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Call and Response: Negation and the Configuration of Desire

Férdia J. Stone-Davis

Introduction

This chapter enquires into the de-centering of the self that occurs in certain musical experiences, where the subject is called into a non-instrumental relation with that which is other. It does so through the analogy of musical experience and mystical experience, exploring the possibility that an "apophatic anthropology" can be said to take place within musical experience.[1] Herein the self is constructed through its de-centering, and desire is dispossessed and thereby reconfigured.

In what follows, I begin by outlining what is meant by "liquid modernity," the context for this chapter. I then present an interpretation of mystical experience informed by two strands of thought, one found in Jean-Louis Chrétien and the other in Michel de Certeau. In the light of this I consider musical experience as that which impacts us, absorbs us and takes us beyond ourselves, before outlining the advantages of considering such experiences as involving an apophasis of anthropology. I suggest that, considered as such, musical experience offers an interruption of the liquid modern mode of being by offering a form of attention that is relational and non-acquisitive. In doing so, I suggest that music can return us to something of our core, something eloquently expressed by Nicholas Lash:

> If human beings are . . . "hearers of the word," it is by utterance, and hence by sound, that we are *constituted*—and constituted to be, in every fibre of our being, turned towards, attentive to the voice that makes us and that calls us home.[2]

Liquid Modernity

This chapter is set within a narrative that sees a movement from the pre-modern to the modern world or, otherwise put, from an "enchanted" to a "disenchanted" world.[3] Although there are different understandings about what disenchantment entails exactly,[4] it is clear that in broad terms it involves a flattening out of the epistemic frame,

such that meaning is no longer located objectively, outside of the self, but is situated within the subject and the subjective.[5] This shift has been helpfully articulated by Charles Taylor through the juxtaposition of the "porous" and the "buffered' self.[6] In broad terms, the shift gestured towards by these categories signals a process whereby things are reduced to their relation to the subject, specifically to the power of reason and faith in its progress. That is, whereas formerly meaning is received from outside of the self by virtue of the fact that the world has significance aside from and prior to any interaction with it, it becomes the case that a boundary is cultivated that keeps the self "buffered" from the outside world such that it is able to distance and disengage from things outside the mind as well as generate its own purpose and meaning.[7]

Further to this move from the pre-modern to the modern, and the changing relationship between the world and the individual subject, there is another moment to be identified, one that entails a shift beyond the modern to a state identified by Zygmunt Bauman as the "liquid modern." What makes modernity liquid, for Bauman, is "its self-propelling, self-intensifying, compulsive and obsessive 'modernization,' as a result of which, like liquid, none of the consecutive forms of social life is able to maintain its shape for long."[8] As a result, social forms of meaning "cannot serve as frames of reference for human actions and long-term life strategies because of their short life expectation."[9] Thus, "change is *the only* permanence, and uncertainty *the only* certainty," since modernity—with its emphasis on the power of reason and faith in its capacity to improve the human situation—entails the pursuit of a "'final state of perfection' . . . an infinity of improvement, with no 'final state' in sight and none desired."[10] Strategies for meaning-making are thus episodic rather than long-term.[11] This episodic character shapes individual approaches to life, such that "each next step needs to be a response to a different set of opportunities and a different distribution of odds," and a "swift and thorough *forgetting* of outdated information and fast ageing habits" becomes more important for the next success "than the memorization of past moves and the building of strategies on a foundation laid by previous *learning*."[12] The emphasis of liquid modernity on impermanence and uncertainty has significant consequences for desire which strives for episodic meaning, is driven by need towards consumption, and thereby becomes focused on self rather than self in relation to other.

This said, we must be careful not to suggest that the subject is completely self-determining within this framework. This would be to underestimate the storied nature of human existence, that is, our entanglement in existing narratives and the resources these provide us with, consciously and unconsciously.[13] Bauman implicitly acknowledges this:

> It [short supply of patterns, codes and rules to which one might conform] does not mean that our contemporaries are guided solely by their own imagination and resolve and are free to construct their mode of life from scratch and at will, or that they are no longer dependent on society for the building materials and design blueprints.[14]

What it does mean, however, is that narratives are more lateral than vertical, that the individual bears "the burden of pattern-weaving," and that "the responsibility for failure" falls primarily on the individual's shoulders."[15]

Consequent upon this lateral strategization, and the fact that culture tends to consist of "offers, not prohibitions; propositions, not norms," is that the self in its search for meaning becomes leveraged by a system of meaning-making that is necessarily driven by the short-term and is largely grounded in a narrative that values processes of consumption.[16] To clarify how so, it is worth pausing to consider the kind of desire Bauman has in mind. For Bauman, the desire at work in consumer culture is characterised in terms of need and lack,[17] and is driven by the temporary possibility of fulfilment (given the episodic character of meaning-making). This kind of need-based desire is explained well by Emmanuel Levinas:

> To be cold, hungry, thirsty, naked, to seek shelter—all these dependencies with regard to the world, having become needs, save the instinctive being from anonymous menaces and constitute a being independent of the world, a veritable subject capable of ensuring the satisfaction of its needs, which are recognized as material, that is, as admitting of satisfaction.[18]

In short, if I am hungry, I eat; if I am thirsty, I drink—these are desires that can be satisfied, literally, though consumption. Bauman is clear that the distinctive mark of consumer society and its culture "is not . . . consumption as such; not even the elevated and fast-rising volume of consumption."[19] Rather, what sets consumer society apart from its precursors is that consumption is removed from biological and social survival, thereby removing set points at which satiety is reached and further consumption is no longer necessary.[20] Bauman is clear that what makes consumer culture distinct is:

> the emancipation of consumption from its past instrumentality that used to draw its limits—the demise of "norms" and the new plasticity of "needs," setting consumption free from functional bonds and absolving it from the need to justify itself by reference to anything but its own pleasurability.[21]

These processes of consumption are relentless and all-encompassing since, as Bauman explains, their "chief concern is to prevent a feeling of satisfaction . . . and in particular to counteract their perfect, complete and definitive gratification, which would leave no room for further, new and as yet unfulfilled needs and whims."[22] Thus, Bauman explains: a liquid modern, consumer-oriented economy relies "on a surplus of its offerings" that in turn depends on the obsolescence of items and services (an obsolescence both in terms of longevity but also appeal). The impetus behind this economy is to sufficiently arouse consumer desire, however, working blindly—since the desire of the consumer is multiple and cannot be known for sure and in advance—attempts to do so are numerous and often involve costly mistakes.[23]

Within the narrative of the liquid modern consumer context, then, the subject's capacity for meaning-making is turned on its head, as desire, understood as lack, is commodified as it grasps after the temporarily new and best, the temporarily satisfying. Here, seeking after is rendered perpetual in a negative sense, and fulfilment is postponed in both the present and future tense. As we shall see, however, the absence of satisfaction need not be understood in this way.

Mystical "Event"

In the light of this condition in which we arguably find ourselves collectively, what is the significance of examining music through analogy with mystical experience? There are certain phenomenological similarities that ground the comparison, which itself in turn might point towards a different mode of being, one that can offer some remedy to the liquid modern condition by tendering an experience of a different, more fruitful way of finding meaning and interacting with that which is other than the subject—a mode of being that reconfigures desire as lack into desire as abundance.

Recognizing that attempts to speak about mystical experience in abstract terms risk collapsing the particular into the general, fallaciously presuming that there is *a* thing called mystical experience, I draw upon two streams of thought that are helpful in suggesting ways forward for a fruitful dialogue with musical experience (which, likewise, is not singular in nature). Within both streams of thought, as we shall see, there is a clear sense of being-in-relation. Specifically, being acted upon, of being completely engaged and thereby of being taken to the brink of ourselves where we experience something other and are transformed not through the satisfaction of something lacking but through the experience of something non-reducible and incapable of being possessed, since abundant. Similar moments can be identified within certain music events.

Before proceeding, however, I would like to make one important qualification to my language, for having said that I will speak about musical and mystical *experiences*, in effect I am talking, rather, about musical and mystical *events*. The reason for this language shift is threefold. One, to speak of event is to remind us of the particularity and dynamism of experience—its *happening* rather than its *being*. Two, going further than other recent treatments of event, which understand it simply as that which is marked out from the ordinary in some way,[24] the conception of event I have in mind is more like Slavoj Žižek's, wherein, he says, "at its most elementary, event is not something that occurs within the world, but it is a change of the very frame through which we perceive the world and engage in it."[25] Three, drawing attention to this change in perspective indicates something about the mode of attention involved in a particular experience, namely, one that makes possible a profound transformation and extends beyond the moment, or series of moments.

Chrétien

The first stream of thought that points us towards a dialogue with musical experience is provided by Jean-Louis Chrétien and a central motif that runs throughout his works, namely, call and response. Chrétien offers two observations about this motif. The first is that "I" am *called into being*, and the second is that "I" am *already and always in response*. This dynamic of call and response operates at two distinct levels. At one level, it points towards an originary call, an "*excess* of the encounter with things, other, world, and God."[26] In doing so, that which calls remains resistant to anything that might be said of it and remains beyond any particular response one might make. For this reason, listening does not simply involve listening to what is said but, rather, "to what it is, in

the world or, in other words, to which his words are replying—what is calling his words, requesting them, menacing them or overwhelming them."[27] In this sense, listening and responding necessitate an attention not only to what is heard but to what the heard itself responds to. It thereby opens a space of plurality and hospitality:[28]

> Every voice, hearing without cease, bears many voices within itself because there is no first voice. We always speak to the world, we are always already in the act of speaking, always in the world still, so that the initiative to speak always comes calibrated with past speech, with a charge to speak, which it accepts and takes on without having given rise to it.[29]

The second observation follows from the first, for just as I am called into being, so I am constituted in and through this response, and transformed in the process. This observation recognizes that we are called into being in different ways and by different kinds of experience, ones that address our whole being, body and soul.[30] Importantly, the possibility of transformation emerges from the integral asymmetry of the dialogue. This asymmetry is twofold for, on the one hand, what is heard is not heard in its totality (it is always inescapably more)[31] and, on the other hand, our response is always belated[32] and never entirely adequate.[33] This is ontologically significant. As Chrétien notes, "the way the response falls short constitutes neither a contingent deficit nor a regrettable imperfection in the response that we give. . . . It is the very event of a wound by which our existence is altered and opened," he continues, "and becomes itself the site of the manifestation of what it responds to."[34] This falling short by necessity invokes "chorus and polyphony":[35] "The response accomplishes its unsubstitutable singularity only in giving itself into a community and thus making appeal to other voices. This is not because they complete that response, but because the fault is closed only at the same time as our mouths."[36] The response to the call is thus a space of hospitality but also a site of intimacy. The call does not leave me "intact"; it opens a "space in me to be heard" and shatters "something of what I was before I felt myself to be called."[37] Thus, for Chrétien: "To listen is to be opened to the other and transformed by the other at our most intimate core. Intimacy, in these ways of thinking, is neither escape nor shelter, but rather the place of broader exposure."[38] As we shall see, this place of broader exposure and wounding, generated by a response to a preceding call that always eludes comprehension, is fruitful not only in terms of thinking about mystical events, but also musical events.

De Certeau

The second stream of thought arrives from Michel de Certeau. His treatment of mysticism resonates with Chrétien's account of call and response, and offers something analogous to the sense of hospitality built into the latter's structure. Thus, in relation to mystical experience, De Certeau says:

> The event imposes itself. In a very real sense, it alienates. It pertains to the same order as ecstasy: that is, to that which transports one outside oneself. . . . [S]uch a "birth" draws from man a truth that is his without coming from him or belonging

> to him. Thus, he is "outside himself" at the very moment that a Self is asserted. A necessity is aroused in him, but under the sign of a melody, a spoken word, or a vision coming from elsewhere.[39]

Mystical experiences, in short, operate through a dynamic of call and response. They are "expressions overflowing with the excess of a presence that could never be possessed."[40] Otherwise put, they involve the "discovery of an Other as essential or inevitable that defines this relationship."[41] These discoveries are "indissociable from a place, a meeting, a reading, but not reducible to the means that convey them."[42] For de Certeau, the presence of that which is other stands at the centre of the mystical, and, as in Chrétien, seems to hold together distinct forms of otherness, including not only the originary other, but the community of others within which one is necessarily situated, thereby creating sites of hospitality. It is thus that, speaking of mystical texts, de Certeau notes the importance of the "dialogic spaces" they create.[43] Writing about mystics of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, he says:

> Since it was no longer possible to presuppose the same cosmos that was experienced in times past as a (linguistic) encounter between Divine Speaker and His faithful respondents, it was necessary to *produce* the conventions needed to circumscribe the places where one can "hear" [*entendre*] and where one can "come to an understanding with" others [*s'entendre*]. An essential sector of mystic thought attempts to explain and obtain the conditions allowing one to "speak to" [*parler à*] or "speak with" [*se parler*].[44]

Within these spaces, a plurality of voices is brought together, including the voice of the absolute (the Divine), the voice of the institution (the Word of God), and the voice of the author.[45]

Just as for Chrétien, the language of transformation is key for de Certeau. Talking about "mystical life," de Certeau suggests that it is "comprised of experiences that initiate or transform it."[46] These "moments," he says, are like "throwing open a window onto one's dwelling; they give a new sense of ease, allow a breath of fresh air to enter one's life."[47] The elusiveness of the experience is vital, since it reflects something of its ineffability, but also of its unexpected nature and transformative capacity. It has the character of revelation:

> There the unbelievable and the obvious coincide. It is a transformation and a revelation. It is impossible to identify the event with a particular instant in time because of what it awakens in the memory and because of all the life experience [*le vécu*] that emerges in that particular moment. By the same token, it is also impossible to reduce it to the product of a long preparation, since it happens unexpectedly, as a "gift," and is unforeseeable.[48]

Explaining further, de Certeau notes that the mystic can say "It happened *there*" because "he keeps engraved in his memory, the smallest circumstances of that instant." However, at the same time, the mystic must also say, "It was not *that*," because "for him the

experience has to do with something other than a site, an impression, or a certain knowledge."[49] The language of "trace" captures something of this, as it refers to the impact of "the fissure of an Absence or a Presence" upon other experiences and understandings.[50] Indicating that "the event cannot be reduced to its initial form," it suggests, for de Certeau, that the mystical event "calls for a beyond to what was only a first unveiling. It opens up an itinerary."[51] The mystical life, therefore, is not "circumscribed in the particular forms of a privileged instant," nor is it constituted by the repetition of a mystical experience.[52] Rather, the mystical life is processual; it "is begun when it recovers its roots and experiences its strangeness in ordinary life—when it continues to discover in other ways what has occurred that first time."[53]

Musical "Event"

The musical event has the capacity to create a particular interrelationship between subject and object, self and world, that can be cast in terms of impact, absorption and ekstasis,[54] and furthermore can be said to involve a mode of attention suggestive of that which we have seen in relation to mystical events. These are not isolated moments but points of interaction that occur throughout the musical process as a result of the self acting, as well as the self's being acted upon. Herein an attunement takes place or, otherwise put, a resonance. This resonance, as we shall see, invokes the transformative site of hospitality and intimacy noted in relation to the mystical.

To elucidate these moments, whether performed or listened to, music—as event—issues a call to us.[55] It *impacts* us physically, striking our ear drums but also reverberating in our bodies, more or less subtly. It catches our attention and invites us to enter into its sound. Depending on how we engage with it (since there are many different ways to do so), we can respond to it and become *absorbed* by it, entering completely into its time, space and flow. Here, we *face outwards*, being in some sense brought to the "brink" of ourselves. The concept of "threshold" (from the Latin *limen*) gives flesh to this. A threshold is a point at which transition occurs. However, that which is most significant about thresholds is not the *moment of crossing*, but the *relation* that manifests at the *instant before that crossing*, since it is here that binaries such as "inside" and "outside," "subject" and "object," are transcended as they are held in tension. A site of hospitality and intimacy is formed.

To illustrate this, let us consider music production, which comprises a succession of physical actions that manipulate wave vibrations: the lengths of channels of air and pieces of string are altered through the impression of the human body. This manipulation runs reciprocally for the sound yielded in turn has an impact on the player, who responds to it. An "attunement" takes place between player, instrument, sound and music, since the physical body becomes one with the instrument and with the sound produced. In this way, the player is brought to a threshold where subject and object, inner and outer meet. Importantly, attunement is not an isolated moment. It is, rather, a process identifiable within different levels of playing and within accompanying modes of attention that move from the mechanical, on the one hand, as one masters bodily movement in relation to achieving a desired sound, to the musical, on the other,

where one is freer to become involved in music's shape and internal movement. Here, details are situated within phrases that are then placed within the musical whole, understood as pointing both forwards and backwards "intentionally" within a larger musical structure, which itself is called into being by other sounds, other musics.

The reception of music is as physical an act as that of its production. The aural space is singular in nature and discloses the porosity of the boundary between subject and object. For the distance between them is eliminable. It is thus that the aural experience can be contrasted with the visual. In visual experience, we see discrete things in certain places at particular times. Physical items are thus bounded, for example, two distinct things cannot be in the same place at the very same time, and I experience things as "here" or "there." By contrast, aural experience is more encompassing; although I might hear a sound as generated by a source and thereby as coming from a particular "here" or "there," my experience of the sound is not reliant on this, and indeed can far exceed it, as in the case of music, the foundation of which is the peeling away of sound from source and its consequent ability to create a "field of force" into which I am taken.[56] It is due to the permeability of the boundary between subject and musical object that we are caught up in it. Whether in performance or reception, music calls to us, invites response, and enables us to be taken outside of ourselves so that our experience is reshaped and structured as we are taken into the musical time of what we experience.

To further understand the attunement involved in the music event, the idea of threshold is worth unpacking further, for music can be cast as a threshold practice, since its mode of being is fundamentally bound up with thresholds and is characterized by openness. We can illustrate three ways in which this is so.[57] One, music is integrally connected to sensory thresholds—unlike the relationship between other media and the human senses, the effect of sound is immediate and to a degree unstoppable. The aural threshold is easily trespassed, so to speak. Two, music can be said to operate as a threshold itself, since it is only ever in transition and relies on process and change. This can be seen in the aspects that constitute musical experience, including the dissipation of sound and its organization as it moves through time and space, held together even in its eventual absence. Three, through the moments of impact, absorption and ekstasis that occur within the course of attunement, there is no subject and no object, no inside and no outside, there is only threshold, the point at which the two meet. In this sense, the proximity of the subject to and its dependence upon that which is other is brought to the fore, as is the intransigence of the other. This other cannot be dominated and is not there to simply be acquired and possessed. That is, it never yields or gives itself completely and is abundant in character. More than this, the other makes a demand: utterances (musical and otherwise) are performed and act upon us, they offer an interpellation. They address us, in some sense they call us into being and constitute us in doing so. Thus, value does not derive simply from the self but, rather, is something received and responded to. Meaning and value are in process but are not instrumental. Simultaneously, they are an end in themselves but are not thereby definitive or unambiguous. In these terms, the analogy of the musical and the mystical set Bauman's statement that "change is the *only* permanence, and uncertainty the *only* uncertainty" in a new light.[58] They also, concomitantly, challenge the premising notion of desire as configured in relation to lack, a lack that can be satisfied, even if temporarily.

Apophasis of Anthropology

As we have seen, the alignment of musical and mystical experience arises fundamentally from certain phenomenological similarities that they share, which indicate the situation of desire within an experience that is taken as an end in itself rather than as instrumental, not as lack but a place of abundance. Moreover, they both offer a transformation that is to some degree conceptually ungraspable with an extension beyond its duration. But can we be more specific about what can be constructively offered by musical experience within the context of liquid modernity, within which desire is impelled ever onwards by the promise of various illusory necessities and fulfilment is deferred in both the present and future tense? To attempt this, it is helpful to turn our attention to the idea of detachment found in Meister Eckhart or—as explained by Denys Turner—the idea of an apophasis of anthropology.

In Sermon 52, Eckhart considers the meaning of the verse "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." He suggests that a poor man is he who "wants nothing, and knows nothing, and has nothing."[59] In reflecting on each of these three aspects of poverty, Eckhart points towards the ways in which humans tend to form attachments that distract us from our fundamental connection to God. The soul, Eckhart notes, tends to cling to things and is incapable of maintaining a "healthy distance" from them.[60] Thus, human actions have a tendency to become self-oriented. Eckhart says:

> See, all those are merchants, who restrain themselves from major sins and would love to be good people and do their good works to give God the honour, works such as fasting, vigilance, prayer and alike, hence lots of good work, but they do all of this, so that the Lord recompenses them and God gives something they would like back to them.[61]

Will to action obscures the end of action. In the light of this, the goal of detachment is to enable a person to be "so free of all things and all works, both interior and exterior, that he might become a place only for God, in which God could work."[62] Detachment is, then, a reciprocal movement in which humans leave "things" and undergo a self-emptying. However, this detachment is not negation but a fulfillment of being, since in and through it an individual is filled with God's presence (although, importantly, God's limitlessness means that this "filling" is also without end).[63] As Turner explains, "detachment" is not an experience, but "the strategy of dispossessing desire of its desire to possess its objects and so to destroy them" such that a "proper relation" can be set in place wherein desire has "reverence" for its object, rather than seeking to appropriate it.[64] In this way detachment stands as the condition of possibility of love and results not in deficiency but an excess that is neither exhaustive nor exhaustible.

Certain music events provide a strategy for detachment and an opportunity for modelling a different way of being in the world, one that provides a point of orientation that transcends commodity and use (since music always remains to some degree resistant to appropriation and expectation), and has the potential to reconfigure desire. It does this on (at least) three levels. One, by taking us out of ourselves and taking us

into its musical time and space, music can lift us beyond self-preoccupation. Two, music can take us beyond our usual form of interaction with things we encounter; we can delight in the absolute "for nothingness" of musical experience. Three, by using the desire elicited by and formative to music's power, music can shape and reshape desire—at a basic level by fulfilling, subverting, deferring or refusing musical expectation (or expectations of music). In doing so, music has the potential to provide not only a modelling of, but an exercise in, attention and attentiveness to that which is Other. This can extend beyond an experience's duration and may even serve as an impetus to re-evaluation and transformation of other (more ordinary) modes of engagement. As such, music can draw us back to the dynamic of call and response that constitutes our being. It gestures in this way towards an understanding of desire that is not based on lack, as in liquid modernity, but on abundance, and is thereby not simply driven by need towards consumption. Rather, it is oriented metaphysically. Such a view of desire and abundance is characterized by Levinas as a "hollowing out," that which in our terms has been cast as apophasis. He says:

> Outside of the hunger one satisfies, the thirst one quenches and the senses one allays, exists the other, absolutely other, desired beyond these satisfactions, when the body knows no gesture to slake the desire, where it is not possible to invent any new caress. This desire is unquenchable, not because it answers to an infinite hunger, but because it does not call for food. This desire without satisfaction hence takes cognizance of the alterity of the other. It situates it in the dimension of height and of the ideal, which it opens up in being.[65]

Conclusion

The shift from enchantment to disenchantment and from the porous to the buffered self is bound up with issues of perception and the flattening of the epistemic frame, such that the subject is cast as the sole meaning-giver. This is complexified by Bauman's diagnosis of the liquid modern where the constructed social frames of meaning become increasingly unstable—because they are fluid—and meaning is pursued within the market context. Here, meaning is strategized in a different way as it becomes perpetually deferred: it relies upon the orientation of desire towards commodities, the allure of which is necessarily transient. In turn, desire itself is commodified, as an attitude of acquisition and usefulness is encouraged and proliferates. In setting mystical experience alongside musical experience by virtue of their shared phenomenological moments of impact, absorption and ekstasis, and by casting them as event, or experiences, with a capacity to transform the frame through which we perceive and engage with the world, I have suggested that the mode of attention that music is capable of eliciting forms an interruption of the liquid modern mode of being. It does so by offering an experience that is relational and non-acquisitive, one that reconfigures desire in terms of abundance rather than lack, thereby recalling us to our human nature which is constituted always in response to the Other.

Notes

1 Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 168.
2 Nicholas Lash, *Holiness, Speech, and Silence: Reflections on the Question of God* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2004), 92.
3 Max Weber's idea of *Entzauberung* (disenchantment) is articulated in Max Weber, "Science as a Profession [*Wissenschaft als Beruf*, 1920]," in *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, edited by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 129–56.
4 Meijer, Michael and Herbert De Vriese, eds., *The Philosophy of Reenchantment* (New York/London: Routledge, 2021) offers a range of interpretations of disenchantment, and proposals as to what enchantment might entail (both theistic and atheistic).
5 Disenchantment understood as an epistemic flattening is suggested by two things: (1) within the domain of religion, Weber highlights the movement away from ecclesial sacraments (through which one is assisted in one's progression towards salvation) towards rationalized ethical action (through which one attests to one's own predestination); (2) within society, Weber points to increasing rationalization and intellectualization, for what was previously attributable to the supernatural becomes explicable by more mundane means uncovered through rational and scientific enquiry. In brief, this means "the knowledge or belief that if one but wished one *could learn it at any time* . . . it means that principally there are no mysterious incalculable forces that come into play, but rather that one can, in principle, master all things by calculation." Weber, *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, 139. See Férdia Stone-Davis, *Musical Beauty: Negotiating the Boundary between Subject and Object* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2001), 178–81.
6 Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 27–41.
7 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 38.
8 Zygmunt Bauman, *Culture in a Liquid Modern World* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), 11.
9 Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Times: Living in an Age of Uncertainty* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 1. Bauman continues: "indeed, a life expectation shorter than the time it takes to develop a cohesive and consistent strategy, and still shorter than the fulfilment of an individual 'life project' requires." Ibid.
10 Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), 7.
11 "The future—the realistic future and the desirable future—can be grasped only as a succession of 'nows.' And the only stable, hopefully unbreakable continuity on which the beads of episodes could be conceivable strung together so that they won't scatter and disperse, is that of one's own body in its successive avatars." Zygmunt Bauman, "Consuming Life", *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 1 no. 1 (2001): 22.
12 Bauman, *Liquid Times*, 3.
13 See for example, Rodolphe Gasché, "Entanglement in Stories (Wilhelm Schapp)," in *Storytelling: The Destruction of the Inalienable in the Age of the Holocaust* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2018), 41–56. Thanks to Amy Daughton for drawing my attention to Schapp.
14 Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, 25.
15 Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, 25–26.
16 Bauman, *Culture in a Liquid Modern World*, 13.

17 The idea of desire as lack can be traced back to Plato's *Symposium*, 200A, trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff, in *Plato Complete Works*, ed., with introduction and notes, by John M. Cooper (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997); see also Simon May, *Love: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 38–55.
18 Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 117.
19 Bauman, "Consuming Life", 12.
20 Bauman, "Consuming Life," 12.
21 Bauman, "Consuming Life," 12–13.
22 Bauman, *Culture in a Liquid Modern World*, 16–17.
23 Bauman, *Culture in a Liquid Modern World*, 15–16. As Hartmut Rosa notes: "For a considerable and growing part of the libido of late modern subjects seems to be directed not toward consuming or using purchased items, but toward the act of purchase as such. Year after year, people in affluent societies buy more books, more music devices, more telescopes, tennis rackets, and pianos, but they read and listen to them, look through and play with them less and less." Hartmut Rosa, *Resonance: A Sociology of Our Relationship to the World*, trans. James C. Wagner (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019), 254.
24 See e.g., Ansgar Nünning, "Making events—making stories—making worlds: Ways of worldmaking from a narratological point of view," in *Cultural Ways of Worldmaking: Media and Narratives*, ed. Vera Nünning, Ansgar Nünning, and Birgit Neumann (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 191–214.
25 Slavoj Žižek, *Event: Philosophy in Transit* (London: Penguin, 2014), 10.
26 Jean-Louis Chrétien, *The Unforgettable and the Unhoped For*, trans. Jeffrey Bloechl (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 121.
27 Jean-Louis Chrétien, *The Ark of Speech*, trans. Andrew Brown (Oxford: Routledge, 2004), 10.
28 "The first hospitality is nothing other than listening. . . . It is the first hospitality, to be sure, but nobody has ever inaugurated it. No man has ever been the first to listen. We can offer it only because we have always already been received in it." Chrétien, *The Ark of Speech*, 9.
29 Jean-Louis Chrétien, *The Call and the Response*, trans. Anne A. Davenport (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 1. Elsewhere, Chrétien says: "The act of speech cannot be thought on the basis of a simple duality of you and me. As soon as you speak to me, we are already all there, even the dead, and those who will one day come also." Chrétien, *The Ark of Speech*, 10.
30 "The various powers of call that we describe are not addressed to a pure transcendental ego but to the whole human being, body and soul. . . . If there is indeed an inner voice, it must belong intrinsically to our fleshly voice, not dwell in a spiritual sanctuary: it must therefore put us in dialogue with our very corporeity." Chrétien, *The Call and the Response*, 3–4.
31 Chrétien, *The Call and the Response*, 30.
32 Chrétien, *The Call and the Response*, 44.
33 Chrétien, *The Unforgettable and the Unhoped for*, 122.
34 Chrétien, *The Unforgettable and the Unhoped for*, 122.
35 Chrétien, *The Unforgettable and the Unhoped for*, 122.
36 Chrétien, *The Unforgettable and the Unhoped for*, 122.
37 Chrétien, *The Call and the Response*, 48.

38 Chrétien, *The Call and the Response*, 63.
39 Michel de Certeau, "Mysticism", *Diacritics* 22, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 18.
40 De Certeau, "Mysticism," 16.
41 De Certeau, "Mysticism," 18.
42 De Certeau, "Mysticism," 17.
43 Michel de Certeau, "Mystic Speech," in *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi, forward by Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 91.
44 De Certeau, "Mystic Speech," 91. Translator's brackets.
45 "Where should I write? That is the question the organization of every mystic text strives to answer: the truth value of the discourse does not depend on the truth value of its propositions, but on the fact of its being in the very place at which the Speaker speaks (the Spirit, 'el que habla'). . . . In every case . . . divine utterance is both what founds the text, and what it must make manifest. That is why the text is destabilized: it is at the same time *beside* the authorized institution, i.e., the Word of God." De Certeau, "Mystic Speech," 92.
46 De Certeau, "Mysticism," 17.
47 De Certeau, "Mysticism," 17.
48 De Certeau, "Mysticism," 18.
49 De Certeau, "Mysticism," 17.
50 De Certeau, "Mysticism," 19.
51 De Certeau, "Mysticism," 19.
52 De Certeau, "Mysticism," 20.
53 De Certeau, "Mysticism," 20.
54 Stone-Davis, *Musical Beauty*, 158–90.
55 Although distinguishing here between performance and reception, I by no means want to suggest that they are wholly discrete activities. The distinction is simply so that we might analytically consider two modes of engaging with music.
56 Roger Scruton, *Aesthetics of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 17. Indeed, consequent on this capability of sound, Scruton posits a strictly acousmatic understanding of music, whereby the material source and origin is of marginal importance to sounds as music, see Scruton, *Understanding Music: Philosophy and Interpretation* (London: Continuum, 2009), chapter 2. For an exploration and critique of Scruton on the acousmatic in terms of the anthropology he proposes, see Férdia J. Stone-Davis, "Making an Anthropological Case: Cognitive Dualism and the Acousmatic," *Philosophy* 90, no. 2 (2015): 263–76.
57 For a more detailed outworking, see Férdia J. Stone-Davis, "Music and World-Making: Haydn's String Quartet in E-Flat Major (op. 33, no. 2)," in *Music and Transcendence*, ed. Férdia J. Stone-Davis (Abingdon, UK: Ashgate, 2015), 125–45, esp. 130–35.
58 Bauman. *Liquid Modernity*, 7.
59 Meister Eckhart, *The Essential Sermons, Commentaries, Treatises, and Defense*, trans. Edmund Colledge, O. S. A. and Bernard McGinn (London: Paulist Press, 1981), 199.
60 Markus Vincent, *The Art of Detachment* (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 59. "The soul's binding attachment is the web in which she is helplessly entangled, so regretfully strangled that she is kept from performing her work, disabled from attending to the work that she does, and concerned only with herself while trying to do her work without being able to stay distant from it, becoming involved because of her relentless self-love." Vincent, *The Art of Detachment*, 60.

61 Eckhart *Predigten 1: Meister Eckhart by Franz Pfeiffer Leipzig, 1857*, trans C. de B. Evans (1924), 28–31, cited in Vinzent, *The Art of Detachment*, 61. Another translation of Sermon 1 can be found in *Meister Eckhart: Teacher and Preacher*, trans. Frank Tobin, ed. Bernard McGinn, with the collaboration of Frank Tobin and Elvira Borgstadt and preface by Kenneth Northcott (London: Paulist Press, 1986), 239–44.
62 *Sermon* 52 in Eckhart, *Essential Sermons*, 202; Turner, *Darkness of God*, 172–73.
63 See Vinzent, *The Art of Detachment*, 81; see also Turner, *Darkness of God*, 172.
64 Turner, *Darkness of God*, 183.
65 Emmanuel Levinas, "Philosophy and the Idea of Infinity," in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans., Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987), 56. For an astute consideration of desire as lack and desire as abundance, see Fiona Ellis, "The Quest for God: Rethinking Desire," in *Passions and Emotions: Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplements* 85 (July 2019): 157–73.

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