *theoria* as play?

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Gadamer (1990), 107.

Huizinga (1955), 8-11.

Huizinga (1955), 9.
In the first instance, Platonic associations come into mind here. Not only does Plato frequently identify playfulness as a method of philosophical interaction, the activity of philosophy especially in regard to the written text and the creation of mythologia is described in the *Phaedrus* as “play” (*paidia*). What concept of philosophical *theoria* then underpins this conception of philosophy as “play”?

Plato’s concept of *theoria* is naturally embedded in the context of the classical tradition and practice of *theoria*. The original sense of *theoria* alludes to the spectator who attends religious, musical or athletic festivals and may in fact travel abroad for these. In this sense *theoria* shares the attributes of play, namely separation from ordinary life, self-sufficient and autonomous reference and independent spatial and temporal constitution. *Theoria* refers to a mere “seeing” which incorporates the aspects of self-sufficiency and “leisuredness” (or disinterestedness) which Aristotle identifies as important characteristics of philosophical *theoria*. *Theoria* as “seeing” emphasises the particular participative, active and developmental nature of *theoria* which becomes subject to the determinations of the subject matter. As in play where “it plays”, the medial aspects of *theoria* as ritual and encompassing the spectator are predominantly significant as is for example expressed by Gadamer:

> “Theoria is however not primarily to be conceived as a behaviour of the subject, as a self-determination of the subject, but through that which it conceives. Theoria is real participation, no doing, but a suffering (*erleiden, pathos*), namely the inspired captivity in the moment.”

In the attention of the spectator, the subjective determination recedes in favour of the participation in the subject matter. The spectator of the religious festival becomes initiated into a ritual and finds himself transported into a “vision” in a detachment from everyday life. This original character of *theoria* resonates with the understanding of music as a “polythetic” activity. Like music, *theoria* requires the same form of activity that constituted it in the first instance. In order to become evident, *theoria* relies on participative captivity or “suffering” (*erleiden*). At the same time, the flux of *theoria* condenses into a “seeing”, a vision, an illumination and understanding. The latter requires, however, a stand and constitutes a tension with the temporal flux of the original *theoria*. In its activity *theoria* as seeing arrests the flux of time in a peculiar and ambivalent way and in the same manner as this could be said of an “understanding” which reaches the work of music.

It remains now to be seen how these sketchy characteristics of *theoria* manifest themselves in a philosophical context and in particular in the context of Plato’s philosophy. Huizinga has pointed to a

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321 *Phaedrus*, 276d-e.
322 see Nightingale for a substantial study of a development of *theoria* and also her reference to the difference between the *theoros* (the spectator who travels abroad) and the *theates* (the spectator at a local festival), a distinction which could prove productive in an interpretation of Plato’s *Theaetetus*. (Nightingale, 49-52).
323 Huizinga (1955), 21.
324 Gadamer, (1990) 130.
325 For a major study of philosophy as play see Aichele’s interpretation of Heraclitus, Plato and Nietzsche in A. Aichele (2000). *Philosophie als Spiel*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000. A philosophically important conception of play emphasizing its ontological conceptions has been formulated by Fink (E. Fink (1960), Schlageret (1963)). Following Heraclitus and Nietzsche Fink argues for an ontological conception of play as a way in which the human being is open to and exposed to the cosmos itself. The ontological conception of “cosmic play” (*Weltspiel*) is primarily not transposed from an ontic experience of play. Rather, the ordinary experience of play is a reflection of the original constitution of the cosmos. (“Spiel ist Offenbarung der Welt”, Schlageret, 210). The importance of the concept of play for the thinking of Heidegger has been discussed by Roesner (M. Roesner (2003)). For our context particularly noteworthy is Roesner’s argument that Heidegger’s confrontation of the “end of metaphysics” with music is “certainly original and cannot be reduced to a trivial contrast between theoretical-philosophical thinking and artistic relationship to the world. Music does not serve as an antidote in order to not perish through the metaphysical truth, but the paradigm of music becomes an
number of examples in Plato where both philosophy and sophistry are seen to refer to their own playful characteristics. In the Sophist Plato refers to the central character of the Eleatic stranger as a person who gives himself “up to play” (paidia). In other contexts Socrates refers to the lack of seriousness which characterises sophistry while he himself is repeatedly engaged in playful and ironic behaviour. On the surface the suggestion that philosophy is play (paidia) challenges the seriousness of philosophy. Yet, the very practice of philosophy as a serious undertaking relies on characteristics which at least partially determine theoria as play. This is particularly evident in Plato’s Phaedrus which discusses the relationship between writing and speech in the context of philosophy. In this dialogue the play character of philosophy is connected with the written statements of philosophy in the first instance. In the statement cited Socrates affirms the character of philosophical writing as “play” (paidia) he also contrasts this with a more “serious” (spouda) activity of “dialectic method” which “plants and sows in a fitting soul intelligent words which are able to help themselves.” The dialogue opens with a statement referring to leisure (schole) and “business” (ascholia) which sets the scene and appears to refer to the fundamental characteristics of the matter at hand, namely rhetoric or the speaking and writing of philosophy.

The reference to schole and ascholia is relevant on two levels: In the first instance the reflections of philosophical theoria require the freedom and leisure to “walk along and listen” to the argument. Philosophical theoria is fundamentally polythetic and requires attentive and active participation in the temporal framework in which the thinking unfolds itself. Like the energeia of play, philosophical thinking only unfolds according to its own temporal and referential contexts and anyone participating in philosophical thinking must submit himself to the requirements of this thinking. This means that philosophy does not unfold in an inauthentic or instrumentalised context which transforms philosophy into a business (ascholia).

This circumstance is reflected in the phenomenon that the aural and direct philosophical dialogue is the only appropriate form of philosophical practice as it reflects the nature of thinking as an energeia. The practice of philosophical dialogue substitutes the word which “knows not to whom to speak or not to speak” with the “living and breathing word.” This substitution requires the freedom to submit to the activity of dialogue itself. It requires leisure and it is a function of the polythetic constitution of philosophical thinking as an energeia. It has implications for the business of writing philosophy or philosophical speeches: As opposed to direct philosophical discourse, direct, written communication and analysis is un-leisured (ascholia). The activity which originally inspired the writing (namely thinking) comes to a stand and becomes determined by the products and views which it outlines. Thinking recedes behind the images of the words which become fixed and determined in their meaning where hitherto the activity of thinking had sustained an active conceptual field.

interpretative guide for the authentic essence of metaphysical thinking itself.” (Roesner (2003), 258). For the Heidegger of the 40s and 50s the “imageless sonority and immateriality of music appears eminently suited to provide an interpretative pattern for traditional philosophical language as well as a possible future thinking, insofar as both do not originate in a non-objectifiable, spatio-temporal activity.” (Roesner (2003), 263).

326 Huizinga, 149.
327 Sophist, 235a.
328 “It is no better than tripping somebody up or taking his chair away as he is about to sit down.” (Euthydemus, 293c.
329 The “sportive jest” referred to in Phaedrus 265d is a case in point.
330 Phaedrus, 276d-e.
331 Phaedrus, 276e.
332 Phaedrus, 227b-c.
333 Phaedrus, 276a
“And so it is with the written words; you might think they spoke as if they had intelligence, but if you question them, wishing to know about their sayings, they always say only one and the same thing. And every word, when once it is written, is bandied about, alike among those who understand and those who have no interest in it, and it knows not to whom to speak or not to speak; when ill-treated or unjustly reviled it always needs its father to help it; for it has no power to protect or help itself."

The characteristic of writing asserted here includes the determination of meaning within an analysable concept which transforms the active, meaning-giving and dialogical consciousness which originally intuited and conceived the text and was itself immersed in the energeia of thinking. The written word has left the energeia of theoria behind and has instead become a separate ergon. This means that the activity which is responsible for the creation of the written word has become transformed into a techne of writing. Writing is now a making and production of text rather than the sowing of the seeds of thinking. The transformation of thinking into writing can be described with Stanley Rosen as a transformation of the activity of thinking into a stasis of the concept as follows:

“I have to say that neither thinking nor existing is a concept, but an activity of a living individual. As soon as we conceptualize this activity, we detach ourselves from it. We shift as it were, from our intuitive to our discursive understanding. Whether there is any way in which to bridge this gap remains to be seen, if by “way” we mean some rational and hence articulate explanation of description. If there is such a way, however, it will not be found among the techniques of analytical philosophy. To analyse is to divide, and self-consciousness is a unity. Analysts analyse concepts, and self-consciousness is not a concept.”

The distinction between the activity of thinking and the concept or images (eidola) produced by the philosopher and the poet alike are a central concern of Platonic philosophy. In the Phaedrus it is translated into the question what reflects adequately the nature of the original activity of thinking and how such a reflection can be articulated. The answer appears to be complex and connects to the discussion in the Symposium which was concerned with the nature of eros. In the Phaedrus it is the lover himself who comes into view. Both topics ultimately aim to illuminate how the activity of thinking stays on track. In the realm of language and speech the appropriate form of persuasion (psychagogia) is required to emulate the path of thinking originally determined by eros. However, before such a speech can be conceived, the nature of the speaker and his level of inspiration and “divine madness” requires consideration. This is clearly illustrated by the three speeches in the Phaedrus with Socrates’ second speech delivered as a “recantation” and as a “purification”. The remarkable aspect of Lysias’ speech is the affirmation of sobriety (which appears on the surface an important attribute of philosophy) and the functional success of his techne which is, however, an outcome of his corruptness:

“It is the vulgarity and bestiality of the non-lover’s position, and not his freedom from desire that makes his suit more advantageous. In fact the non-lover is moved by Eros, but by a very low form of Eros. The success of his argument then turns upon the possession of wealth, and the capacity to corrupt the young by employing the techne of rhetoric to excite greed rather than lust. The non-lover is in fact a concealed lover, however base a lover.”

334 Phaedrus, 275e
335 Rosen (1980), 178
336 see Aichele, 54
As Rosen points out the vulgarity of Lysias’ non-lover is a function of his instrumentalisation and commodification of eros. The non-lover imitates philosophy in combining “technical skill with the praise for the utility of sobriety.” Socrates responds to this speech with a “concealed speech” which commences an ascent towards the “silence of divine madness.” It is followed by an uncovered speech and mythological account of the soul as a winged chariot. The dialogical exposition of the speeches and their corresponding dramatic contexts reflect the dialectic activity which characterises subject matter in response to the question of eros and its guidance of the human psyche. When we transpose the relation between eros and psyche to the philosopher himself, the complexity is increased: The philosopher is a concealed lover, both a lover and non-lover and his activity is characterised by seemingly contradictory activities, namely the sobriety of discourse and an erotic attachment and immediacy of seeing in theoria.

This dilemma emerges most clearly in the context of philosophical speaking and writing. Philosophical speech (as Rosen argues) “is dependent upon non-erotic ‘detachment’ as well as upon erotic madness or ‘attraction.’” The divine madness or “silence of noetic intuition” can only be reflected in public discourse if this discourse is “circular or complete.” Accordingly the activity of philosophy must maintain the activity of philosophy as an energia because in this form of immanent and essentially infinite activity philosophy can be viewed as complete and self-sufficient. The Phaedrus makes the case for a “winged” conception of the written text to enable the soul to ascend towards the divine forms. In addition it becomes clear that discourse needs to be organised “like a living being” to enable participants to endure the aporia that determines the relationship between the detachment of writing and the attachment to the philosophical eros. These active conceptions seem to put speaking and writing as a techne into question: Socrates himself claims that he possesses “no techne of speaking.” To qualify as a techne, speaking must “seize hold of truth” and a speaker “who knows not the truth, but pursues opinions, will, it seems, attain an art of speech which is ridiculous, and not an art at all.” The latter is an argument against the sophists who misleadingly claim to possess and teach a “techne of contention in speech” (antilogike). Speaking and writing then need to reflect the activity of thinking and in particular of dialectic activity. However, how can the nature of writing express the particular character of Platonic truth?

There are two initial aspects which provide us with an insight into this possibility. In the first instance, we need to point out that Socratic philosophy is oral philosophy. Plato’s writings are conceived in such a way as to preserve the activity of doing philosophy. The aim of doing philosophy is the vision of the ideas and the Good. This vision can not be directly achieved through philosophical writing as the allegory of the cave outlines but relies on a journey of the soul and a turn

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338 Rosen (1988), 86.
342 For a characterization of the importance of ‘winged’ thoughts and writing and its origin in Homeric metaphor see Fischer (1966), 166-169.
343 Phaedrus, 264b.
344 Phaedrus, 262d.
345 Phaedrus, 260d.
346 Phaedrus, 262b.
347 Phaedrus, 261e.
348 See also Cratylus, 387b. „And speaking is an action (pazeeon), is it not?”
“around from the world of becoming together with the entire soul, like the scene-shifting periact in the theatre, until the soul is able to endure the contemplation of essence and the brightest region of being.”

There is a substantive reason then which relates to the very subject matter of philosophy and which would make the direct expression of philosophical truth difficult if not potentially harmful as Plato explains in Seventh Letter:

“For it does not at all admit of verbal expression like other studies, but as a continued application to the subject itself and communion therewith, it is brought to birth in the soul on a sudden, as light that is kindled by a leaping spark and thereafter it nourishes itself.”

The question of the written text can thus not be divested from the activity of education and didactic influence because its understanding depends on the condition of the soul. Philosophical discourse does not aim to share philosophical information in regard to the nature of the ideas but aims to influence the philosophical existence, that is, the constitution of the philosophical life as the ideas can only be apprehended through an autonomous existence it seems. This however, makes the active desire for and approach towards truth the most important aspect of any written text which becomes a temporal form.

The second aspect of the dilemma of the written text relates to its interpretation and function within the philosophical dialogue itself. Socrates answer to this dilemma of writing is to re-affirm the “play” dimension of a written text in order to recover the original attitude of conception characterising philosophical theoria. He thus rejects the view that writing “possesses great certainty or clearness” and advocates a playful attitude towards the dealing with text:

“But the man who thinks that in the written word there is necessarily much that is playful (paidia) and that no written discourse, whether in metre or in prose, deserves to be treated very seriously...but that the best of them really serve only to remind us of what we know; and who thinks that only in words about justice and beauty and goodness spoken by teachers for the sake of instruction and really written in a soul is clearness and perfection and serious value, that such words should be considered the speaker’s own legitimate offspring, first the word within himself, if it be found there, and secondly its descendants and brothers which may have sprung up in a worthy manner in the souls of others, and who pays no attention to the other words, - that man, Phaedrus, is likely to be such as you and I might pray that we ourselves may become.”

In this conception, the written word is not only inferior to the lived, philosophical conception. It is to be treated playfully in order to recover the originally active attitude of philosophical thinking. The purpose of this conception of philosophy as play is not primarily the rejection of written discourse, but the re-immersion of the written word into the original energeia of thinking. This immersion is comparable to the interpretation of the musical work which recovers and reminds us about the original, improvisatory conception of music in its performance. While this analogical dimension in relation to music is naturally absent from Plato’s philosophy (the performance of notated works is not relevant to Plato’s conception of music) the ontological conception nevertheless points to a homology in the understanding of music and philosophy as play.

349 Republic, 518c.
350 Epistle VII, 341d.
351 Phaedrus, 278a-b.
9.2 Philosophy as a journey

In order to show more concretely the nature of philosophy as an *energeia* I wish to explore two conceptions more fully: Plato’s understanding of philosophy as a journey and the conception that philosophy is a “way of life”. In the first instance I am hoping to show that the conception of philosophy as journey and as a “way of life” exposes the nature of thinking in a particular way. The attributes of thinking which emerge in this characterisation include the habits (*ethos*), attitudes (*hexis*) and desires (*orexis*) of the character engaged in philosophy as much as the purely discursive abilities. Plato develops his conception of philosophy through the character of Socrates and in contrast to the practices of sophistry. Pierre Hadot constitutes a comparable opposition in contrasting a classical view of philosophy as a way of life with an academic or scholastic notion of an interpretation of theoretical views. A similar opposition is found in the “philosophers of life” (*Lebensphilosophie*) who distinguish their project from *Kathederrphilosophie*. I will argue that these conceptions lead to a view that truth is a *topos* or realm in which human thinking occurs. This conception stands against a view of truth as correctness and of an independently existing and transcendental stratum, an “other-world” which its way into the reflections and representations of human thinking.

The most succinct articulation of Plato’s conception of philosophical *theoria* is found in the allegory of the cave in the *Republic*, book VII. Naturally, this allegory has been interpreted countless times and we will not need to pursue a detailed and comprehensive analysis at this point. However, we will be interested to establish the ontological characteristics which characterize philosophical *theoria* and in particular its relationship to life. In the first instance it is remarkable for our context that Plato uses a narrative to characterise the nature of philosophy as a journey. This seems to directly reflect the need to participate in the activity of *theoria* in order to conceive its importance and understand its subject matter. In addition, the ambivalent achievements of *theoria*, the attainment of the vision of the Good and subsequent and seemingly necessary return to the realm of the shadows indicate the complex nature of this “journey of dialectic”.

While on the one hand the journey of *theoria* is progressing towards truth, Plato separates the realm of shadow and the realm of light and to *agathon* radically. In order to attain the vision of the Good, the journeying philosopher must become blind to the shadows of everyday. When returning to the realm of the shadows to attend to its political governance the philosopher must become reacquainted with the mode of vision appropriate here, however in a now transformed sense. The activity of ascent, turn and return has clearly transformed the philosopher but according to the Republic he does not remain in the realm of *theoria* but willingly returns to rule the city. The view that Plato makes the philosopher return willingly has been discussed by scholars on a number of occasions. For our purpose we need to make the following points:

Plato’s account is given in the context of an ideal state and it is not altogether clear that Plato believes such a city could actually exist. For the philosopher in the non-ideal city the situation will be quite different:

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353 "The meaning of the Parable in general is clear and needs no elaboration. It is an allegory of the philosopher’s education, as well as his fate in the corrupt society, with a concluding allusion to the death of Socrates.” (Voegelin, 115).
354 Republic, 532b.
355 "Down you must go, then, each in his turn, to the habituation of the others and accustom yourselves to the observation of the obscure things there” (520d).
356 see Irwin, 237 ff. and summary of discussion in Nightingale, 134-136.
“The philosopher who lives in the nonideal city will not serve in a civic capacity but will play the role of a private theoros. This does not mean, however, that the theoretical philosopher will never have to return from contemplation and engage in action in the practical sphere; as I have suggested, insofar as he is a human being the philosopher will make many ‘journeys’ to the Forms (never gaining a full or perfect view), and will come back just as many times.”

This implies that in the context of real life and the non-ideal city théoria is a journeying (rather than a journey). Rather than advocate the life of théoria Plato argues for the philosophical life, which implies that the philosopher is also and always an ordinary member of human society and in this a citizen of the realm of the shadows. While this does not imply a compulsion to return to rule the city, it does exclude the possibility that philosophical théoria can keep itself apart from ordinary life. The connection between théoria and praxis which Plato ultimately portrays in the character of the philosopher, leads to a peculiar temporality of théoria. It appears to be two-fold: in the context of the primordial journey the temporality of théoria is determined by a progression towards an end. The journey of théoria has a determined temporal progression but its fulfilment is the vision of the Good which in itself is a-temporal. The Good is apprehended in an enduring and essentially infinite vision at the apex of the journey of théoria. Yet, in the empirical sense and in the context of the ontic world, théoria must be characterised by a repetitive and immanent activity. The inclusion of the philosopher in real life implies that the journey and vision of théoria is not completed but must be repeated. The reason for this is that the vision of the Good cannot be maintained as the philosopher returns to the shadows (be it as atopos). The journey defines théoria as an energeia with the Good being the immanent end of this activity.

Plato maintains that the journey of théoria has a function for human life. In this théoria coincides with moussike in so far as it conditions and directs the nature of the soul and the human life. This conditioning relies on a constitution of what we may call “conscience.” Socrates refers on a number of occasions to his philosophical conscience or spirit (daimon) and does so on occasion in the context of a prophetic gift of inspiration (mantike). Philosophical conscience thus seems to be closely aligned with the powers of inspiration and divination granted by the muses. It does not only effect the practice of philosophy directly but also directs the activity of human life.

9.3 Philosophy and the examined life

The conviction that life and théoria form a unity is central to Socratic thinking. Socrates view of philosophy culminates in the statement that “the unexamined life is not worth living”. This implies that both life and philosophy (or the search for understanding) are codependent. Socrates’ insists that understanding does not approach life as if the latter was a separable, pre-existing entity. Instead he shows that life and living in fact imply crucially an activity, namely the search for understanding. The commitment to the “examined life” implies a conviction that neither living nor understanding can make sense in isolation. Understanding is always lived understanding and life is always the search to understanding life.

357 Nightingale, 136.
358 For example Phaedrus 242c: “My good friend, when I was about to cross the stream, the spirit and the sign that usually comes to me came- it always holds me back from something which I am about to do- and I thought I heard a voice from it which forbade my going away before clearing my conscience, as if I had committed some sin against deity.” See also: Apology, 31d.
In the first instance, Socrates attempts to illustrate this necessity for philosophy through the contrast between the philosophical life and the everyday mode of existence. In the Apology Socrates defends first and foremost the philosophical life, that is, the life of examination and radical reflection within the context of living and returning to the polis. I wish to trace this defense as it articulates in my view the necessary connection between life and philosophy. It shows that a condemnation of the philosophical life cannot salvage the supposed ease and blissful ignorance of ordinary life but leads to the constitution of an inevitable tendency towards the philosophical life in the form of the inspiration of conscience. On the surface it appears that there is a mere contrast between the directed philosophical life and the everyday mode of an existence which is endured and suffered. However, the Socratic defense in the Apology makes clear that in condemning the philosophical life, the advocates of everyday life will of necessity be transformed and forever changed through their encounter with the energeia of the philosophical life. The Socrates of the Apology provokes conscience and transforms himself into the daimon of those who condemn him. He subsequently calls for constant clarification of the relationship between life and consciousness and continues the weaving of the web of philosophical searching activating the energeia of philosophy. I propose to turn directly to the Apology to establish how Socrates achieves this.

9.4 The two defences of the Apology

It is noteworthy from the start that Socrates mounts two defences in the Apology. The first one is directed against accusers who have been making accusations against him "long ago":

"Besides, these accusers are many and have been making their accusations already for a long time, and moreover they spoke to you at an age at which you would believe them most readily (some of you in youth, most of you in childhood)."

The long standing nature of the accusations is as significant as the accusations themselves. It points to a sense of habituation and adaption to these which Socrates needs to penetrate. The danger of these accusations is further increased for Socrates by the fact that these accusers are almost entirely anonymous ("it is not even possible to know and speak their names") and that in defending himself against these accusations he will be dealing with "shadows". The nature of these deep-seated suspicions and accusations are internal to consciousness and relate to the constitution of a world view and of conviction which can only – this is the implication – be unsettled by radical measures.

The second defence is made against actual concrete accusations by Meletus and the charge that Socrates is a wrongdoer and has committed acts of injustice. Both defences are directed at entirely different types of challenges and proceed formally and substantially quite differently. Socrates himself believes that his conviction will be caused by the first accusation and not the concrete ones for which he is actually standing trial. Socrates indicates that it is the pervasive ignorance of prejudice rather than the impurity of intention that will ultimately overpower reason and lead to his unjust conviction.

The first defence confronts the accusation from which the prejudices against Socrates have arisen. The second defence proceeds substantially through a direct examination of Meletus and his views and behaviour

359 This distinguishes Plato from Aristotle whose bios theoretikos seeks radical separation from everyday life and ultimately detachment from the polis (see Nightingale, 198).
360 Apology 18b.
361 Apology 24b.
which have brought about the trial of Socrates. It concludes with a clarification of the importance of
philosophy in relation to death (or life).

Socrates seems to attach significantly higher importance to the first accusations. He fears these
accusers as "dangerous enemies" and "more than Anytus and the rest." They are also "many and have been
making their accusations already for a long time". What kind of accusations do the shadows level against
Socrates?

Their accusations are clearly distinct in content and quality from those of Anytus and Meletus. While
Meletus' accusations against Socrates allege impiety and wrongdoing- in some ways concrete and arguable
offences- the "dangerous enemies" allege the following:

"Socrates is a criminal and a busybody, investigating the things beneath the earth and in
the heavens and making the weaker argument stronger and teaching others the same
thing."\footnote{Apology 19b.}

It seems that these allegations amount to little more than slander. Not only are the accusers entirely
anonymous ("many") but the slanderous accusations (\textit{diabole}) appear to be directed at merely general aspects
of Socrates' behaviour. It is obvious to refer to Aristophanes' Clouds perhaps as a satirical manifestation of
this type of prejudice against Socrates.

For the purpose of our discussion, a further dimension of ultimately fundamental philosophical
relevance needs to be brought into view. The slanderous accusations give voice to -what Nietzsche calls- the
"instinct of the herd". In this context it should be clear that this is not meant (as it is not in Nietzsche) to be a
social or ideological classification. As a philosophical category, the "herd instinct" refers to the instinct which
prioritizes survival, gratification and fulfillment of the basic instinct to survive. The "instinct of the herd" is
thus a particular interpretation of life as survival. Socrates' endeavour to investigate life with a radicalism that
asserts that the "unexamined life is not worth living" places in question the priority of survival and the related
basic instincts. It will need to be investigated what grounds Socrates has for denying this priority. However,
the aggression of the "herd" against Socrates is understandable and in many ways inevitable. The
investigation of life and its transcendental foundations ("the things beneath the earth and in the heavens")
brings with it a questioning and ultimately an inversion of "value". If a priority of survival, fulfillment of
needs and instincts in the broadest sense is assumed any argument against this position must be considered
"weak". If however, these priorities are questioned values may well become inverted and the weaker
argument may well become the stronger. The herd instinct with its absolute commitment to survival and its
readiness to compromise truth to suit its needs and desires must naturally reject this approach because it
remains oblivious to the basis on which these arguments are "strong" or "weak" in the first place. Unable to
perceive that the demand of "utility" is not absolute, that survival and gratification of instinct is not beyond
question, the herd instinct is disturbed\footnote{Apology 18b.} and reacts angrily to any interference by Socrates in its search for
fulfilment. Being unable to perceive the need, the usefulness and the value of such interference, it assumes
that his behaviour is disruptive, intrusive, frustrating and even criminal.

\footnote{Hence Socrates' frequent reminder in the \textit{Apology} that the judges not "make a disturbance".}
As Socrates points out, the herd instinct is difficult to confront. Not only does it exist anonymously within a society (such as the Athenian one) gaining voice through particular political and cultural forms of advocacy, it also resides within any individual - it is, as a matter of fact, part of the fundamental conflict of an individual's consciousness itself. It is the conflict between ordinary and philosophical consciousness of life.

9.5 The "unexamined life" and the role of conscience

Socrates' conviction and provocation that "the unexamined life is not worth living" raises a number of issues about life itself and about the relationship between life and survival. Firstly, what is "life" and how is it lived? Secondly, where and how does "examination" and life interrelate? Is life simply something present and subsequently examined like a broken jar? Finally, what influence does the examination have on the life - what influence could it have, given that the examiner and the examined are - for all intents and purposes - the same?

We have considered above two possibilities to think of life. Life can be either considered substantively, as the life of a person comprising a number of qualities, objectifiable actions, a history and a disposition towards the future. It can also be considered as the transitory and ultimately indeterminate process of living. The lived life, living as it unfolds at any moment is no easy object of analysis or examination. After all the objectification required by examination denies its essential aspect, namely its transitoriness, particularity and the fact that no stand point is available from which we could understand our life in retrospect in its totality. This condition is expressed perhaps most succinctly in a journal entry by Kierkegaard (cited by Wollheim):

“It is perfectly true, as philosophers say, that life must be understood backwards. But they forget the other proposition, that it must be lived forwards. And if one thinks over that proposition it becomes more and more evident that life can never be understood in time simply because at no particular moment can I find the necessary resting-place from which to understand it backwards.”

Kierkegaard’s comment points to a conflict between life and its understanding. We may be able to draw a number of conclusions from this conflict: firstly, we can take the view that it is not possible to examine life and that we thus should just get on with living it. A second and related answer summarizes the damaging nature and perspective established by the examination of life and can be expressed as follows:

“What is disabling about self-examination is the temporal direction in which the person who engages in it is required to face. To understand his life he must turn his back on the present and look into the past, whereas the leading of his life, living, requires him to turn his back on the past and confront the future.”

Both arguments against the examination of life establish an implicit division between life and theoria on the grounds that they are distinguished by virtue of their temporality. However, as we have seen this is authentically not the case. As energeia life and its examination are ontologically homogenous. The view that the examination of life constitutes a turn in perspective away from life is based on an inauthentic conception of the temporality of theoria.

366 Apology 38a.
367 Upon those who step into the same rivers, there flow different waters in different cases (Heraclitus, fragment DK 12).
368 Quoted in Wollheim (1984), 162.
369 Wollheim (1984), 163.
I believe that this is the point Socrates ultimately makes: the organ of *theoria* is not only reflective consciousness but the phenomenon of conscience. For Socrates the leading of the life is not separable from its examination. To be sure, the accomplishments and manifestations of the activity of living, the sediment of a life are examinable in the form of an account of the life. There is a possibility that we establish biographical accomplishments, what a life amounts to and how it has been lived. But this reflective engagement with life is a mere summary of its ontic manifestations as they are manifested outside their original existence within the *energeia*. While this examination is in progress, life itself no longer takes place as this would withdraw continuously from its own account. The examination of life can thus not merely be conceived as a retrospective reflection if it is to have concentrated significance for life itself and if it is to capture what makes life what it is- its *energeia*. However, there is a further viewpoint available here: The unexamined (*anezetastos*) life is the life which remains “unsearched for.” Not only is it not held to account (*elenchos*) but it does not wish to be refuted or investigated. Examining life means in this context to commence a search for it and to formulate a wish for an *elenchos*. This transforms the intentionality in our approach to life. While an investigation is quite necessarily retrospective, the assumption of a searching and critical stance nevertheless transforms the activity of living at its core and into the future. To say that the examination of life is constituted by introspective reflection and subsequent “interpretation” of it may thus fall short of characterizing it as an examination of life. The examination of life is only meaningful if it recognises the essential unity of living “forwards” (in Kierkegaard’s terminology) and consciousness. Instead of dealing with two separate processes (living and *theoria*) we are immersed in one immanent process of living, which, however, is completed by the processes of examination not unlike the composed musical work is completed by the process of interpretation and performance. The examination of life is a creative and constitutive activity, in effect an activity which does not only reach a reflective dimension of engagement with life, but a creative one in which it changes and directs life by searching for a life within truth. The examination and the living are identical because life is understood as an *energeia* and because both are embraced by a fundamental commitment to the same, namely truth.

Socrates projects this thought into the realm of reflective consciousness in his "prophecy" at the end of the Apology. He predicts that his condemnation, the suppression of the examination of life will be directing the life of many including the judges themselves. They will be tormented by the confrontation with the notion of the *elenchos* presented by Socrates in existential concreteness and by their own consciousness of having silenced this *elenchos* without adequate refutation. This circumstance will sound as a discord throughout their entire life. Not only will Socrates' examination of life inspire and direct the process of "living" of others. The consciousness of having attempted to suppress Socrates and his project of searching for- and being able to give an account of life develops its own dynamism and functions like a seed for the growth of conscience. Conscience is the harmony between the *elenchos* and the living of life. It will remind the judges of the ontologically flawed conflict projected into their judgement and sublated by the defence of Socrates.

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370 As Wollheim does (“The formula of self-examination is, introspection proposes, interpretation disposes” (Wollheim (1984), 167).
371 Compare Gorgias 482b. “…philosophy always holds the same, and it is her speech that now surprises you, and she spoke it in your presence. So you must either refute her, as I said now, by proving that wrongdoing and impunity for wrong done is not the uttermost evil; or, if you leave that unproved, by the dog, god of the Egyptians, there will be no agreement between you, Callicles and Callicles, but you you will be in discord with him all your life.”
This conflict also exists between the herd instinct and the question of the value of life. Once this conflict is recognised and the contingent value of the herd instinct (i.e., survival) becomes apparent, the battle between the herd instinct and its examination unfolds following its own dialectical momentum. Where and when will the examination of life stop? Ontologically this process has no external temporal determination. The unlimited nature of the examination and the character of philosophical examination as an *energeia* is represented by Socrates’ claim to complete ignorance, a claim that is to be interpreted didactically. Claiming Socratic ignorance preserves the dialectical momentum of the *elenchos* of life and moves life into the realm of truth. Its basis is not so much the absence of knowledge but the understanding that living and *theoria* are similarly connected with temporality. Examination of living is a concrete affair with lasting results that transcend individual relevance but need to nevertheless be re-applied to individual circumstance. Any insights gained from the examination of life will need to be continuously renewed. While knowledge may improve our ability to live and to examine life, it does not provide doctrinal protection from an unexamined life. Whatever knowledge can be claimed about life will need to validate itself in this process of living again and again. The examined life will need to continue to be subject to the *elenchos*.

The judges of the *Apology* (and by implication the readers and interpreters) will continue to be troubled by the question how far the examination of life is to proceed. They will need to entertain the possibility to follow the radical Socratic path of examination themselves or alternatively live in internal discord or suffer from an existence that flees from consciousness altogether. The judgement has embedded a seed in the conscience of the participants, of the listeners and readers which forces them to account for their lives by virtue of their consciousness. This is in itself sufficient to justify Socrates’ prophecy and recognise that the conflict in the judgement, i.e., the silencing of the examination of life remains fertile for future development in the consciousness of any reader of the *Apology*.

We can now see a more general aspect of the relationship between life and *theoria*. The understanding how we live and how we are to live, which is gleaned from a *theoria* of living and life, is not designed to exist for its own sake. The *elenchos* has a didactic and therapeutic value in establishing a mode of living. Without this “practice” of living the performance of life is—-in the words of Socrates—“not worth” anything. One may possibly go further: Without the practice of “living” supported by *theoria* the performance of life—-does not even strictly speaking occur. Instead life is suffered and merely endured. *Theoria* is instrumental to putting the suffering of life into question. It is not a theoretical position for its own sake, but a way of practicing the essentially indeterminate reality of the performance of living. It requires a journey and a forceful action and shift372 in our intention and attitude towards living to place the life within a commitment to truth. This placement underpins the harmony of living and *theoria*. Heidegger’s interpretation of the allegory of the cave expresses it thus:

“...When we said that precisely this essence of truth is an occurrence which happens to man, this means that the man whose liberation is depicted in the allegory is set out into the truth. That is the mode of his existence, the fundamental occurrence of his *Dasein*. Primordial unhiddenness is projective de-concealing as an occurrence happening “in man”, i.e. in his *history*. Truth is neither somewhere *overman* (as validity in itself) nor is it in man as a psychical subject, but man is ‘in’ the truth...”373

372 “A dragging by the neck” (*Republic*, 515e).
373 Heidegger (2002), 55/56.
The placement of life within the *topos* of truth and the question of the unity of life and its examination now become a question of a “character” and its history. It is this point that the second defence of the *Apology* highlights in a more direct way.

9.6 The second defence

The second defence of the *Apology* addresses concrete accusations against Socrates. This defence takes the form of a cross-examination of Meletus. Socrates shows that Meletus is not truly concerned about any of the matters which are alleged against Socrates. The lack of seriousness and the carelessness with which Meletus proceeded towards the accusations of Socrates are aspects of the application of knowledge indicated above. In establishing that Meletus is acting from a "spirit of violence and unrestraint and rashness" Socrates shows the importance of the spirit (or *pathos*) in which arguments are applied and knowledge is used. Why is this relevant? Reference to the person and the motivations should - as such - not be able to discredit their arguments?

It is interesting to ask when and where considerations of a person's accusations, arguments (or even theories) require a relevant consideration of their personality or mode of living. Debates about, eg. a mathematical problem could quite clearly proceed without any relevant reference to the mathematician's character. The subject matter demands a specific approach and level of “precision”. In the questions related to life, however, the issue appears to be different as is indicated above. Ethical theories, theories of happiness or the just life have an applied meaning. If life is performatively conceived as "living" any theory of an ethical life (or its aspects) requires a performative demonstration. Thus, the talk about moral right and wrong - in relation to life - is authentically meaningful only in so far as it contributes to the practice of this performance and is in turn validated by this performance. If we consider, eg. the importance of courage in life, we can do so in an entirely theoretical and abstract manner. However, we will only reach meaningful considerations if we are able to concretely represent courage in the dynamic process of living. This can, naturally occur in a fictional manner but it must nevertheless occur in a performative mode of enactment. The account (*elenchos*) which we may wish to give of life is an enacted account. Similarly any considerations of "courage" and its aspects will need to be validated against- and instantiated through performed and lived experience. This means that debate about courage for example must make reference, most compellingly in a concrete manner to concrete manifestations of courage and must include the application of any theoretical dimensions to a lived life for it to be meaningful.

This indicates why Meletus himself needs to be "serious" about the matters contained in the accusations against Socrates. If he is not existentially committed to the issue of piety or the question of educating the youth in his own life, he stands himself accused of not understanding these issues at all. One could argue that ethical matters are understood when the performance is enacted by the understanding consciousness. That is, there is no merely theoretical understanding of ethics. Naturally, this is a complex claim and one that would require further discussion which cannot be undertaken here. However, we can

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374 *Apology* 26e.
375 This does not imply that Meletus needs to prove himself to be pious necessarily. He just needs to be committed to the truth of piety as it were. And this requires an attitude of commitment to truth, i.e. a commitment to all aspects relevant to the understanding of "lived" concepts. Socrates is quite clear that the lived commitment to the truth of piety will naturally result in being pious, however, with the simultaneous subjective (and didactive) uncertainty if what is committed to has been achieved.
sketch this much: By analogy with music we may say that anyone who does not “perform” a musical work cannot in truth understand it. Naturally we can refer to a wide concept of performance here (as we have done in section one) and include active or participative (“serious”) listening as an act of performance. A merely formal or theoretical interest would not qualify an understanding of a musical work just like the merely formal interest in courage, justice, temperance or piety would amount to little without an applied understanding for our lives. An abstract, theoretical interest is unable to reflect the temporal form in its fullness.

If we apply this analogy further to Meletus, we could argue that he does not understand what he is talking about unless he lives with- and for the concepts through which he attacks Socrates. Without a lived instantiation, the "theoretical" allegations of impiety or perversion of education are not only used irresponsibly, the activity represented in these concepts also loses its full and significant meaning. To be sure, the non-sincere “enactment” of the ethical concepts or their detached and theoretical conception could still make some progress in understanding aspects of the phenomena in question. But the most we could gain would be an “opinion”. In circumstances where a particular activity is dependent on “habit” (ethos) the conceptual structure of an ethical concept must be justified by the truth of the ethos, that is as a truthfully applied and lived phenomenon. Why is this so?

In the first instance, the division between action and understanding only applies in a limited sense to the realm of ethical behaviour. There is an authentic and direct dependency of ethical activity on ethical conception because both are grounded in human activity as energeia- their telos must coincide to constitute the activity. Secondly, the detachment which is implied by a theoretical consideration of ethics also transforms the activity itself into a realm of potential and actual activities. Naturally, we believe that our actions can be otherwise and thus have no difficulty in applying the qualification of “potentiality” to them. Closer inspection, however, brings to light that human activity is always particular and applied within a circumstance. Activity is then strictly speaking not chosen, but it is unfolded according to intention, desire, projections, etc, that is according to an individual’s conception and ethos. In this process of unfolding the question of habit (ethos) and its seriousness becomes important. A lack of grounding of activity in the ethos of the person would suggest that human activity is a mere instrument to achieve productive ends. However, as human doing is an energeia this cannot be the case.

The allegation that Meletus is not serious implies that he is ignorant in regard to these matters but does not know this. The carelessness and cynicism implies that Meletus is fundamentally ignorant of the energeia of human life. Like a murderer who ignores the uniqueness of human life for a merely "instrumental" understanding of it, Meletus treats matters of living (ethics) as instrumental and arbitrary. If he understood the way in which life and human action unfold in a serious manner, he would live the essential congruence of human activity, ethical conception and ethos.
10.1 Philosophy and the understanding of life

In the discussion of the Socratic advocacy for the examined life I have tried to show how the activity of philosophical thinking and the directedness of the lived life coincide. Living, an energeia and an essentially irreversible activity, and thinking, an energeia which attempts to understand and direct this life, share an important grounding in the conscience for life as the “examined life”. This conscience expresses itself in the pathos of existence or the daimon of conscience. We have also referred to the Kierkegaardian reference of the temporal asymmetry of the lived life which makes the understanding and direction of life itself problematic. How, to what extent and in which respects is it possible to understand life?

In the first book of the Nicomachean Ethics Aristotle gives a repeated warning which relates to the relationship between understanding and the subject matter on which understanding is sought. Aristotle points out that there must be a judgement of appropriateness which precedes the understanding as the latter itself is informed by a grasp of the fundamentals of the subject matter in question:

“We must not look for equal exactness in all departments of study, but only such as belong to the subject matter of each, and in such a degree as is appropriate to the particular line of enquiry... Nor again must we in all matters alike demand an explanation of the reason why things are what they are; In some cases it is enough if the fact that they are so is satisfactorily established...so we must endeavour to arrive at the principles of each kind in their natural manner, and must be careful to define them correctly, since they are of great importance for the subsequent course of the enquiry. The beginning is admittedly more than half of the whole, and throws light at once on many of the questions under investigation.”

In order to make an appropriate decision on the “exactness” of understanding appropriate, the relevant enquiry needs to be guided by the defining phenomena of the subject matter in question. Aristotle seems to imply that there needs to be a homology between the ontological characteristics of this subject matter and the activity of the understanding which attempts to understand the subject matter. The demarcating activity which defines the realm of understanding opens up the context of “precision” available to the understanding. Naturally this defining, grounding activity will differ with regard to the relevant phenomena.

If we are to approach the phenomenon of life and attempt to understand it we are immediately confronted with the hermeneutical situation to which Aristotle refers: what conceptual tools and what approach can hope to do justice to this fluid, indeterminate and constantly evolving phenomenon? In our discussion above we have alluded to homologies between music and lived experience in regard to temporality and “polythetic understanding.” Life is distinguished by Aristotle as an energeia and as such subject to the peculiar temporal and ontological characteristics of a pure energeia. If we follow Aristotle’s point in regard to the understanding of a subject matter we will need to grant that the mode in which we are attempting to understand life will need to be congruent to the fundamental characteristics of life as an energeia and to the peculiar ontological characteristics of lived life. The question which seems important here is how life is to be understood given that the understanding consciousness is at all times immersed in the flux of life itself.

376 NE 1098a 30- 1098b 7.
377 NE 1175a 12.
Philosophy does not only attempt to articulate the phenomenon of life itself but also aims to illuminate the consciousness and the conditions under which such an articulation can be made. Both philosophical attempts are fundamentally co-dependent. One could argue that an understanding of philosophy as reflecting the energia of life could present a challenge and contradiction to a conception of philosophy as a conceptual field of works, questions and views (erga). Indeed, the relationship between philosophical views and doctrines and the energia of philosophy has only been superficially clarified in the Platonic context of the relationship between thinking, speaking and writing. We would need to go further and ask what role philosophical interpretation plays in relation to philosophy as an understanding of life. Do we need to bother about philosophical views and works if the fundamental concern of philosophy is an understanding of lived life? Furthermore, how do we view philosophy as a historically determined and academic activity in this context?

Before we address these questions in the context of Pierre Hadot’s conception of philosophy as a “way of life” we need to point out that the challenge to philosophy as a subject matter of philosophical views and doctrines does not imply that philosophical erga are to be discarded in favour of a free flowing activity of reflective consciousness. The asserted homology between philosophical activity and human life implies that the approach to and philosophical absorption of theoretical erga needs to become subject to further clarification within the context of an understanding of life. The crucial question how we understand the relationship between philosophy as theoretical activity and life or in other words, philosophy as a way of life, remains to be addressed.

In the history of philosophy this issue has been variously identified as the problem of philosophical interpretation or philosophical hermeneutics.378 We have indicated above that the tension between the energia of thinking and the stasis of the (written) concept leads Socrates to engage in a playful approach to philosophical interpretation in order to recover the original and improvisatory dimension of philosophical thinking and truthful inspiration. At the same time and following the discussion of Plato’s conception of philosophy as a journey and examination of life, we can see that the energia of philosophical thinking is not necessarily suspended or subject to arbitrary directions but directs itself in accordance with the conscience and pathos that is formed by the essentially erotic commitment to philosophy. How does the engagement with philosophical views and doctrines contribute to philosophy itself?

10.2 Philosophy as a way of life

We have indicated above that the journey of philosophy is guided by the conscience or daimon of the philosopher and by the erotic attachment to philosophy itself. In addition it is clear from our exposition of the

378 Schleiermacher’s early identification of “hermeneutics” as the “art of understanding” emphasizes the essential identity of speaking (reden) and thinking (denken). Thus, Schleiermacher characterizes thinking as an inner speaking (innere Rede) and speaking an outer aspect of thinking (äussere Seite des Denkens) (Schleiermacher (1993), 76). At the same time the completed “business of hermeneutics is to be viewed as a work of art, however, not in the sense that it ends in an artwork, but only in respect of the fact that its activity display the characteristics of art, because the rules do not already give their application.” (Schleiermacher (1993), 81). It seems that the ontological congruence between speaking and thinking makes interpretation possible, yet, despite the fact that meaning is given it needs to also be recovered by the interpreting consciousness. The ontological congruence does not imply a necessary guarantee for understanding, but understanding needs to be achieved and the homologos needs to be established by the activity of understanding. This gap between “inner speaking” and “outer thinking” seems indeed peculiar as it suggests that the difference between thinking and speaking requires further qualification. For, why should there not be a necessary and unambiguous translation
Socratic apology of philosophy that the journey of philosophy must be undertaken by the philosopher himself. Philosophy is a fundamentally original activity and requires autonomy of thinking of the kind expressed by Kant in a passage from his Logik (Jaesche Logik):

“Nobody can call himself a philosopher who can’t philosophise. Philosophising can only be learnt through practice and the autonomous use of reason. How could philosophy be learnt otherwise? Every philosophical thinker builds, as it were, his work on the ruins of someone else… one can not learn philosophy for the simple reason that it is not yet given… the true philosopher must, as an autonomous thinker make a free and autonomous, not a slavishly imitative use of reason.”379

Kant’s identification of the “free and autonomous use of reason” refers to the actual existence of thinking: Philosophy is “not yet given” and cannot be collected in summary points from given ideas, because philosophical thinking unfolds in time and constitutes a movement and an activity. A recovery and reflection of such thinking requires the free and autonomous use of reason in just the same way as any original unfolding of thinking. Like musical improvisation and interpretation, philosophical activity strictly speaking cannot distinguish between originally creative and interpretative, re-creative activity as thinking is an originally creative activity by virtue of its nature as an energeia.

The necessarily autonomous and original nature of thinking is reflected in a number of approaches to philosophy, which we will briefly discuss to conclude our exposition of congruence between music and philosophy. In recent years and in the context of an interpretation of classical and neo-platonic philosophy, Pierre Hadot has made the case for a view of philosophy as an autonomous and personal activity. Hadot’s view of philosophy as a way of life emerges largely through the interpretation of classical texts (Plotinus, Marcus Aurelius, Plato, etc) and one may suggest that it accordingly depends on these contexts and furthermore that it only applies to these contexts. In the following I hope to make clear that this is not so and that Hadot’s view in fact characterizes the fundamental nature of philosophy.

My claim is that Hadot’s approach to philosophy is not only an interpretative paradigm for philosophical interpretation but applies to philosophical thinking as a whole and in different contexts on account of the ontological characteristics of thinking and its relationship to philosophical articulation. The important point here is to gain an understanding between the energeia of thinking and the nature of the philosophical ergon. Hadot suggests that the latter is in fact a form of life, that is, itself an energeia. Of central importance in this conception is the understanding that thinking is primarily directed to a transformation of perspective or transposition of the self. Thus, philosophical thinking does not make or capture the truth, but conditions the “self” for a vision of it. It will be naturally important to understand Hadot’s conception of “self” and to demarcate (as Hadot has done) this view of philosophy from existentialism380 which according to Hadot overestimates the importance of the self.

According to Hadot existentialism leads to aestheticism or “dandyism”. His criticism of Foucault is particularly important here. (see Flynn, 615).
We can initially distinguish a number of aspects which contribute to Hadot’s view of philosophy as a way of life:

(1) The classical conception of philosophy as an oral activity based on dialogue emphasizes the dynamic and continuously developmental nature of philosophy. In addition philosophical activity is primarily not directed towards obtaining views, arguments and doctrines for their own sake, but addresses a broader didactic concern. This concern is not a question of choice in the activity, but an outcome of the nature of the activity itself. Since philosophy is not “fixed” and since its views require a participative and engaged mode of reflection, philosophy manifests itself primarily in the condition of the person doing philosophy. Hadot’s central point is that philosophical argument is to be viewed as a “spiritual exercise” which has far-reaching implications for our conception and interpretation of the philosophical text. The dialogically active conception of the text and its functionality as a spiritual exercise imply that a solely theoretical and logical or propositional dimension of the philosophical text does not have a self-sustaining relevance outside the activity of “doing” philosophy.

(2) A major focus of classical philosophy is its role as a “meditation on death.” In this concern, philosophy establishes an original and immediate relationship between time and consciousness. The concentration of philosophical consciousness in the present moment and the character of philosophy as pure attention to the present moment are the feature of the classical sage and determine the possibility of sophia as a “seeing”. Despite the fact that this characterization is developed by Hadot in the context of classical philosophy, I will endeavour to show that it in fact applies to a number of philosophers, namely Nietzsche and the philosophers of life (Lebensphilosophie).

(3) According to Hadot, the majority of philosophers make a difference between the discourse about philosophy and philosophy itself. This has important consequences to the way in which we understand the difference between philosophical theory and practice. For Hadot, the systematicity and theoretical rigour of philosophical theory are important in regard to their impact on philosophical practice. The epistemic interest of theoretical philosophy needs to be viewed in the context of its existential and ethical grounding. The nature of this relationship will require careful discussion as Hadot distinguishes his own position from that of existentialism on the basis of a divergent concept of the “self”. Two aspects are further relevant to this discussion: the intent of philosophy to transcend the confines of particularized perspectives and ascend towards a “bird’s eye view” and the role of philosophy as contemplation, self-examination and examination of conscience.

10.3 Philosophy as dialogue and the spiritual exercise

In his interpretation of classical philosophy Hadot makes a point which initially seems related to the activity of philosophical interpretation:

“It seems to me, indeed, that in order to understand the works of the philosophers of antiquity we must take account of all concrete conditions in which they wrote, all the constraints that weighed upon them: the framework of the school, the very nature of

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381 See for example, Phaedo, 64a.
philosophia, literary genres, rhetorical rules, dogmatic imperatives and traditional modes of reasoning.”

The two fundamental aspects, which assume predominant importance are the fundamentally oral nature of classical philosophy and its particular understanding of philosophical wisdom. It is not difficult to see, that both issues are somewhat related. The classical conception of the philosopher included the conception of the philosopher as a lover of wisdom who is somewhat “unclassifiable” (atopos). This lack of classification is based on the fact that the philosopher desires yet is unable to achieve wisdom. The wisdom for which philosophical thinking searches is “nothing more than the vision of things as they are, the vision of the cosmos as it is in the light of reason, and wisdom is also nothing more than the mode of being and living that should correspond to this vision.” Hadot’s point is that theory has a creative and inspiring role. It provides the philosopher with a possibility to perceive how things are and to view truth directly. This view is potentially possible because theoria shapes and directs the philosopher’s life according to the light of reason.

Because of his largely impractical concern with wisdom within the conduct of life itself, the philosopher appears strange when compared with ordinary and non-philosophical approaches. While the central concern of the philosopher is his love for wisdom, complete wisdom nevertheless transcends life and remains elusive as a constant state. The failure to obtain wisdom manifests itself in the philosophical life as a “movement, a progression, though a never-ending one, toward this transcendent state.”

The need to maintain the philosophical life as a transcending activity imposes requirements on philosophical discourse itself. Philosophical discourse needs to contribute to the movement and progression of the philosophical life through its didactic and active properties. If the impact upon the philosophical life matters most then such discourse should be more properly interpreted as a form of intellectual or spiritual exercise. The fundamentally didactic nature of philosophy implies that the oral exposition is its most appropriate form:

“True education is always oral because only the spoken word makes dialogue possible, that is, it makes it possible for the disciple to discover the truth himself amid the interplay of questions and answers and also for the master to adapt his teaching to the needs of the disciple.”

The didactic role of philosophy puts the purely abstract and theoretical aspects of philosophy into context. Instead of becoming an end in itself, philosophical theory needs to be seen to have strong links to teaching and moral improvement (therapy) of the interlocutors within the philosophical dialogue. The recognition of this role should lead in Hadot’s view to a transformed perception of the nature of philosophical writing and its interpretation or use. The exegetical and critical analysis of philosophical texts is to be placed in context of a more original and relevant context of the philosophical text as a “spiritual exercise”:

Philosophy has become exegesis or preaching. As exegesis it restricts itself to commenting on the text of Plato or Aristotle. In particular, it attempts to reconcile texts, when they seem to present contradictions. It is in the course of these attempts at reconciliation and

systematization that individual originality comes into play. As preaching, philosophy become an exhortation to a life of virtue. Here again, it is guided by centuries-old themes and backdrops. The philosopher was a professor and a spiritual guide, whose goal was not to set forth his vision of the universe, but to mold his disciples by means of spiritual exercises.\(^{389}\)

The practice of classical philosophy consists then in the formulation and engagement with spiritual exercises of the reflective imagination. This practice does not only emphasize the importance of sensibility and imagination to philosophical thinking, but in its particular instances and temporal unfolding turns reflection back upon the central concerns for philosophy, namely life and wisdom themselves. Philosophy as spiritual exercise achieves a transformation of vision and focus of attention (prosoche) which allows the philosophical life to unfold with regard to the harmony between the self and logos. Thus, the propositional aspects of philosophy are designed to inspire the reflective imagination towards a conception of the self and a transformation of the existence of the thinking person. This conception has important implications for the writing and interpretation of philosophical text. In the first instance all philosophical texts need to be conceived as a dialogue which prevents them from being merely theoretical and doctrinal and assists the constitution of the inner dialogue known as philosophical thinking. As Hadot explains in the context of the writings of Stoic philosophy:

“The goal is to reactualize, rekindle and ceaselessly reawaken an inner state which is in constant danger of being numbed and extinguished. The task- ever renewed- is to bring back to order an inner discourse which becomes dispersed and diluted in the futility of routine.”\(^{390}\)

Hadot makes clear that philosophical theory “is never considered an end in itself; it is clearly and decidedly put in the service of practice.”\(^{391}\) The contextualisation of philosophical theory leads to a need to adjust and define our attitude towards reading philosophy. It will not be sufficient to understand and interpret the propositional content of the written text, but the interpreter needs to understand the contextual field and application of the written text. In other words, the interpretation is embedded in- and applied to a lived life.

Citing Porphyry, Hadot stresses the demand of philosophy to integrate thinking and understanding within the activity of a lived life:

“Beatific contemplation does not consist of the accumulation of arguments or a storehouse of learned knowledge, but in us theory must become nature and life itself.”\(^{392}\)

The purpose of philosophy as a “spiritual exercise” is based on the understanding that the self is also the realm of truth. All classical philosophical activity is implicitly an attention to- and care of the self. It is a conditioning of the self. This takes a number of forms, which are variously described as interior purification, simplification or unification.\(^{393}\) The aim of such exercise is the recovery of an immediate and authentic understanding of life itself from the routine of ordinary and everyday existence which includes the alienation of the self from its unity with logos. The temporal determination of ordinary existence is revealed as the dimension in which such alienation manifests itself most strikingly. Thus, the conception of philosophy as spiritual exercise does not only aim to reflect the complexity of the phenomenon of life itself but intends to

\(^{389}\) Hadot (1993), 18.
\(^{390}\) Hadot (1998), 51.
\(^{391}\) Hadot (1995), 60.
\(^{392}\) Hadot (1995), 60.
grasp the temporal dimension in which this phenomenon unfolds in a direct and meaningful sense. This intention is reflected in the description of philosophy as a “meditation upon death”. 394

10.4 Contemplation and the perception of pure presence

The process of philosophical contemplation is crucially concerned with the temporal nature and finitude of human existence. Philosophy as a spiritual exercise is thus often referred to as a “training for death.” According to Plato philosophers “study nothing but dying and being dead.” The contemplation and practice of death and dying implies a number of achievements including the attention (prosoche) and mastery of the self. In addition, philosophy as the spiritual exercise and practice of dying aims to achieve a concentrated view, a spiritual state which focuses on the present moment as a center of existence.

One of the aims of classical philosophical practice is to achieve an effective mode of attention which is qualified as “pure presence” and seems to transcend the ordinary consciousness of time. This transcendence is required because ordinary temporality of past, present and future shows itself to be a context in which a vision of truth is not in principle attainable. The transcendence of an ordinary conception of time as extending from the past into the future is most properly achieved through an intense and continuous concern for presence itself. In such a concern, philosophical contemplation achieves an independence and inner freedom from time.

According to Hadot, the substantiality of the present moment is expressed in the notion of kairos. It reflects temporality as a totality of ontological possibilities in a given moment. Achieving a purity of attention to the moment in this character is equivalent to eudaimonia as implied by Stoic or Epicurean conceptions. While contemplating the finitude of human existence, a concentration on presence achieves recognition of the perfection of life as an energeia and accordingly happiness. If perceived in singular concentration as a kairos or right moment the instant reveals itself to be perfect and thus the very center of eudaimonia:

“The same is true of a propitious or opportune moment of favourable opportunity: it is an instant, the perfection of which depends not on its duration, but rather on its quality, and the harmony which exists between one’s exterior situation and the possibilities that one has. Happiness is nothing more nor less than that instant in which man is wholly in accord with nature.”

Experiencing the moment as “thick” in meaning creates an experience of time totally different to the experience of time as fleeing from a presence towards a future. This experience is particularly striking in Stoic philosophy which emphasizes the need to delimit the present.

“The Stoics distinguished two ways of defining the present. The first consisted in understanding the present as the limit between past and the future: from this point of view, no present time actually ever exists, since time is infinitely divisible. This, however, is an abstract, quasi mathematical division, with the present being reduced to an infinitesimal instant. The second way consisted in defining the present with reference to human

393 Hadot (1998), 65.
395 Phaedo, 64a.
396 Thus Hadot characterises Plotinian “gentleness” as “pure presence”. (Hadot (1998), 95).
397 Hadot (1995), 221, also Hadot (1992), 137.
399 Hadot (1995), 228.
consciousness. In this case, the present represented a certain “thickness” of time, corresponding to the attention span of lived consciousness.\footnote{400}

The conception of presence in the second sense leads to an ontological experience of time as homogenous, complete and ever-present. This distinguishes it from the time of conscious reflection and representation which is essentially referential and mediate and thus ontologically incomplete on its own terms. Time as a (Kantian) “condition of all representation” is connected to a particular activity of consciousness.

In his interpretation of Plotinus, Hadot points out that consciousness is “inexorably tangled up in time.”\footnote{401} Consciousness introduces a “point of view, a center of perspective”\footnote{402} and “introduces something intermediate”\footnote{403} wherever it is constituted and acts. To sublate this mediation, we “have to abandon reflection for contemplation”\footnote{404}. Philosophical contemplation reveals the “real self” beyond ordinary consciousness and reflection. It establishes a unity with life itself through attention to pure presence. As Hadot points out, Plotinus expresses this as a grasping of the “inexhaustible infinity of life” which cannot be achieved in a mediated form of consciousness:

“This is so because the movement of Life, in its total presence, cannot be fixed in any particular point. However far we go in the direction of the infinitely small or the infinitely large, the movement of life will always be beyond us, because we are within it. The more we seek it the less we find it. If, however, we give up seeking it, then it is there, because it is pure presence.”\footnote{405}

Two aspects contribute to the abandonment of ordinary consciousness to contemplation: the reflection of the finitude of human existence (philosophy as meditation of death) and the attempt to conceive time in its totality (or infinity). In both cases, contemplation is an activity which engages the faculties of the imagination\footnote{406} and requires sustained practice and effort. It is able to transcend the “paradox and scandal of the human condition: man lives in the world without perceiving the world.”\footnote{407} Achieving the “seeing” (theoria) of contemplation amounts to a turn, a conversion or rupture with ordinary consciousness. It aims to achieve a “bird’s eye” view\footnote{408} and thus transforms the nature of the human soul or self. The ability of the self to ascend to such a view is based on the essentially ‘divine’ nature of the self itself or on the fundamental identity of the self and logos. This view of the self distinguishes Hadot’s conception of the self crucially from those that advocate an “aesthetics of existence”. An aesthetic view of existence implies that philosophy as a “way of life” is a matter of style or choice. Philosophical theoria would thus primarily constitute the self according to essentially aesthetic intentions and as a defence or separation from everyday life. In the following I will try to establish clearly the difference between Hadot’s conception of the self and the view of an “aesthetics of existence”.

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
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\footnote{400}{Hadot (1995), 227.}
\footnote{401}{Hadot (1998), 32.}
\footnote{402}{Hadot (1998), 29.}
\footnote{403}{Hadot (1998), 41.}
\footnote{404}{Hadot (1998), 41.}
\footnote{405}{Hadot (1998), 46.}
\footnote{406}{“Such a procedure is the very essence of philosophy. We find it repeated – in identical form, beneath superficial differences of vocabulary- in all the philosophical schools of antiquity. Plato, for instance, defines the philosophical nature by its ability to contemplate the totality of time and being, and consequently to hold human affairs in contempt.” (Hadot (1995), 184).}
\footnote{407}{Hadot (1995), 258.}
\footnote{408}{Hadot (1993), 172.}
\end{thebibliography}
10.5 The self as the focus of philosophical theory and practice

In Hadot’s view the constitution of philosophy as a spiritual exercise of the reflective imagination is to be seen as an attempt to transform the nature, attitude and stance of the self:

Thus, all spiritual exercises are, fundamentally, a return to the self, in which the self is liberated from the state of alienation into which it has been plunged by worries, passions and desires. The “self” liberated in this way is no longer merely our egoistic, passionate individuality: it is our moral person, open to universality and objectivity, and participating in universal nature and thought.\(^{409}\)

The crucial point here is the opening of the self towards universality and objectivity. The purpose of philosophy as spiritual exercise is to effect a movement of conversion in accordance with a universal and objective ontological principle. This stands in contrast to achieving a presumed inner experience for its own sake as Hadot points out in his criticism of Foucault:

“In this way, one identifies oneself with an “other”: nature, or universal reason, as it is present within each individual. This implies a radical transformation of perspective, and contains a universalist, cosmic dimension, upon which, it seems to me, M. Foucault did not sufficiently insist. Interiorization is a going beyond oneself; it is universalisation.”\(^{410}\)

The transformation and opening of the self is possible because the self lives essentially within a logos and shares in its ‘divine’ characteristics. This circumstance becomes evident in the (temporal) turning of attention, which can be variously identified as Stoic prosoche, Epicurean eudaimonia\(^{411}\) or Platonic ascent towards To Agathon. Naturally, this characterisation proposes some questions in regard to an appropriate demarcation between the realm of the spiritual and the divine or religious\(^{412}\) which we cannot follow in this context. It needs to suffice to say that the condition of the self is formed by a spiritual ascent and not by a self-contained and purely aesthetic interiorisation.\(^{413}\)

The universalist perspective also grounds a number of phenomena which are included in the characterisation of philosophy as a practice of spiritual exercises. Without this reference neither the capacity of the self to “see things from above, in the grandiose perspective of human nature and of humanity”\(^{414}\) nor the philosophical examination of conscience, nor the attention to the human daimon appear to make any sense. To be sure, the relationship between the self and its transcendent aspects is a complex matter and raises questions. Hadot refers to it in the context of the transcending and divine nature of the daimon as follows:

\(^{409}\) Hadot (1995), 103.
\(^{410}\) Hadot (1995), 211.
\(^{411}\) Hadot suggests that there are some affinities between the “aesthetics of existence” and Epicureanism. He also argues, though, that the “Epicurean was not afraid that he needed other things besides himself in order to satisfy his desires and to experience pleasure…. In Epicureanism there is an extraordinary reversal of perspective. Precisely because existence seems to the Epicurean to be pure chance, inexorably unique, he greets life like a kind of miracle, a gratuitous, unexpected gift of nature, and existence for him is a wonderful celebration.” (Hadot (1995), 208-09).
\(^{412}\) As suggested by Flynn, 619.
\(^{413}\) In his discussion of Plotinus’ interpretation of the Narcissus myth, Hadot exposes the failure of Narcissus to achieve a “spiritual ascent” as crucial to the conversion of the self. Narcissus does not achieve a conversion of the self and represents a moral and spiritual condition. Plotinus opposes the figure of Ulysses whose discovery of the body as a light of the soul to which we must return achieves the conversion towards the light and corresponds to a change in vision. The purely aesthetic and self-absorbed poverty of Narcissus amounts to an absence of spiritual orientation. (See Davidson in Hadot (1998), 9/10).
\(^{414}\) Hadot (1985), 284.
“What, however, is the precise relationship between this *daimon* and the self? To be sure, it corresponds to the transcendent Norm, which, as we have seen, was equivalent to Reason. It also corresponds to the “Other” mentioned by Epictetus: a kind of inner voice which imposes itself upon us. Here, however, we come face to face with the paradox of moral life, for the self identifies itself with a transcendent Reason which is simultaneously above it and identical with it; it is a case of “Someone within me, more myself than myself.” As Plotinus said of the Intellect, by virtue of which we lead a spiritual life: ‘It is part of ourselves, and we ascend towards it.’”

The “paradox of moral life” is reflected in the unfolding of philosophy as an *energeia*. Through the exposition of Platonic and Socratic philosophy and Hadot’s own understanding of philosophy as a “way of life”, one could argue that – congruent to the aporetic nature of music- this paradox is not to be resolved, but rather shows itself in the performance and unfolding of philosophy and represents the very essence of philosophy. I wish to conclude this argument with a brief reference and indication of relevance of this view of philosophy to central questions in the philosophy of Nietzsche and thinkers of an approach to philosophy commonly referred to as Lebensphilosophie.

The purpose of this reference is to show that Hadot’s characterisation of philosophy as “spiritual exercise” is not simply focused on the practices of classical philosophy but applies to philosophy in a wider sense. Naturally a case for a more universal application of Hadot’s understanding of philosophy can only emerge compellingly from a detailed analysis of philosophical thinking in its various contexts- a project that exceeds the further scope of this thesis. In this context it needs to suffice to firstly point out that Hadot does not restrict his own discussion to classical philosophy but exposes affinities and similarities between the classical conception of philosophy and philosophers such as Goethe, Husserl, Bergson, Nietzsche and others. Importantly, the view that philosophy consists of spiritual exercises is not restricted to his reading of classical philosophy but is applied further to an interpretation of modern philosophy, such as Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus*.

Secondly, it needs to be reaffirmed that the view of philosophy as a way of life does not simply affirm a priority of ethics over metaphysics, epistemology or aesthetics as may be suggested by a superficial reading. Referring to a “way of life” in this context, does not primarily assert an ethical dimension in a straightforward sense unless we withdraw towards a basic and very abstract meaning of ethos. It rather affirms the insight that the propositional and theoretical dimension of philosophical thinking does not satisfy the philosophical passion for truth as it cannot include the conditions for its truthfulness and in addition does not adequately reflect the characteristics (or “exactness”)

of the subject matter. The paradigm of philosophy as “spiritual exercise” is thus a response to ontological challenges within the subject matter of philosophical reflection.

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415 Hadot (1993), 124.
417 See Aristotle’s point above that any understanding sought must reflect the epistemic possibilities of the subject matter.
I will briefly show that some philosophical questions pursued in particular by Nietzsche and the “philosophy of life” (Lebensphilosophie) expose the connection between the ontological characteristics of the philosophical subject matter and philosophical thinking itself in such a way that they require a transformation of philosophy in line with the characteristics proposed by Hadot. My intention is not so much to argue for Hadot’s view, but to show that the notion of philosophy as a way of life is a conceptually required consequence of the nature of certain philosophical questions.
11.1 Nietzsche and the phenomenon of life

A central concern and topic of philosophical discussion is the phenomenon of life itself. We have referred to it already in the context of Aristotelian notions of the bios theoreikos and the Socratic focus on the examined life. More recent philosophers have focussed on the topic of life in a variety of context and this concern culminates to an extent in the philosophical “movement” of Lebensphilosophie. The explicit roots of this movement extend into the philosophy of early romanticism. Thus Friedrich Schlegel argues in his 1827/28 lectures Philosophie des Lebens for a turn away from mere abstraction towards a mode of reflection that preserves the authentic characteristics of inner and spiritual life:

“The philosophy of life cannot be a mere science of reason, particularly not an absolute one, because this leads firstly into the realm of dead abstractions, which are foreign to life itself; and through the dialectic conflict which is native to reason this realm is transformed into a labyrinth of opposing opinions and concepts, from which reason cannot extract itself with its dialectic weapons; and just because of this life, precisely the inner, spiritual life is disturbed and destroyed.”

Schlegel identifies an initial conflict between reason and life which becomes symptomatic for the inability of purely discursive or scholarly philosophy to reflect the ontological characteristics of life directly. This conflict is not unlike the one between conscious reflection and contemplation proposed above in the context of Hadot’s view. It becomes more pronounced and significant, though in the two major philosophical forces who expose the phenomenon of life as a central issue of philosophical concern in the 19th century, namely, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer asserts a correspondence between life and an ontologically central conception of will. According to Schopenhauer will “always wills life” and it appears to be of no relevance if we refer to “will of life” or simply “will.” At the same time, life reflects will and constitutes the appearance of will:

“Because the will is the thing itself, the inner content, the essence of the world; life, the visible world, the appearance, but merely the reflection of the world, the latter will accompany will as inseparably as the shadow the body: and where there is will, there is life, world.”

The ontological characteristics of the world and life thus appear closely related. It is significant in our context that Schopenhauer argues that an adequate expression of the will (or given the characterisation above: world/life-in-itself) is not achieved through propositional discourse but in an intuitive experience of music. Music expresses the “quintessence of life” and articulates the “inner essence of the world” or will itself. Schopenhauer argues that the metaphysical essence of the world as will is not expressed discursively despite the fact that the will achieves objective presentation in the ideas and music alike. The relationship between the ideas and music, however is merely mediate, because music is subject to temporal determination whereas the will and the ideas are not. The relationship between will, life, music and reflective discourse is thus complex:

424 Schopenhauer, *WWV*, § 54.
426 Schopenhauer, *WWV*, § 52, 346.
Rejecting Leibniz’ statement that music is an *exercitium arithmeticae occultum* in which the soul does not realise that it is counting\(^{427}\) Schopenhauer instead conceives of the relationship between music and the ideas in terms of analogy. Music does not have a

“direct, but merely mediate relationship to them, because it does not express appearance, but always the inner essence, the appearance as such, the will itself.”\(^{428}\)

This implies that philosophy is to be based on an essentially intuitive experience of music for an articulation of the essence of the world as will is only achieved in this context:

“If, further, according to my view and desire, philosophy is nothing but the complete and correct repetition and articulation of the essence of the world, in very general terms, because only such terms enable a sufficient and applicable survey of the entire essence, no one who has followed me and has understood my way of thinking, will find it paradoxical, when I say, that- provided a complete and utterly correct and detailed explanation of music, that is an extensive repetition of that which is expressed by music, was possible, this would amount to a sufficient repetition and explanation of the world in concepts, or equivalently, to a true philosophy.”\(^{428}\)

As is, no such description is possible and instead philosophy must take its intuitive direction from music in the forms of analogies or parallelisms.

Schopenhauer’s conception of the world as will and its associated importance of music is of significant importance to the early Nietzsche. Here music is brought into closer contact with the phenomenon of life and despite his later development, Nietzsche remains focussed on the philosophical contemplation of life throughout his later works.

In the introduction to the second *Untimely Meditation* Nietzsche affirms the priority of life over history. In the essay that follows Nietzsche outlines how the properly historical perspective anchors itself firmly within a perspective of life.\(^{430}\) This subservient relationship implies that the requirements of life dominate the use of history and not vice versa. It also includes the possibility that the history and the past are “destroyed and dissolved” in the interest of life. The critical attitude to history in particular approaches the past in the service of life. History is “dragged into a courtroom” by life and investigated:

“It is not justice that holds court here; it is far less mercy, which pronounces the judgement; but life itself, this dark, driven, insatiably self-desiring power.”\(^{431}\)

Life contradicts the “analytical drive”\(^{432}\) which is supposedly responsible for the destruction of the present. Nietzsche’s cultural critique focuses on the fact that the “contrast between life and knowledge” has been accepted without challenge. Instead, he argues that knowledge needs to be transformed by life. The scientific attitude which keeps itself separate to life is unable to reflect the mystical, all-encompassing and transcending nature of life.

\(^{427}\) Weyers (1976), 93.
\(^{428}\) Schopenhauer, *WWV*, § 52, 341.
\(^{429}\) Schopenhauer, *WWV*, § 52, 346.
\(^{430}\) “This is the service which history can provide for life; every human being and every people needs in accordance with its aims, powers and needs a certain understanding of the past, at times in the monumental sense, at other times in an antiquarian sense, again at other times as critical history: but not like a flock of pure thinkers who observe life, not like curious individuals, satiated only by knowledge, whose aim it is to augment their understanding, but always only for the purpose of life and thus under the guidance and highest dominance of this purpose. (Nietzsche, *UB* II, 230).
\(^{431}\) Nietzsche, *UB*, 229.
\(^{432}\) Nietzsche, *UB*, 251.
The importance of life is maintained throughout Nietzsche’s later philosophy. Thus the *Zarathustra* identifies those contemptuous of life as major opponents of his philosophical journey. This contempt arises for Zarathustra through a denial of presence as becoming and from a mistaken conception of transcendence. The “preachers of death” who variously affirm the doctrinal conceptions of life do not recognise the fundamental nature of life as “overcoming” itself:

> “Good and evil, rich and poor and high and low and all the names of values: weapons they must be and sounding signs of the fact that life must overcome itself always anew! It wishes to build itself high with posts and steps, life itself; it wishes to see far and perceive blessed beauty—thus it needs height! And because it requires height, it needs steps and contradiction of the steps and the climbers. Life wants to climb and overcome itself in the climb.”

Nietzsche affirms here the central and autonomous characteristics of life as self-overcoming or “will to power.” This conception of the *energeia* of life is also responsible for Nietzsche’s most abysmal thought, the thought of eternal return. The theoretical challenge presented by life is the conception that life is essentially a struggle, a paradoxical process within the ontological difference of being and becoming. Life involves destruction, denial and alienation, most notably in the temporal determination of the presence through the past. It is open to the future yet determined by the past. The lived past is the “stone which cannot be turned” and thus grounds and shackles life within itself. Against this essentially theoretical conception of life, Nietzsche affirms life itself as an *energeia*, as an eternally recurring process. That is, Nietzsche’s thought of the eternal return uses the opportunity of the twofold reflective perception of life: as a lived past life is burdened by temporal determination, as a living present it is open to the future and able to overcome itself. If both views are conceptually separated, as they must be in theoretical understanding and reflection the paradox arises that life as lived and past life contradicts life as potential and future life both in an ontological and historical sense. Within an absolute affirmation of life, however, and within an active intuition of the eternal return which expands the present to include the past and future we are able to transcend conceptual separations and contradictions. The thought of the eternal return which constitutes this affirmation is not a propositional or conceptual truth but a spiritual exercise and a philosophical activity which arises from conceptual contradictions which become evident in the direct and concentrated contemplation of the phenomenon of life itself.

The phenomenon of life is also reflected in Nietzsche’s mytho-conceptual separation of Apollo and Dionysos. In Nietzsche’s early *Birth of Tragedy* this distinction becomes symbolic for the ontological principles of individuation, being and representation (Apollo) on the one hand and unification, intoxication, becoming and life (Dionysos) on the other. The Dionysian and Apollonian are seen in this context as an interpretative paradigm for the decay of Greek tragedy and the revival of its spirit in the music of Richard Wagner. While the Dionysian is most properly the expression of music, the revival of the spirit of Greek tragedy in the *Gesamtkunstwerk* of Wagner becomes in some sense a reunification of the principles of life.

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433 Nietzsche, *Z*, 280. “I beseech you, my brothers, remain true to the earth and do not believe in those who bring otherworldly hopes. They are poison mixers, whether they know it or not. Contemptuous of life, they are, dying and themselves poisoned…”


436 We recall here the Kantian notion of time as a “condition of representation”.

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Dionysian and the Apollonian. The decay and death of Greek tragedy is – according to Nietzsche – the result of the replacement of the Dionysian element in particular through critical, Socratic reflection. Euripides, the “mask” of aesthetic Socratism introduces the Socratic principle into tragedy. This expels music and thus the Dionysian principle from the tragedy. Combined with Nietzsche’s Schopenhauerian conviction that music is “the immediate idea of life” this expulsion of music amounts to an expulsion of ‘life’ itself.

The invocation of Dionysos as a reflection of a philosophical insight is according to Beyond Good and Evil not unproblematic. In aphorism 295 (“Genius of the heart”) Nietzsche draws attention to the ambiguous and complex nature of this representation. Dionysos is not just an irrational and mystical symbol of becoming and intoxication, but ultimately a “philosopher.” This suggests that the symbol of Dionysos strives for but fails ultimately to reach - the full insight and truth that is attributed to him in the Birth of Tragedy. Dionysos’ presence is akin to a question-mark as the Attempt at self-criticism which is added to the Birth of Tragedy in 1886 explains. Nietzsche qualifies his use of the mytho-poetical symbol as an attempt of a

“mystic and almost maenadic soul, which laboriously and arbitrarily, almost undecided whether it should express or hide itself, stammered seemingly in a foreign tongue. It should have sung, this “new soul” – and not spoken.”

The reference to a “new soul” and the corresponding rejection of language in favour of music indicates the difficulty to which Nietzsche refers. The intended and directly symbolic representation of life and becoming fails. Life cannot be articulated in a straightforward and discursive context as the Dionysian truth of being. Its conception is authentically based on a transformation of the soul and cannot be articulated in a theoretical insight or even communicated in symbolical or propositional terms. Instead, the symbol of Dionysos is replaced by the symbolism of the Dionysian festivals, the highest symbol of life as the Twilight of the Idols explains:

“This alone means the word Dionysos: I know no higher symbolism than this greek symbolism of the Dionysian festivals. Here is the most profound instinct of life, that of the future of life, of the eternity of life felt religiously – the path towards life, procreation as a holy path. Only Christianity, with its resentment against life because of the uncleanness of sexuality: it threw filth on the beginning, on the condition of life…”

The symbols of the Dionysian festivals become representations and expressions of the philosophical understanding of life. Nietzsche, the teacher of eternal return, considers himself to be “the last disciple of the philosopher Dionysos.” His earlier symbolism of Dionysos is now interpreted as a question mark. It becomes qualified by reference to the didactic properties of philosophy. The discipleship to Dionysos suggests a corresponding understanding of philosophy as theoria or spiritual exercise. The reference to Dionysos as philosopher highlights the understanding that the question mark of philosophy (particularly in its attempt to understand life) asks for a transformation of the self. Nietzsche’s answer to the question mark of Dionysos is indirect and affirms music or a philosopher’s religion. Either the transformed soul “sings” or it practices the spiritual exercises and rituals of the philosopher-God Dionysos.

437 “Dionysos speaks the language of Apollo, Apollo finally that of Dionysos: thus the highest aim of tragedy and of art itself is reached”. (Nietzsche, GdF, 120).
438 “That Dionysos is a philosopher, and that the Gods also philosophise, seems to be news, which is not unproblematic and which may particularly among philosophers raise some suspicion.” (Nietzsche, BGE, 755)
439 Nietzsche, GdF, 12.
440 Nietzsche, GD, 1032.
441 GD, 1032.
11.2 Philosophy of life

Following Nietzsche’s concern for the phenomenon of life, we can refer to a number of subsequent philosophers such as Dilthey, Bergson, Georg Simmel, Theodor Lessing, Ludwig Klages, Max Scheler and Ortega y Gasset who have continued to make life a topic of their original philosophical reflection. Thus Dilthey proposes to bring the entirety of life into view as the central starting point of philosophy. He writes:

“One must start with life. This does not mean, that one has to analyse it. Philosophy is an action, which elevates life, that is the subject in its connectedness as a living being to consciousness and thinks it to its end.”

A number of aspects contribute to Dilthey’s concept of life including the close relationship between life and history and the view that life shows itself first and foremost in the lived experience of the subject. “Life grasps life” implies that the individual and subjective experience (Erleben) reflects the more universal and fundamental concept of life itself. At the same time, the flow and temporality of this experience implies that every state of experience changes before it can become a clear object of reflection. Dilthey’s analysis of time implies that while the present can be determined in an abstract mathematical sense externally, the lived experience of the present moment cannot be grasped. The present has already passed when its has become an object of attention. Accordingly lived experience (erleben) can only be experienced and the “essence of this life cannot be grasped”. Our “observation destroys life.”

A similar interest in the immediate experience of life is found in the writings of the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset. In analogy to the Cartesian Cogito, Ortega exposes the phenomenon of individual life as the fundamental starting point and original concern of philosophy. “My life” is the “primordial reality, the fact of all facts, the datum of the Universe, that which is given to me…‘my life’ – not myself alone, not my hermetic conscious self; these things are interpretations, the idealist interpretations. ‘My life’ is given to me, and my life is primarily a finding of myself in the world…. But note well that what it finds is not a philosophic theory but the philosopher in the act of philosophizing, that is in the act of living the process of philosophizing.”

The phenomenon of life gives philosophy a starting point which is original and immediate. Philosophy is primarily the activity of philosophizing and this is “undoubtedly a way of living – as is running, falling in love, playing golf, growing indignant in politics, and being a lady in society.” One may argue that Ortega operates with a vacillating or alternatively trivial concept of life here. In which sense are these diverse human activities to be identified as “forms and ways of living”? In the first instance there appears to be a distinct difference between falling in love and playing golf. In addition to qualify them as ways of life would overstate their importance. We would normally only conceive them as activities within a life and not as forms of life. However, to emphasise this understanding would seem to miss Ortega’s point: His concept of life and living refers to the most fundamental ontological aspect of human being in the world on its most basic level. In philosophical reflection (for Ortega this is the

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442 For a summary of the philosophers of Lebensphilosophie see Albert (1995).
444 Albert (1995), 82.
446 Ortega (1960), 203.
radical reflection of Cartesian doubt), life is not to be separated from human activity. Life is identical with such activity, because philosophical reflection finds life in such activity:

“Therefore, when we put the question, ‘What is our life?’ we might answer, ‘Life is what we do, of course, because living is knowing what we do; in short, it is finding oneself in the world and being occupied with the things and beings in the world.’”  

Thus, there are two conceptions of life at work here: the conception of life itself as we find it in immediate and original philosophical reflection and the acquired conception that “living is knowing what we do” and is independent of other human activity. Ortega drives philosophical thinking back towards the former conception. The closeness of this conception of life to Heidegger’s analysis of Dasein and “throwness” is recognised by Ortega himself. He variously qualifies human life as “unforeseen” or “given to us- better, it is thrown at us, we are thrown into it.”

Outside such a viewpoint we seem to assume that life exists and we are to form it. It is only in this sense that we distinguish actively between life and the things we do. However, Ortega’s point seems to be that initial and immediate philosophical reflection fundamentally finds life as active life. “Finding oneself in the world” is an immediate philosophical insight which is identical to finding oneself within a particular activity. The above objection to Ortega’s qualification of what constitutes a way of life needs to take accordingly further account of what this original reflection reveals.

At the same time, further philosophical reflection reveals that the givenness of life awaits the activity of human consciousness. Life is what the human being makes it to be. At the heart of the concept of life lies the temporally determined paradox that while we are “tossed into our life” we must “on our own account, construct that thing into which we have been tossed, we must fabricate it.”  

This development of a dual conception of life constitutes a “most profound paradox”. Life is both throwness and yet a constant series of collisions with the future. To live is “to live here and now,” yet, life is essentially also “deciding what we are going to do”.

The described paradox of life is an outcome of the characteristic that life is a temporal form. Life is not only a primary ontological fact it is also consciously unfolding life. As such life is a projection into the future. It is anchored in the immediate present yet in its dependence of thinking points towards a “cosmic” time, towards the future and past:

“Our life is set and anchored in the immediate present. But what is my life at this moment? It is not the process of saying what I am saying; what I am living this moment is not a matter of moving the lips; that is mechanical, outside my life, it pertains to the cosmic being. On the contrary, my life is the process of thinking what I am going to say; at this moment I am anticipating, I am projecting myself into the future. But in order to do this I make use of certain means- of words- and that gives me a portion of the past. My future, then, makes me discover my past in order to realize that future. The past is now real because I am re-living it, and it is when I find in the past the means of realising my future that I discover the present. And all this happens in an instant; moment by moment life swells out into the three dimensions of the true interior time.”

The time consciousness which is described here indicates some affinities with descriptions of time consciousness discussed in earlier sections. Life as thinking life unfolds a consciousness of temporality

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447 Ortega (1960), 218.
448 Ortega (1960), 222.
449 Ortega (1960), 241.

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within the moment or instant. It brings to light the essential “thickness” and ontological extension of the moment or now to include past and future.

The temporal dimension of life is not the only striking aspect of life as thinking life. According to Ortega, the “first category of our lives is ‘to find oneself’, to ‘understand oneself,’ ‘to be transparent.’” This implies the fundamental importance of thinking. Thinking is living because it is the activity which occupies itself with life as what there is in the world. At the same time as finding life, though, theoretical thinking abstracts from life to establish what it finds in a category of autonomous ontological being. Thus philosophy and philosophising as thinking which abstracts from life are not living, but a form of living. It is important to see this distinction clearly. Thinking as form or way of live is a “de-living”- an exemplary and interpretative approach to life. If living is finding oneself in the world then the form of life is the way in which we find ourselves in the world. It is a determination of the content of living, it is itself a vital act which gives life a place. Ortega considers the identification of life as the central and primordial starting point of philosophical reflection to be the beginning of a “new philosophy” and even a “whole new life- a vita nova.” This allusion to Dante brings the conception of philosophy as a way of life into one concentrated focus.

This brief characterisation of selected philosophers of life was intended to show how the topic of life itself transforms the understanding of philosophy and philosophical reflection in the tradition of Classical philosophy (as interpreted by Hadot, Schlegel, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche). The challenge of a philosophy of life remains that an adequate reflection of life must achieve two things: the adequate ontological determination of the phenomenon of life itself in its immediacy and scope and the appropriate reflection of this phenomenon within philosophical activity. In other words: a philosophy of life must reach clarity as to the ontological modality of life itself. Heidegger argues that the approaches of the Lebensphilosophie of Dilthey and Bergson precisely fails at this point. While these philosophers seek an understanding of life through the being of Dasein (human being), the ontological mode of being of life itself does not become a topic of discussion. This leads Heidegger himself to replace the concern with life with the question of being. One might argue that Ortega achieves an outline of such an ontology by pointing to life as a “paradox” of “thrownness” and temporal form.

450 Ortega (1960), 244.
451 Ortega (1960), 236.
452 Ortega (1960), 206.
454 Heidegger (1986), 46.
12.1 The case for congruence: Philosophy as the greatest music

I believe that I am now in a position to summarize my findings in relation to the nature of philosophy in such a way that they also demonstrate congruence between music and philosophy:

(1) Philosophy is distinguished by the play of theoria. This is a direct result of the relationship between philosophical writing and thinking. Play is a form of philosophical engagement with text and theory and is required in order to maintain the original momentum of thinking. Play is a consequence of the nature of theoria as an energeia. Theoria and play coincide in their common attribute of leisure. This determines not only the content but also the approach to the subject matter of philosophy.

(2) Philosophical thinking is dialogical and polythetic. This implies that philosophy is constituted in the activity of philosophical dialogue. In order to maintain the movement of thinking, philosophy must maintain its “seeing” within the living and breathing word, which is established and maintained by dialogue. The outcomes of philosophy and its arguments are demonstrations which – akin to the works of music - repeat the temporal unfolding of the original thinking. Philosophical demonstration is thus a repetition of a polythetic form.

(3) Philosophy is a journeying of the soul. In the context of Platonic philosophy, the philosopher remains a lover of wisdom. His desire for complete enlightenment remains unfulfilled. The movement of thinking in philosophy is generated by philosophical eros and a desire to reach a state of “seeing”. Philosophical “seeing” does not only involve propositional understanding but implies a journey of the soul in its entirety. The aim of the journey of the philosopher is – in Platonic terms - the vision of the Good. The nature of this vision and the nature of human existence imply that this journey does not endure and needs to be repeated. The impossibility to conclude the journey of philosophy constitutes philosophy as an ongoing performance. The manifestation of philosophy is not the unattainable vision of the Good but the condition of the soul and the conscience (daimon) of the philosopher.

(4) The topic and topos of philosophy is life. In its journey towards the Good the philosopher becomes conscious of life as the most fundamental philosophical starting point. The journey of philosophy is transformed into the examination of life. This examination is inevitable. Human life itself demands examination. For the philosopher, life is a fundamental starting point of contemplation, a manifestation and ergon of his contemplation.

(5) Philosophy is a way of life based on spiritual exercise. Philosophical contemplation is formative activity and form of life. In addition to being a realm (topos) of philosophy, life is also the work of philosophy. This results from the fact that life is an energeia. The activity of examining life is also the form of life. Philosophy engages with the energeia of life in the praxis of theoria or in spiritual exercise. The function of theoria is thus twofold: it maintains the original movement of thinking but it also maintains the condition of the soul. The immediate evidence and fundamental identity of conscious, human life implies that philosophy as a way of life is not a matter of choice. The contemplation of philosophy is the examination of life.

(6) Philosophy is the greatest music. In its contemplation of life, philosophy is also always a meditation upon death. The pure presence achieved by philosophical contemplation is a vision which transcends ordinary temporality. Like music philosophy searches for harmony and homologia in the
fundamental paradox of life as both temporal form and form of temporality. Music, the *meditatio mortis* \[455\] creates templates of life and thus “contemplates” life through temporal forming. Philosophy, “the greatest music”, contemplates life as temporal form and creates a template of life.

\[455\] This characterisation of music by Adam of Fulda (1490) is cited in Dahlhaus (1982), 11.
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