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Ruth HaCohen

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The Music of Sympathy in the Arts of the Baroque; or, the Use of Difference to Overcome Indifference

Ruth HaCohen

Musicology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Abstract *Sympathy*, in the sense of the ability to suffer with or for the other, entered English usage toward the end of the sixteenth century. This marks an important moment in Western culture, the birth of a new artistic sensibility nourished by the Aristotelian notion of poetic compassion. This article delineates strategic points in the emergence of this sensibility and the forms and contexts of its presence in art during the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century. The primary thesis is that sympathy thrived where mimetic illusion failed. In the figurative terms of the period, this amounted to the substitution of Echo, the compassionate nymph, for Narcissus, the self-centered deity. This analysis is informed by the fate of these cultural figures as well as by theoretical discussions of sympathy/compassion in antiquity (Plato and Aristotle) and in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (primarily Descartes and Rousseau). Against this background the article examines certain artistic enactments of sympathy and tries to identify the values and beliefs that underlay them. Here music played a central role. The phenomenology of the auditory and of contemporary musical language in particular lent themselves to various manifestations of sympathy without trespassing on the domain of deceptive illusion. The wedding of music and sympathy opened up the possibility for musicians to re-

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cover faith in communication across differences and distances. Although the focus of this essay is primarily on music, related tendencies in the other arts (literature and painting) that contributed to a new awareness of the role of sympathy in the universes of the modern individual and society also are examined.

Who will show me these delights on high?

Echo, I.

Thou Echo, thou art Mortall, all men know.

Echo, No.

.

Then tell me, what is that supreme delight?

Echo, Light.

Light to the minde: What shall the will enjoy?

Echo, Joy.

George Herbert, "Heaven," circa 1613–1633

1. Classical Antecedents

The theoretical life of sympathy in Western culture started as pity or compassion.¹ From antiquity up to our own time, there was a wide diversity of opinion as to whether it is a feeling, an attitude, or a moral duty.² As a feel-

1. The history of the terms reflecting the notion of aesthetic and social sympathy in the various European languages (*ἔλεος*, *misericordia*, *commiseratio*, *Mitleid*, *Mitempfindung*, [*S*] *sympathie*, *sympathy*, *simpatia*, *compassion*, *compassione*, *pity*, *pitié*, *pietà*, and others) requires separate literary-philological research, something in the spirit of Leo Spitzer's (1963 [1944–1945]) important study of the history of the rich semantic/semiotic space of the German word *Stimmung* (air, atmosphere, mood, ambience), itself not unrelated to *sympathy*. Interestingly enough, most of the encyclopedias (of religion, history of ideas, etc.) deal almost exclusively with modern conceptions of sympathy, neglecting its genealogy. Musical sympathy seems to derive from the Greek *sympatheia*, which was applied by the Stoics to the physical universe no less than to society and was later employed in relation to magic in general, as Freedberg (1989: 271–77) demonstrates, and to musical magic, as Gary Tomlinson (1993: 49–50) argues. This tradition had an effect on seventeenth-century sympathy-compassion, distinct from though not unrelated to the Aristotelian tradition.

2. A few modern studies of sympathy should be mentioned in this connection. Arthur Schopenhauer (1995), who followed Adam Smith (1976 [1759]), based his moral theory on sympathy, elevating it to a prime metaphysical principle. Max Scheler (1954 [1931]), who distinguished sympathy from emotional fusion, such as characterizes empathic states or experiences of total identification with another subject, insisted instead on the exclusivity of sympathy as a moral principle stemming from the unequivocal recognition of the separateness of another human existence. His distinction is crucial to the argument developed here. Daniel Goleman (1995), in his popular book, gives a useful survey of the history of the concept in modern psychology and neuropsychology. To the same category belongs current psychobiological research of the kind discussed in Galen Strawson's (1996) article, which ascribes our sense of sympathy to certain evolutionary processes, that is, it goes against the notion that moral progress depends on combating nature (this line of thought started with

ing, it seemed to lack clear expression in human behavior. As an attitude, it has not been clarified whether sympathy is related to inborn disposition or is an acquired trait. As a moral duty, it has raised the question how far sympathy should extend and whom it should include.³ Sympathy appeared to be an emotion of a secondary order, a reaction to primary emotions in the other. But then what are the primary affections on which it should draw? It implicated the imagination but in so doing threatened its own validity. It was supposed to lead to action that would help the sufferer, but how far should or could one carry such an action? In different times some questions were picked up, others were neglected. All, however, were implied in almost every discussion of sympathy's "surprising effects." Nevertheless, the fact that in philosophical discourse pity, since Plato and Aristotle, had been confined mainly to theatrical experience was fatal. It meant that sympathy-compassion was destined to be considered a secondary if not "fictional" mental state and thus of negligible moral consequences. This legacy had a strong hold and thus engendered, in early modern times, one of the principal paradoxes of sympathy. While the road seemed closed for artists and art theorists to directly extricate sympathy from the confines of the imaginary, they still could redeem it by redefining the boundaries between reality, art, and imagination. In this sense Plato and Aristotle's conceptions of compassion, while standing for later generations as its reputable "diagnoses," also turned out to be its very "symptoms," that is, possible human reactions to its expressions in certain human affairs. It is from the points of view of both diagnoses of pity events and the symptoms that they yield that I propose to consider their ideas.

Plato banished pity (ἔλεος [*eleos*]) from his state, together with theater, poetry, and painting (Plato 1963). Pity, he understood, is a bridge between illusion and reality. It also links the antagonist positions of adversaries and the discrete worlds of the audience and the speaker. Pity involves a notion of propriety; not everybody deserves its graces. It requires exposure or an expression of suffering on behalf of the object of pity. It touches upon fear.

Plato disapproved of all these traits and values. Illusion has no place in his utopia: an enemy does not deserve compassion;⁴ expression of suffering discloses weakness, which should be overcome. And if compassion stems from fear—fear that a similar affliction might also befall the compassionate

people like Herbert Spencer in the nineteenth century). The theoretical scope I try to delineate here is open to all these approaches and to others mentioned below.

3. This question and the paradox it entails were treated in relation to the "fatal question of culture" in Geoffrey Hartman's (1997) study, which is an important attempt to link contemporary sensibilities with certain literary heritages.

4. As he argues in *Menexenus*.

persona—it has no place in the moral sphere. Feelings, on the whole, should be tamed rather than allowed to guide human action or imagination.

Plato constructed his universe on hierarchy and reflection. Each ontological rung is a weaker version of its predecessor and a less authentic one: first abstract ideas, then the world of phenomena, and finally that of artistic imitations. Pity disturbs this order—it threatens to make the fictive real and the subsidiary superior. Aristotle was aware of these problems, but he rehabilitated pity because he was building a different universe. While he still juxtaposed the fictive and the real, he welcomed their interpenetration. In both spheres feelings are acknowledged as instigators of moral sensibility and preconditions for well-being. Expression of strong affections thus is accorded an important role.

Pity looms large within this scheme. It is a bridge from the mimetic act, or art, to the emotional reality of the beholder.⁵ In the tragedy the “imitation of pity and fearful incidents” befalls an otherwise rather happy person through “some miscalculation” he or she makes (Aristotle 1968: chap. 13). When intensely felt, as the case of music clearly demonstrates, pity provokes the desired catharsis (Aristotle 1961: book 8, chap. 7). For Aristotle, however, pity was also a powerful instrument in the hands of the orator, who addresses his listeners’ disposition to pity in life rather than in tragedy (Aristotle 1934, book 2, chap. 6). Aristotle acknowledged the role of fear (*φόβος* [*phobos*]) in both types of pity. He asked how the difference between the subject of pity and its object functions in each case while taking the sufferer’s entitlement to pity for granted.

Aristotle’s observations are instructive. In life, he teaches us, pity and fear are mutually exclusive feelings (*ibid.*), while in the theater they are experienced simultaneously.⁶ This points to an even more important difference between the two: in life pity is provoked by perceived similarities in age, manners, and dignity between the subject and the object of pity (*ibid.*); in the theater a sober distance between the two should be preserved through differences in epoch, age group, or status. In life, according to the *Rhetoric*, pity events cause persons to conjecture about their own fate: could such an affliction befall them? If they were really to fear, the affliction would become “their own” and would exclude compassion. In tragedy fear is elicited through the double action of theatrical imagination, which brings the spec-

5. Aristotle’s discussion of the role of pity in the theater (tragedy) appears in his *Poetics*, chapters 6, 9, 11, 13, and 14. My discussion is based on, among others, O. B. Hardison’s (1968) commentary on the *Poetics* and Spiegel 1971. My interpretation follows, to a certain extent, Spiegel’s comparison of Aristotle’s two versions of pity (real and theatrical).

6. See Nathan Spiegel (1971), who carefully interprets the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric*, taking into account the long tradition of their commentary. He relies also on modern authorities, such as S. H. Butcher, in his *Aristotle’s Theory of Poetry and Fine Art* (1951).

tator, via the principle of verisimilitude, as close as possible to the protagonist's inner state while safeguarding him or her in a discrete ontological realm by emphasizing the artificiality of the display. It is this seemingly self-contradictory action that generates the cathartic reaction, as Aristotle indicates when first mentioning tragic pity. "Tragedy . . . is presented in *dramatic*, not narrative form"—thus creating the more direct mimesis—"and achieves, through the *representation* of pitiable and fearful incidents, the catharsis of such pitiable and fearful incidents"—thus maintaining the necessary ontological distance (Aristotle 1968: chap. 13).

Aristotle thus can be read as viewing real pity and theatrical pity as partially antithetic—the first as encouraging moral action while precluding overinvolvement, the second as related only indirectly to moral action while demanding emotional participation. Bifurcated between life and art, the Aristotelian *eleos* became a challenge for later generations, which they tried to overcome without relegating pity to an imaginary or lower moral sphere. The Greek word itself (though in a different inclination) found its way into the Latin culture, musicalized and dressed in Christian attire: Connected to *Kyrie* in the exclamation "*Kyrie eleison*" (Lord, have mercy) and *Christe* in the subsequent "*Christe eleison*" (Jesus, have mercy), it opens the Ordinary of the Roman Catholic Mass, a shibboleth for the heart of the lord and his believers. Indeed it is in the religious realm, mainly in Christian mystical thought, that compassion first blossomed in the second millennium. There the bifurcation of compassion was replaced by theological constructs that bridged between imagination and reality, spontaneity and reflective thought. It became a trait of both Christ and his believers, who activated it mutually. His imagined, compassionate being became for them a most desired reality, achievable either through compassionate acts or contemplative reflection. Compassion thus expanded and evolved into sympathy, encompassing a variety of situations of "being with," "feeling like," and "welding into." Like religion, the music of the first half of the second millennium seemed characterized by flexible ontological boundaries between real and ideal being. It engaged people in real actions like praying to God or praising a lover, actions that themselves aspired to lofty spheres. No wonder the collaboration of music and religion in terms of sympathy continued to prove powerful beyond the mass, especially after music was reattached to drama, by the turn of the sixteenth century. While this took place and opera was born, sympathetic attitudes were transferred from religious to secular spheres. When other arts aspired to the condition of sympathy, they could either directly employ musical devices or develop parallel ways to blur the barriers between real and ideal being, life and artistic expression.

What I am considering here—the emergence and evolution of sympathy as an aesthetic sensibility in the Baroque era (1580–1760)—obviously was not a distinct event. It was rather an elaborate process that involved the innovative employment not only of ideas concerning sympathy but also of motifs and emblems in which it was embodied and the artistic constructions they generated and supported. Gradually, albeit not conclusively, sympathy ceased to serve only as a means for bridging between well-made fictive worlds and well-constructed cathartic effects, the way it figured in the old Aristotelian scheme, and emerged instead as a versatile mode of communication both within and through the artistically constructed universe. As such it defined anew the relations between art and life, their boundaries, the roles of listeners/spectators, and the goals of art. The complex ontological and epistemological configurations that supported this new kind of sympathy as well as the new psychological and social orders that it engaged point to the emergence of a distinctive aesthetic conception, whose historical significance has been largely overlooked.⁷

This aesthetic conception is best formulated in opposition to certain attempts to subsume “the arts of the Baroque” under a single, dominating paradigm, mainly that of Michel Foucault’s *epistémé* of what he calls the classical age. Such attempts, though praiseworthy for the effort to link art to wider cultural processes, fail to discern conflicting trends and competing paradigms, which, descending from different premises, evolved perhaps in reaction to an overpowering *epistémé*. This problematic orientation recently has become prevalent in musicology, for example, in Gary Tomlinson’s studies (1993, 1999). He in effect claims that music shared in and contributed to a belief in a coherent representational order in which all signs, including musical ones, are conventional, and the sensory and the ideational realms are forever split (Tomlinson 1993: 229–46; 1999: 40–61). Though he partly acknowledges the uniqueness of music as an art form even within that scheme, Tomlinson’s music becomes no more than another exemplum of certain overriding abstract ideas. Neoplatonizing music in a Cartesian guise, Tomlinson seems to overlook some of music’s major trends that went precisely in the opposite direction. That the arts, especially the temporal ones, created at the time an agenda of their own, refuting the dichotomy between the conventional and the expressive, the sensational and the ideational, is a notion developed long ago along with its aesthetic and critical implications in Walter Benjamin’s *The Origin of German Tragic*

7. Aesthetic considerations of sympathy were mainly discussed in connection with literary theories of the eighteenth century (such as Engell 1981: 143–60), and only a few studies investigated sympathy in relation to works of art in that period or before (exceptions are Marshall 1986, 1988).

Drama (1998 [1963]). Benjamin's study, whose importance to current critical thought is increasingly recognized, highlights a Baroque conception of artistic form and ontology, which stands in contradiction to the ideology of the self-contained representational form. The human beings such works address and portray "spill over" their otherwise strict ontological boundaries in the ordeal of Passion they undergo and the compassion they feel and excite.

2. The Pitfalls of Compassion: Between Descartes and Rousseau

Let us begin our investigation of Baroque sympathy with some ideas that were made explicit. I will concentrate on two French thinkers, René Descartes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who happened to "open" and "close" the period under discussion and who best exemplify the change in the status of sympathy-compassion.⁸ None were as influential as they in their respect of "compassion," even if Descartes's influence in this regard was indirect. For Descartes, perhaps the first prominent modern thinker to treat the passions in a "methodical" way, pity is confined to "reality," to the realm he defined in the *Passions of the Soul* [*Passions de l'âme*] (1985 [1649]).⁹ Nevertheless, he cannot prevent the theatrical from penetrating the psychophysiological mechanism he attributes to pity. In Rousseau, on the other hand, pity is

8. Most of the French and British critical and philosophical writings on "sympathy" are from the eighteenth century. This is not surprising, for if sympathy as a new sensibility in art emerged in the seventeenth century, explicit awareness of its "surprising effect" (a phrase from the title of Pierre Marivaux's book that David Marshall adopted for the title of his own book [1988]) naturally lagged behind. An early example of an aesthetic theory of sympathy is in James Arbuckle's *Hibernicus's Letters* of 1722, discussed in Engell (1981: 145). For Arbuckle sympathy and art are derivatives of the imagination, hence their natural reciprocation in works of art. The German critics borrowed from both the French and the British traditions; Moses Mendelssohn was an important importer and adapter of the concept (Mitleid in German), which Gotthold Ephraim Lessing reconnected to the Aristotelian tenets, especially to the relation between pity and fear (Lessing 1958 [1768–1769]: 290–309) and to the vicissitudes of the emotions in poetry in general (Lessing 1962 [1762]: 27–31). The contribution of these thinkers to developments in music (especially Bach's and Wagner's) is discussed in HaCohen 1999 and 2000, respectively. Outside of literature and art one finds sympathy discussed prior to the eighteenth century mainly in a few ethical treatises, such as that of Baruch Spinoza (1955 [1677]) (see note 41).

9. This last of Descartes's philosophical works challenges the very duality of body and soul on which it seems to be based. This is discussed in Hoffman 1986 and Grene 1985. Marjorie Grene, like Peter Kivy (1988), considers the treatise of a secondary philosophical importance. Still the interactive theory Descartes proposes, even if it suffers from unsolved queries, has important implications for the cognitive basis of the emotions, the arts, and their interrelations, as discussed in Katz and HaCohen 2001. While the theoretical part of the treatise seems to go beyond Cartesianism, its descriptive sections, the discussion of pity included, still reflect Descartes's dichotomized worldview of soul and body.

omnipresent. It is a primary passion, a literary theme, a moral principle, and a politically cohesive power. Rousseau also reacted passionately and directly to the musical developments of the time. His ideas further problematize the paradoxes of pity while supplying basic coordinates for dealing with developments in the arts that brought about the new sensibility.

Descartes treats pity in the third part of *Passions de l'âme*, devoted to "specific [mixed] passions." He defines pity as "a kind of sadness mingled with love or with good will towards those whom we see suffering some evil which we think they do not deserve" (Descartes 1985 [1649]: 395). As with Aristotle, so with Descartes: the moral entitlement of the object of pity to a better lot is a crucial condition for feelings of pity. Fear, though unnamed, likewise inhabits the psychological arena of the Cartesian pity feeler. Most given to pity, Descartes argues, "are those who think of the evil afflicting others as capable of befalling themselves." But unlike that of his Greek predecessors, Descartes's account of pity is imbued with normative moral notions, which characterize his treatise in general. His compassionate personae are derogated for being moved to pity "more by the love they bear towards themselves than by the love they have for others." One guesses that Descartes think of sadness, the other emotional component of his pity, in a similar way.

Yet Descartes recognizes a compassion of a different kind, motivated by generosity and mixed with a Platonic-Stoical approach. It may be called "virtuous pity." The sadness felt in the case of such pity, Descartes observes, is not bitter. It is experienced "like that [pity] caused by the tragic actions we see *represented on the stage*; it is more external, affecting the senses more than the interior of the soul, which still has the satisfaction of thinking that it is *doing its duty* in feeling compassion for those afflicted" (ibid.; emphasis added). What Descartes describes is a benevolent, quasi-theatrical compassion void of the emotional involvement that characterizes its cousin in the *Poetics*. The "perturbed state of mind" of Aristotle's rhetorical pity, which is affected by the body, gives way to a reflective and reflexive mental act. Virtuous compassion thus comes close to what Descartes (ibid.: 381) calls elsewhere in the treatise "internal emotions":

It is that our well-being depends principally on internal emotions which are produced in the soul only by the soul itself. . . . Although these emotions of the soul are often joined with the passions which are similar to them, they frequently occur with others, and they may even originate in those to which they are opposed. For example . . . when we read of strange adventures in a book, or see them acted out on the stage, this sometimes arouses sadness in us, sometimes joy, or love, or hatred, and generally any of the passions, depending on the diversity of the objects which are presented to our imagination. But we also have pleasure

in feeling them aroused in us, and this pleasure is an intellectual joy which may as readily originate in sadness as in any of the other passions. (Ibid.)

Unlike regular passions, which involve body and animal spirits, internal emotions are not connected to physiopsychological mechanisms. Regular passions are merely the raw material for these deliberative states in which the soul “intellectually” communicates with itself, guided by steadfast virtues and values. Experienced from psychological distance, internal emotions are, paradoxically, more external and detached than regular passions, and so by analogy is virtuous pity, which is similarly constructed.

Descartes’s normative viewpoint drives him even farther away from Aristotle’s tenets and from the suffering, wailing, tragic protagonists who populate the works the Greek philosopher described. “There is also this difference,” Descartes (ibid.: 395) maintains, “that whereas the ordinary man has compassion for those who complain, because he thinks the evils they suffer are very distressing, the chief object of the pity of the greatest men is the weakness of those whom they see complaining. For they think that no misfortune could be so great an evil as the timidity of those who cannot endure it with forbearance.” Descartes’s virtuous pity thus has almost nothing in common with regular pity; neither fear, sadness, nor love is part of it. Instead, it is a feeling of self-satisfaction with a grain of arrogance. In his new “great chain” of human beings, virtuous pity seems to effect some stages: the compassionate persona looks at his or her object of compassion from high above.¹⁰ At the same time he provides a ladder for those who aspire to a higher rational location. They are taught to be “steadfast, patient, and discreet” [*standhaft, duldsam, und verschwiegen*], as the three heavenly boys instruct Tamino in Mozart’s *Magic Flute*.¹¹

With Rousseau, one is in danger of being caught up in a reductive version of his rich understanding of pity or in the debate among his great interpreters (e.g., Starobinski 1988 [1971]; Derrida 1998 [1967]; de Man 1983) concerning its nature and status. According to Jean Starobinski, Rousseau considers comparisons between self and others the root of social evil. As Rousseau (1964: 130) states in *Discourse of the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men* [*Discours sur l’origine de l’inégalité*], the source of morality lies in natural pity, which resides in pure movement of nature, and “precedes . . . the use of all reflection.” Combined with love of self (*l’amour de soi*), which it moderates and is moderated by it, such pity introduces us to the loving and

10. This is exactly how Richard Wagner eventually “viewed” the matter in his important letter to Mathilde Wesendonk. See Wagner 1853–1871: 84.

11. This stoic decree, which they utter at the beginning of the first finale of the opera, stands in clear contrast to their compassionate behavior toward Pamina, Tamino’s beloved (who misinterprets his stoic behavior), at the beginning of the second finale. See also note 48.

gentle passions far removed from vanity, indifference, and nontransparent social intercourse. “Nothing essential is lost,” Starobinski (1988 [1971]: 210) claims in the name of Rousseau, “if we retreat into a world in which the primitive light of conscience shines unmirrored in the dark glass of reflection.”

Derrida agrees that pity is an innate disposition for Rousseau. He even stresses its vocal nature, the way it commands the heart “like a gentle voice,” which “must be the mother’s as well as nature’s” (Derrida 1998 [1967]: 173). But this, he argues, does not sever pity from the reflective faculties, especially the imagination.¹² For how can one feel for the other without relating that feeling to what is familiar from one’s own experience? How can one rightly decipher expressive signs without resorting to images preserved in one’s mental mirrors? Rousseau indeed argues against the possibility that human consciousness could have developed, even partly, in an isolated fashion.¹³ In other words, precisely because sociability and cognitive growth are interrelated, the reflective faculties, especially the social imagination, are so indispensable for their mutual development. “He who imagines nothing, is aware only of himself,” writes Rousseau (1966: 32) in *Essai sur l’origine des langues ou il est parlé de la melodie et de l’imitation musicale* [Essay on the origin of languages which treats of melody and musical imitation], and is “isolated in the midst of mankind.” Derrida (1998 [1967]: 185) dwells on this point, showing that Rousseau’s pity is imageless only up to the point when it enters humanity: “Without imagination . . . pity is not accessible to passion, language, and representation, [it] does not produce identification with the other as with another me.” Only thus could pity serve Rousseau as a regulating power for the formation of the moral society.

If voice and imagination are essential to compassion, their combination in musical expression seems inevitable. This is, I believe, why music is so central in the *Essay*. But from where does music derive its basic imagery? Derrida is of the opinion that for Rousseau it is “out there,” like other imitative arts that find their objects of imitation in reality: Music imitates the inflections of the voice. In this, Paul de Man objects, Derrida follows many a thinker in the first half of the eighteenth century but not necessarily Rousseau. Rousseau, de Man argues, takes music as a model for language and art precisely because it is an autonomous play of relations, free of

12. In his reading of the *Essay*, the *Discourse*, and other works (especially the *Letter to M. d’Alembert*, and *Emil*), Derrida does not ignore the question of early and late in Rousseau’s writings, which led Starobinski to conclude that the ideas in the *Essay* were later dismissed by Rousseau himself.

13. As Etienne Bonnot de Condillac believed, retaining Cartesian premises. Rousseau’s rejection of Condillac is discussed in Starobinski 1988 [1971]: 292 and Derrida 1998 [1967]: 272–74, 281–87.

predetermined signification or reference (de Man 1983: 123–25).¹⁴ Music’s diachronic nature and its “successive impressions” (Rousseau 1966: 8) prevent it from becoming a simultaneous object and thus identical with itself, leaving it “hollow in its core” (de Man 1983: 128). This does not mean that music is meaningless but that the fixation of that which it symbolically creates is ever thwarted. In this way, I would add, music continually enacts or articulates anew the emotional substratum to which it is believed to relate. If the paradox of compassion, according to de Man, lies in the inherent gap between the continuous projection of the sufferer’s mental state upon a temporal axis and another person’s reaction to it in “real time” (ibid.: 132), then music is phenomenologically capable of narrowing it. This is an argument of central importance, as we shall see. It is crucial for the resolution of a more prominent paradox compassion entails, which is explicitly highlighted by Rousseau: that the imagination, the molder and facilitator of compassion, might also turn out to be its annihilator. In his *Letter to M. d’Alembert on the Theater*, Rousseau (1960: 24–25) famously condemns the theater as a waster of the emotional energies of compassion, which could otherwise fuel action in the real socioethical realm:

I hear it said that tragedy leads to pity through fear. So it does; but what is this pity? A fleeting and vain emotion which lasts not longer than the illusion which produced it; a vestige of natural sentiment soon stifled by the passions; a sterile pity which feeds on a few tears and which has never produced the slightest act of humanity. . . . In giving our tears to these fictions, we have satisfied all the rights of humanity without having to give anything more of ourselves; whereas unfortunate people in person would require attention from us, relief, consolation, and work, which would involve us in their pains and would require at least the sacrifice of our indolence, from all of which we are quite content to be exempt. It could be said that our heart closes itself for fear of being touched at our expense.¹⁵

People have the need to pity; it is innate and instinctive, as we have seen. But the morality, which should be constructed on this propensity, is

14. In fact Rousseau discerns in music two modes of signification. The first is indeed the conventional one that “by imitating the inflections of the voice, melody expresses pity, cries of sorrow and joy, threats and groans. All the vocal signs of passion are within its domain.” In the second mode, “not only does it imitate, it bespeaks. And its language, is lively ardent, passionate; and it has a hundred times the vigor of speech itself” (Rousseau 1966: 57). These two modes of signification correspond to a contemporary generic distinction with which Rousseau was familiar. De Man dwells on the second mode, rightly explicating it in terms of the sequential nature of music, on the one hand, and its power of metaphorical substitution, on the other, drawing on the opening chapters of Rousseau’s *Essay*. Rousseau’s insights regarding music’s unique cognitive and semiotic character were developed further by certain British writers, especially Daniel Webb (1769). See Katz and HaCohen 2001.

15. For the French original see Rousseau 1967 [1773]: 78–79. See Starobinski’s (1988 [1971]: 81–121) rich discussion of this topic.

neither. Compassionate instincts can be satisfied easily without engaging real morality. How is this possible? On the basis of Aristotle's position and what Samuel Taylor Coleridge eventually maintained, I would argue that in "real" compassion the imagination is activated in the belief that what is imagined (e.g., the other's state of being) is real. Imagination in the theater produces the same effect, except that disbelief replaces belief and is suspended. The suspension itself is facilitated by an additional operation of the imagination as the temporary warrantor of the reality of the virtual—of the sufferer's virtual position and also of the virtual compassion felt toward him or her. It thus consists of three make-believe operations: first, the imagining of another person's (e.g., the protagonist's) inner state; second, the imagining that what the protagonist feels is real; and third, that the activated compassion is genuine.

Despite some differences with Plato's argument, Rousseau too ends by banishing the theatrical experience. Toward the end of the *Letter*, however, Rousseau finds a substitute for the theater in the public festivals. The festivals are real events, everyone takes an active part in them, and they arouse genuine feelings directed toward flesh and blood fellowmen and fellowwomen. But as Marshall (1988: 135–77) shows, like all events society arranges for itself, festivals, despite their seemingly free and spontaneous nature, are similarly contaminated by theatricality. So the choice, as far as Rousseau is concerned, should be between better and worse theatrical representations, and the question remains whether the arts, despite their dependence on triple make-believe, can still sensitize us to real human compassion. Rousseau, who believes in the amelioristic pedagogic role of culture, in the effort of bringing society "close to nature" through artificial forms based on natural principles, entertains such a thought (Derrida 1998 [1967]: 179).

Even if Rousseau does not directly connect the artistic musical forms of his time to such salutary reforms, I would reassess them in this light. The musical genres he knew and appreciated as well as those he might have cherished can be viewed as rich resources of imagery, conducive to building up the capacity and renewed sensibility for real sympathetic action. After all music, as we have seen, is believed to have the potential of supplying us with ever-renewed "in-hearings" (i.e., audible insight) of emotional configurations in general and sympathetic ones in particular. Would it also prove itself capable of moral education by avoiding the vicious circle of the theatrical make-believe, which plagues civilized society according to Rousseau? Whatever the answers to these queries, the new strains of sympathy-compassion that could stimulate or reassert Rousseau's ideas should be

gauged against the concurrent visual reflections that played a major, though indirect, role in their genealogy.

3. The Realm of the Eye; or, Delusions of Narcissistic Reflections

Juxtaposing Descartes and Rousseau brings out not only what they explicitly maintain but also what surfaces, unwittingly, in their writings. Whereas the Cartesian persona seems to be in danger of being locked up in a self-protective cage of reason, deprived of real social communication, Rousseau's Man of Nature is liable to dissolve in the act of compassion, in others' afflictions. Both reacted to a growing suspiciousness toward the preponderance of images and reflections in mediating nature and society. Among the various expressions of this suspicion, those related to the literary theme of Narcissus and Echo, the Ovidian tragic pair, loom large. While Narcissus is lost in his illusory visual reflection, Echo, his desperate and more humble companion, is consumed in oversympathetic involvement with the mishaps of others, embodied in her compulsive vocal responses.¹⁶ The two played archetypal roles in various cultural orbits long before Narcissus was chosen to represent a pervasive disease, whether neurotic or psychotic. Yet already in older times he — the visual male persona — received more attention than his auditory female other.

In the heyday of the Renaissance, Narcissus was considered the founder of painting as art. "I say among my friends," Leon Battista Alberti (1966 [1435–1436]: 64) tells us in book 2 of his famous *On Painting*, "since painting is already the flower of every art, the story of Narcissus is most to the point. What else can you call painting but a similar embracing with art of what is presented on the surface of the water in the fountain?"

Implicit here is the *Paragone* theme, the emerging comparison and conflict between *pictura* and *poesis*, which predominates in Alberti's essay. Painting is the arts' aspiration, Alberti tells us, and he appropriates the story of Narcissus as a constituting myth of painting. In Ovid, Alberti intimates,

16. The story of Narcissus and Echo is told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, book 3, lines 340–509. David Slavitt's recent translation (Ovid 1994: 53–57) takes a poetic license, emphasizing the role of sympathy and certain Wagnerian corollaries, even in Narcissus's delusive self-love: "O my darling, my love, come! / I see you *smile* when I *smile*, and weep when I weep I hate the idea he should perish but know he is willing / as I am to undergo the wonderful *Liebestod*" (emphasis added). Cf. the first part of this quotation to Alberti's ideas about sympathy (quoted on p. 618). Ovid ingeniously linked, for the first time, the stories of Narcissus and Echo. See Henderson 1981: 78 and Vinge 1967 for further "metamorphoses" of the Ovidian story from antiquity to the early nineteenth century. The separate history of Echo is traced in Hollander 1981: 6–22.

the metamorphosis of Narcissus into a flower occurs as a marginal addendum to the reflection story, whereas in fact it was almost simultaneous with it. Narcissus “embraces” his reflection with “flower”—with art, Alberti explains, bestowing beauty upon it. He pays a high price for this adventure, which has become the artist’s lot as one who devotes a life to art, a labor of love.

Alberti’s emphasis on the beautifying element of art, however, does not imply that he wishes to eliminate its illusory aspect. Rather, he tries to enhance it by artistically rendering pictorial reflections as self-contained reality. For that purpose he uses a window rather than a mirror as his methodical “frame.” His famous call to painters to view the painted surface as an open window through which the subject of the painting should be seen is in fact a synthesis of the “water of the fountain,” the reflecting nature of his medium, and the “flower,” the artistic procedures that should govern it. He determines both by meticulously defining the rules of his artistic windows, those of perspective. The illusory element, he believes, should thus be so convincing that its fictive nature would escape notice: the window would open to a seemingly real vista.¹⁷

In making fiction real, painting thus reverted to its narcissistic standing, especially since the image of Man was placed in its center. Still Alberti’s windows were never accused of the deception attributed to Zeuxis’s and Apelles’s paintings in antiquity, nor were they considered tricky, as would be a window by an Escher or a Magritte. Alberti’s windows seldom lead to delusions or confusions, for in them an *ideal* form of humans or of other glorified creatures, both general and specific, is reflected. Artistic transformation, Alberti propounds, allows form to transcend its material, contingent embodiment. Narcissus is associated with this transition as well, for he is sometimes conceived (though not by Alberti) as having fatally misperceived transient appearance as real form or, later, as even salvaging form from its fall into matter.¹⁸ That a Neoplatonic spirit hovers above the Albertian window is evident in Alberti’s final lesson, that of sympathy.

17. “Perspective is nothing other than looking at a thing through a transparent pane of glass,” writes Leonardo da Vinci in a recently discovered manuscript from 1492, described by Elkins (1994: 48). See Elkins 1994 also for the currency of Alberti’s association between window and perspective in the period.

18. The first interpretation was that of Ficino in his commentary on Plato’s *Symposium* (*Commentarium in Convivium Platonis* [1469]). The second is typical of the Neoplatonic influence he exerted and was developed as such, for example, by Juana Inés de la Cruz in her play *El Divino Narciso* (written in Mexico in 1680), which explores many Echo and Narcissus themes in a way reminiscent of Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*, discussed below. These and other examples of Neoplatonic renditions of the story are found in Vinge’s (1967) comprehensive study, esp. 125–27, 244–48.

Sympathy becomes a subject in Alberti's treatise because people function in the Albertian window not only as a scale and an image but as emotional beings as well. "When each man painted there clearly shows the movement of his own soul," Alberti (1966 [1435–1436]: 77) tells us, it will "move the soul of the beholder." In nature, he adds, "nothing more than herself is found capable of things like herself; we weep with the weeping, laugh with the laughing, and grieve with the grieving." In this way "the image of man in the microcosmos"—the one within the painting—is in contact "with man in the reality of the macrocosm"—the one beholding the painting, as John Spencer explains in his introduction to Alberti's treatise (*ibid.*: 25). If the story of the depicted person is worthy of being told—and it should be—the sympathetic response would be the most edifying. It would strengthen the bridge between life and art, that is, between the real and the ideal.

Echo thus joins Narcissus, and the pair—sympathy and reflection—seem to live together happily. Not ever after, however. Two hundred years later the early aesthetic postulates and their metaphysical underpinning seem to lose their power. This change signalizes a new chapter in the history of the mythological pair. However, though each is destined to play her or his role separately, they still seem to exert mutual influence. In other words, the story of Narcissus—that of sight and self-perception—which was more in the front than that of sound and resonance, brings a change to Echo's wanderings even in that stage.

How could the complexities of sight affect the mysteries of sound? When, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, optics was demystified by regulative laws (to which Descartes was an important contributor) and the intricacies of the lens were discovered, sight as conceived for and performed by innocent eyes came to be considered as one out of many possible visions, not necessarily the truest. Neither the successful transmission of the visual nor the deciphering of ocular signs was guaranteed. The increasingly complicated relations between art and illusion called for a renewal of the unwritten contract between painter and observer established in Alberti's days.¹⁹ Artists were telling viewers to find in relation to each picture its suitable point of view, to newly differentiate exterior from interior spaces, and to distinguish an object from its image, both inside the picture and outside it.²⁰ Among

19. Peter Greenaway was well aware of this when he placed his ingenious movie *Draughtsman's Contract* (1982) in the England of the Restoration, where new preferences regarding design, artistic representation, and social norms arose and called for new appraisal of artist-beholder relations.

20. The studies by Svetlana Alpers (1983), Jurgis Baltrušaitis (1977), Foucault (1972), Dalia Judovitz (1993), and John D. Lyons (1982) substantiate the last points.

other things, the Italian tendency to conceive of a picture as a window was gradually juxtaposed, at least in the Netherlands and Spain, with the conception of a picture as an artificial mirror, which proclaims its reflective or distortive nature (mainly through alternative perspective). Such a mirror could incorporate within its frame objects of a second order that are themselves reflecting: a mirror, a map, a picture, or a face seeing something. Suspicions arose. In such new frames Narcissus could not sustain his self-love even if he successfully contrived a scene of self-reflection, for he would probably end up with an unflattering self-portrait, not unlike Nicolas Poussin or Rembrandt.²¹

Though representation on the whole appeared more artificial than it was in the High Renaissance, no doubt was cast upon the “naturalness” of the represented, as we learn from Michel Foucault (1972), James Ackerman (1961), and Louis Marin (1988). Different perspectives would not render different worlds,²² just as various man-made tools, like micro-, tele-, and other scopes would not reveal divergent realities. Likewise different tone systems would not “bring to sound” diversified emotional substrata.²³ Reality is transparent, divine and human gazes and voices pierce it and converge, but is anything behind the represented? And why should there be, if perception is translatable, unbounded by a priori and inherent categorical dimensions? Those who nonetheless suspected its intricacies, who tried to peep behind the curtains, found themselves engaged in queries such as how to represent representation. They could have been trapped in a series of impossible loops, but like Diego Velázquez they seem to stop on the verge of it, as Foucault (1972) contends and Douglas Hofstadter (1979) would describe it. This

21. Rembrandt’s self-portraits comprise, according to H. Perry Chapman (1990), one of the most concerted efforts at self-representation in the history of art. See also Wetering 1999. The case of Poussin is no less instructive and testifies, as Elizabeth Cropper and Charles Dempsey (1996: 177–215) have shown, to the central role of certain French intellectual legacies (especially that of Montaigne) in fermenting new ideas regarding self-representation, friendship, and illusion.

22. This is clearly manifest in anamorphic paintings (see Baltrušaitis 1977), which employ an alternative, enigmatic, though decipherable perspective. When the latter is juxtaposed in the same painting with a regular one, as in Hans Holbein the Younger’s *Ambassadors* (1532), it verges on negating one of the two represented realities from the point of view of the other but not from God’s eye view. The painting, as such, is an early example of the epistemological skepticism that later penetrated into the representational arts. In the case of Holbein, Desiderius Erasmus and Thomas More’s ideas sensitized him to the precariousness of inherited epistemologies. See Baltrušaitis 1977: 91–114.

23. These are, for example, the presumptions of Marin Mersenne, Descartes’s friend and correspondent on music and other matters, implied in his *Harmonie Universelle* (1636–1637), which exerted much influence in France and still predominated in Rousseau’s writings on music. See Katz and HaCohen 2001, chapter one.

is hinted at in *Las meninas* and other famous paintings, but only indirectly and for select viewers.²⁴

In the hindsight of twentieth-century philosophy, such early attempts at seeing the “unbeseen,” as Derrida (1993 [1990]: 45) calls it, would appear revolutionary and pioneering.²⁵ But as far as seventeenth-century art is concerned, the variety of modes of representation to which it sensitized its beholders was not accompanied by a suitable epistemological frame of reference that would posit a barrier between representation and ultimate reality, as Kantian thought later did. In the time of Poussin and Velázquez the oneness of reality seemed all the more certain in the light of the expanding conviction that the apparent ontological split between perception and conception, experience and science, is but a cognitive bifurcation. This bifurcation is in fact the most striking expression of the distrust in images and reflections, and Descartes’s contribution to it is of major importance. In relegating all images to the domain of secondary qualities and assigning mathematical configurations alone to the realm of primary ones, Descartes seeks to solve the problem of deceptive imagery once and for all. He thus contributes a major tenet to the orthodox distinction between *scientia* (certain knowledge) and *opinio* (knowledge that is probable).

Here Descartes’s ideas regarding compassion come full circle. As indicated by Susan James (1997: 183–207), the effort to order the passions undertaken by Descartes and other contemporary thinkers was part and

24. Jan Vermeer’s *Art of Painting* is a highly sophisticated example of the new awareness of the intricacies of representation. Of the many interesting analyses of this famous painting, that of Daniel Arasse (1994 [1993]) demonstrates the gap intentionally created by Vermeer between the inside painter (who has just begun to paint the bust of Clio) and the outside one (Vermeer himself) to accentuate the shift from the classical theory of Alberti to that of his Dutch contemporaries. In doing so he also “de-realized the painter and his studio while de-allegorizing the allegorical figure, shown with the features of a real painter’s model” (Arasse 1994 [1993]: 42). This and the many other emblematic and compositional devices Vermeer employed render our knowledge of him as the real painter of the picture rather indeterminate, argues Arasse (*ibid.*: 57). It also, I suggest, disrupts a narcissistic gaze that Vermeer might have had at the painting he created. The painting is not a self-portrait, and he is not to be identified with the represented painter. Interestingly enough Vermeer kept this painting far from the gaze of the madding crowd, as did Holbein and Poussin in regard to the above-mentioned paintings.

25. Derrida’s term is taken from his brilliant essay *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins*, which examines the relations between self-portraits, self-knowledge, and blindness in drawings he selected for a special exhibition in the Louvre. Issues such as sacrifice, heritages, fathers and sons, negative and positive theologies, and salvation are central in his theses, along with the dialectics of eyes with voices and inscriptions, tears and compassion. See also note 31. Martin Jay’s (1993) study discusses later stages of the tradition surveyed here as it stemmed in French thought from modern and postmodern critical ideas nurtured by phenomenology, social theory, structuralist, and poststructuralist thought.

parcel of the attempt to guard over *scientia* within the new epistemology. Since Descartes could not apply the same general, regulating principles in the psychosocial realm that he established in the scientific realm, he constructed rules of conduct relating to *opinio* that fit a mind and life devoted to *scientia*. He believed this would guarantee the objectivity necessary for moral conduct. However, this led him into an ineluctable paradox that later social thinkers try to avoid, that of privileging one subjectivity over another (the rational compassionate over his object of compassion), as hinted above. The cognitive split thus ends up in an emotional and social division.

Emotional knowledge implies emotional communication as distinct from the exchange of information, ideas, or beliefs and relating to the interpretation of and reaction to sensory signs—physiological, behavioral, artistic. Descartes suspects the efficacy of such communication, perhaps because this calls for a double subjective prism: that of the expressing person and that of the addressee. In her second novel, *Zayde, histoire espagnole* (1670), Madame de Lafayette invites us to imagine a situation in which a stranger, with whom the protagonist falls deeply in love, gives him a sign of recognition and approval. What does she recognize? he asks himself. Unable to speak with her, he has to speculate. Perhaps he reminds her of somebody, a dead lover whom he represents for her. This, however, turns out to be wrong. Then he entertains the thought that he may remind her of a portrait of a lover she never met. Trying to picture for her his various conjectures, he becomes entangled in the paradox of re-presentation of represented selves. Through a pictorial self-representation, in which he represents the man in the portrait she owns and cherishes, he tries to reveal his emotions toward her. Finally, he discovers that she misinterpreted the portrait she possesses. It is a picture of himself as an oriental prince. Having deemed his orientalism real, she tries to find him in the voyage that brings them together. The need to be on guard, never to confuse your image with yourself, is Madame de Lafayette's main lesson here and in her famous *La princesse de Clèves*.²⁶ These works instruct one to examine carefully who sees you and how and if the other rightly perceives your perception of her or him.

This is the reason, perhaps, why some significant seventeenth-century critical, theological, and literary writings examine solitude as a remedy to

26. John Lyons makes a different point in his 1982 article, which brought this story to my attention. He claims that the solution to the deceptiveness of pictures, according to seventeenth-century writers and artists, resides in verbal communication, whereas I argue that this deceptiveness exposes a deeper crisis in conceptions of emotional-personal communication, which encompasses verbal expression as well. Anne Green's (1996) sensitive interpretation of the story as exemplifying the problem of communication between the sexes and especially the problem of women's voice and isolation, supports my understanding of the story in the context of Narcissus and Echo's rivalry.

the loops of emotional communication through representation. Being alone took one out of the confusing game in which everyone endlessly reflects images of self and of the other to one another and are never able to capture a glimpse of genuine self, as Antoine Arnauld and Pierre Nicole maintained in the *Port Royal Logic* and the poet Marc-Antoine de Saint-Amant intimated in his famous *La solitude* (1617).²⁷

Altogether the Cartesian persona, representative of a major trend in seventeenth-century thought and sensibilities, seems to be haunted by the estranging effects of representations and of self-images in particular. That persona guards itself against such chimeræ with walls so constructed as to preserve at least an internal image of one's own self while fixing the other in a well-defined, unchanging locus. Sitting alone in its cell or grotto (or in one's secluded library like Montaigne), the persona can confidently contemplate the vicissitudes of emotional life, exempting itself from activating ethical emotions in the fluid social situations of life. This contradicts of course the activation of compassion, which necessitates social flexibility and faith in the communicability of expressive signs. For the Cartesian persona, this venerable emotion is therefore mainly a lip service to an honorable heritage and an acknowledgment of its role in a decent society.

4. The Realm of the Ear; or, the Commiserative Power of Sympathetic Echoes

So much for Cartesianism and narcissistic reflections. But what does it mean to link Rousseau to "echoism," if I may coin a parallel term? Curiously enough, whereas Rousseau was attracted by the figure of Narcissus, "the lover of himself," Descartes supplied one of the first modern accounts of sympathetic echoes.²⁸ Descartes's is a physicalistic model of sympathetic

27. See Lyons 1982: esp. 168–69, 185–87. Solitude was a topos in seventeenth-century French poetry, and Saint-Amant is considered its most important exponent. See Samuel Borton's (1966: 45–69) analysis, "Self-Discovery of the Poet," referring to Saint-Amant's *La solitude*, which is populated by Echo and Narcissus among other creatures. The scene the poet creates is touched by musical sounds intended to console Echo herself. This softens the otherwise solipsistic experience of the poet's beloved Solitude. Instructively, when the poem was adapted to English and was set to real music by Henry Purcell (1687), it seemed to relinquish its acrimonious narcissistic atmosphere and was imbued with rich sympathetic overtones. This intricate cultural background seems to stimulate director Alain Corneau in his engaging movie *Tous les matins du Monde* of 1991, in which he cast a solitary figure for the historical composer St. Colombe, associating him with Jansenist sensibilities (and thus with the *Port Royal* school) and the cult of solitude. As expected, the musical materials bent the plot nonetheless toward the pole of sympathy rather than toward that of self-absorption. In this I find a kind of a complementary parallel to the movie of Greenaway, mentioned above in note 19, whose preoccupation with the visual kept it "cold," untouched by strains of compassion.

28. Rousseau wrote a youthful play called *Narcissus*, performed in 1752. He later added a preface, which he entitled *Preface to Narcissus; or, the Lover of Himself*. This of course is not sur-

strings or vibrations, based on new acoustic observations, which he proposes in his *Compendium Musicae* of 1618. When a string is plucked, argues Descartes (1961 [1618]: 6), “the ones which are an octave or a fifth higher vibrate and sound audibly of their own accord.”²⁹ Music thus tightened its ties with sympathy precisely when painting, as we have seen, seemed to have doubts about immediate reflection and as a result to loosen the links between mimesis and sympathy. Through music sympathy now sought an earthly basis after an extended period as an ultimate mode of explanation in a world dominated by magical interrelations and wild similarities (Foucault 1972: 17–44; Freedberg 1989: 271–77). While retaining the power to effect reciprocity even across distances, sympathetic vibration, as a mode of rational accounting for natural phenomena, was based on sameness, on measurable proportions physically articulated. It thus became a model for the new scientific classifications, which heralded knowledge based on commensurable scientific units.³⁰ Dressed in its new attire, the scientific concept of sympathy could have undermined, at least on a theoretical level, artistic sympathy, which aims at expanding across incommensurable worlds, that is, artistic microcosms (composed of pigments, solid forms, sound waves, words, and verses) and human macrocosms (governed by cognitive, psychological, social, political, and other factors).

In this new conceptual universe, populated by measurable sympathies and disillusioned reflections, the figure of Echo and echo configurations began to play an important role. Unlike Narcissus, Echo is an incarnation of a reflection—an audible one. It is as if, in Narcissus’s case, the image rather than the figure itself were called by his name and endowed with in-

prising given the fact that Rousseau’s *Confessions* (1781, 1788) is perhaps the most radical early attempt at self-portrayal and certainly the most influential one.

29. The phenomenon of sympathetic vibration is explained in Cole 1985: 263–76. I find the following definition of special relevance to my argument. “Literally resonance means to resound, or sound again, to echo. . . . In order for something to resonate, it needs a force to pull it back to its starting place and enough energy to keep it going. The trick is to have it *resound again and again in a kind of continuing echo, but this requires both keeping friction at a minimum and putting energy in faster than friction can take it out. Two can play this game much better than one because one can feed energy to the other.* That’s what sympathetic vibrations are all about” (Cole 1985: 265; emphasis added). This acoustic definition of resonance seems to have served the figurative realization of echo as an autonomous musical texture.

30. Sympathy-based scientific explanations functioned as a bridge between magic and science, as Simon Schaffer (1987) argues. The vibration of musical strings was believed to correspond to the phenomenon of refraction of light or of memory and the soul because “similar particles in nature would engage in harmonic vibration.” In England such explanations occupied a central role in the New Philosophical Club founded by Robert Hooke in 1676. Even Sir Isaac Newton, whose theories were refuted in this framework, agreed to its essential presupposition (Schaffer 1987: 62–64).

dependent personality.³¹ Does this fact reflect an intuition that in the audible realm the separation of a simulacrum from its origin does not lead to phantasmagorical delusions? If this is the case, what does it tell us about the phenomenological nature of auditory responses? These are major questions that were seldom explicitly raised. In any case, the power of Echo increased at the time relative to her former scant and humble appearances in artistic imagery. By the end of the sixteenth century she was granted a more eminent cultural representation. In French, Italian, and English poetry she actively participated in dramatic echo games. She was located in a pastoral environment, her natural habitat, and played the role of adviser for the pursuing lover. Once he or she was abandoned, Echo compassionately lamented with the loser by “redoubling sorrow with a sorrowing sound” (Colby 1919: 687).³² She often comforted the hero, helped reflect his or her sense of loss, or even acted as a divinatory voice, the origin of all consolations (see the epigraph to this article). At times, however, she was cynical if not deceptive, as if her bitter fate overcame her compassionate nature.

Through poetry the realm of Echo opened to musicians of the time as they materialized literary (written) reverberations in real (audible) sound. Musicians were attracted to Echo’s compassion, to her suffering that resulted from compassionate acts, which in turn intensified her compassionate nature. In their hands Echo’s compassion became the last resort of the desperate, when human or even mythological support no longer could avail.³³ As such she became almost an ideal embodiment of compassion, unrelated to fear or any other earthly concerns. Sometimes she turned into a

31. Which is the case with *Doppelgänger*, but they, unlike Echoes, belong to the realm of the Freudian *Unheimliche* (uncanny). An analysis of these two spectral forms (self-reflection and echo) as they relate to the phenomenology of vision and sight vis-à-vis that of hearing and sound would return to the antithetic relations between vision and voice, touched upon above in the Rousseau-Derrida-de Man debate. Derrida’s later 1993 study gives an important insight into the relations between voice and portrait, arguing that drawing “is consonant with and articulated by a sonorous and temporal wave,” for it replaces (like in the story of Butades) the decree of the heart “to hear oneself call the other or be called [by] the other.” That is to say, drawing “never goes without being articulated with articulation . . . without the order of narrative, and thus of memory, without the order to bury, the order of prayer, the order of names to be given or blessed” (Derrida 1993 [1990]: 56–57).

32. From Thomas Watson’s sonnet “The Tears of Fancie” (1593), quoted in Colby. Colby was the first in modern scholarship to deal with the poetical phenomenon of Echo(es). Their mythical and metaphorical configurations are the subject of John Hollander’s (1981) and Joseph Lowenstein’s (1984) books. My following statements partially rely on these studies and on Vinge 1967.

33. See Sternfeld 1992, 1980, and 1981 for discussions of many literary and musical examples of embodied echoes in the Renaissance and the Baroque (Sternfeld’s list extends also to later periods). Some classical examples of echo arias include Jacopo Peri’s “*Ebra di sangue*” from his *Dafne* (1598), Emelio Cavaleri’s *La rappresentazione di anima e di corpo* (1600), the echo aria

pietà, as Poussin chose to portray her.³⁴ The Italian musicians went beyond such thematic elaborations, exploring Echo's potential for creating a new expressive musical language, in which they were currently engaged.³⁵ At first their renditions seemed no more than simple musical embellishments of the poetic echo device. Jacopo Peri's *Arion's lament*, "*Dunque fra torbide onde*" [Then amidst the troubled waters] (1589), is an example.³⁶ Claudio Monteverdi, who followed and developed the innovations of Peri and his circle regarding musical expression, yet understood that such embellishments bring both music and drama to a dead end and block the development of interactive dramatic-musical style. In his deepest grief, after having failed to regain Euridice, Monteverdi's Orfeo utters some typical echo verses, to which Echo responds:

Orfeo: In così grave mia fera sventura
 Non ho pranto però tanto che basti.
 [In such grievous and cruel misery
 I still have not tears enough.]
 Echo: . . . basti!
 [. . . enough!]

For Monteverdi this was not enough, as we learn from his Orfeo's final words to Echo:

S'hi del mio mal pietade io ti ringrazio
 Di tua benignitate.
 Ma mentre io mi quero lo,
 Deh, perché mi rispondi,
 Sol con gli ultimi accenti?
 Rendimi *tutti interi* i miei lamenti.
 [If thou hast pity for my misery, I thank thee

of the hero's daughter in Giacomo Carissimi's *Jephte* (1640–1649), and Giovanni Legrenzi's, Vivaldi's, and Handel's *Giustino* (1683, 1762, and 1779 respectively).

34. Poussin's three Echo and Narcissus paintings (the second and the third are included within a larger mythical frame, *The Realm of Flora* and *Birth of Bacchus* respectively) are relevant to this essay's argument. I suggest that Poussin's preoccupation with the theme is related to his search for a new artistic paradigm to replace the one associated with the school of Alberti. See Cropper and Dempsey 1996, esp. 175–215. The pietà theme—Echo modeled on a pietà painting by Paris Bordone—appears in Poussin's first painting (an earlier painting of the pair is no longer ascribed to him), as is convincingly demonstrated by Dora Panofsky (1946). The other two paintings suggest a gradual relinquishing, on the part of Poussin, of the tragic, dead-end myth of Echo and Narcissus and its replacement with the more inclusive, hopeful, androgynous, and musically rich myth of Bacchus.

35. Latin and French examples of musical echo renderings are sparse and were influenced by Italian models. See Sternfeld 1992: 213.

36. Sternfeld (1992) discusses this and other examples of echo songs and airs in his two last chapters.

for thy kindness.
 But while I lament,
 Ah, why dost thou answer me
 Only with my last syllables?
 Return my laments to me *in full*.]
 (Monteverdi and Striggio 1987 [1607]: 114–15)

Monteverdi made these very last words his hero's will, which he would implement in due time. For in the musical language of his age, Monteverdi could utilize certain techniques that proved useful in according Echo a fuller and more independent voice. These consisted of the manipulation of echo and response in textures conceived as representing two personae, whether groups (in choral music) or individuals (in chamber music). Such echoing textures — as I call them to distinguish them from mere echo devices — separate original utterances from their responses by giving each a *tutto intero* (entire) melodious line. This highlights their rhetorical reciprocation. The dense and rigorous polyphony of the High Renaissance was thus replaced by a sparse and flexible antiphony, resolving in unity in homophonic or quasi-homophonic textures.³⁷

The choral echoing technique, *cori spezzati* (divided choirs), developed during the sixteenth century in various musical communities, especially in Italy (Carver 1988). It enjoyed its heyday at the turn of the sixteenth century in Venice with Andrea Gabrieli and Giovanni Gabrieli and was later heard, as a unique Baroque technique, in many German cities. It divides the performing body, whether vocal or instrumental, into two or even three antiphonal choirs placed in different locations in the cathedral, each responding, as an echo, to the others' utterances. This engendered new values of musical structure, relating to space and balance, pace and volume, and an ordering of main, subsidiary, and unified phrases, values derived from the phenomenon of echo. In Venice these seemed to serve certain political causes, a sympathetic union between the worldly dominion of the doge, represented by one choir, and the divine dominion of the Church, represented by another choir (see Landon and Norwich 1991).

In other Italian city-states more intimate echoing constructions evolved. Madrigals and other chamber settings featured dialogue textures (as distinct from dialogic texts, dramatizing “real” characters) that reveled in double-voice alternations, imitations, passionate suspensions, and euphonious chains of thirds, supported by a resounding base. Such dialogues,

37. Homophonic texture (as, for example, in the Lutheran chorale) is achieved when all the parts (voices) move together in the same rhythm, thus creating separate (though not necessarily different) chords on almost each and every step. Usually the upper voice leads melodically.

which became increasingly common in operas, cantatas, and oratorios, convey with great immediacy the subtleties associated with sympathetic echoes. *Cor mio, deh, non languire* (1601) (see Figure 1), a madrigal composed by Luzzascho Luzzaschi, is one of the first examples to this effect. The 1597 poem by Giovanni Battista Guarini, an expression of the Petrarchan conceit of unrequited love, alternates between images of eyes and sounds of sighs that give a dialogic, consoling rendering to the soliloquy of a wounded lover. In light of the new aesthetics of monody, which correlate dramatic singularity and solitariness with the singleness of voice (accompanied by a continuo—a suitable string or keyboard instrument), Luzzaschi's rendition of such a poem for double voices (and continuo) marks a significant alternative, that of compassion in communication.³⁸

The following characteristics are of note: (1) the words on which the conceit revolves, *odi, pietate, mira*, are central to echoing scenes of this self-reflective kind; (2) the urgent echoing *sospiri* (mm. 9–11, bracketed) are typical of the presence of Echo in such scenes; (3) these sighs culminate in the chromatic step from the tonic to the leading tone, a focal point of the entire madrigal (see the asterisk in Figure 1, m. 10); and (4) the embellished *desire* reverberations (mm. 13–14) recur at other passionate, “hot” words (not included in Figure 1).

Music was thus effectively employed to echo entire melodies, what Orfeo yearned for in his distress. In so doing it encouraged a belief in reciprocity, though of an ideal kind that assists humans through their difficult hours and contains within itself a cathartic outlet. Echoing melodies thus turned out to be rather different from literary echo tails: while poetry was accused of turning echo into an artificial conceit, in music it sounded natural. Poetry tolerates consistent repetition only if the phonetic monotone yields a semantic difference (as in Herbert's poem in the epigraph), whereas music naturally consists of sonic repetitions and dwells on them. Thus poets turned to echoes for wit, composers for surprise and enveloping effect. The latter carries with it a special sympathetic atmosphere, a kind of “airy shell,” to quote Milton (1957: 95).³⁹ Moreover in music, unlike in poetry, original

38. The translation of Guarini's 1597 poem is by Michael Fields and Alessandra Testai (from the CD *pur ti miro, seventeenth century Italian duets*, Aeolian Records 507). Luzzaschi was part of the so-called Ferrara school of madrigal, and he intended this work for the famous *concerto delle donne* (concerto of the ladies), which fascinated so many of the duke's privileged guests and attracted many a composer. Newcomb's (1980) study can be read as providing support to the idea that this special ensemble of voices of similar register motivated Luzzaschi's experiment in echoing madrigal.

39. I refer here to Lady's song to Echo in *Comus*: “Sweet Eco, sweetest Nymph that live'st unseen / Within thy airy shell / By low Meander's margent green, / And in the violet-embroider'd vale” (Milton 1957: 95). In the remainder of her song, Lady alludes to Narcissus

Cor mio deh non lan - gui - - re Che

fai te - co lan - guir fa - ni - ma mi a O - di i

Che fai te - co lan - guir fa - ni - ma mi - a O - di i

cal - di [so - spir] so - spi - ri a te gl'in - vi - - - a La pie -

cal - di so - spir so - spi - ri a te gl'in - vi - - - a La pie - ta

ta - te e'l de - si - re

te e'l de - si - re

Figure 1 Luzzasco Luzzaschi, *Cor mio, deh, non languire* (1601) mm. 1–15. Two voices representing an internal echoing dialogue of the self. *Madrigali . . . per cantare et sonare a uno, e doi, e tre soprani* (Rome, 1601); in *Monumenti di musica italiana* ii/2 (1965).

[Translation: My heart, oh do not languish, / For you make my soul languish with you. / Listen to the hot sighs which pity / And desire send you. / Look into these languid eyes of love / And see how grief consumes me. / If, by dying, I could help you, / I would die to give you life; / But you live, alas, and he dies unjustly / Who has you, alive, in another breast. (G. B. Guarini)]

voice and echo can partly overlap, thereby enhancing the overall coherence of the echoing texture, as is the case in the Luzzaschi example. While the echoing effect is preserved, the differentiation between the voices in terms of principal and subsidiary is obscured. Distances collapse, each voice can begin or respond, while the two, for the sake of unification and expression, often join, as we have seen, in homophonic movement. Echo response (of ultimate syllables) thus metamorphosed into responsive echoing (of entire phrases), which redeemed the Ovidian Echo from her partial dumbness. At the same time, her compassionate disposition, wrought in her echoing character, was preserved if not enhanced.

Monteverdi was aware of these developments by the time he conceived *Orfeo* in 1607. Only with his seventh book of madrigals, published in 1619, however, did he study and then elaborate this textural arrangement.⁴⁰ Simple and powerful, it soon became one of the dominant textures in both instrumental and vocal music. Whatever style or genre it eventually became associated with, it managed to invoke a sympathetic aura. Gradually responsive textures went beyond pity and compassion to embody other kinds of fellow feeling. Imaginary souls now could give reverberation to a wide spectrum of emotions, whether joy or distress, hope or despair. The moral-psychological content of sympathy was thus enlarged, an achievement that only later won theoretical recognition.⁴¹

and at the same time “translates” Echo “to the skies” so as to “give resounding grace to all Heav’n’s Harmonies” in the spirit of the Neoplatonic tradition mentioned in note 18.

40. Fifteen of the twenty-eight madrigals of his *Settimo libro de madrigali* [The seventh book of madrigals] can be considered “echoing madrigals” (which Monteverdi titled also as *concerti* or as chamber duets), and three others, though for three voices (and continuo), create similar effects. Some of his finest works in this genre are included in his eighth book of madrigals (1638). Precedence of “echoing texture” exists in *L’Orfeo* (1607), for example, in act 5, Orfeo’s dialogue with Apollo; in his *Vespers* (1610); and in certain passages of three voices within five-part madrigals. In *The Seventh Book of Madrigals*, however, he systemizes the earlier experiments, defining the semiotics of the new texture. Nigel Fortune (1985: 210–15) eulogizes the new genre and mentions some other contemporary composers who published in the genre (Sigismondo d’India, Giovanni Valentini, Marco da Gagliano). For the poetic background and word-tone relations these madrigals embody, see Tomlinson 1987. Fortune (1985: 215) explicitly states that in this new form “Monteverdi showed himself to be the most imaginative humanist of his age,” but neither he nor Tomlinson explains the aesthetic innovations it involves. Carl Dahlhaus (1990 [1968]: 313–23) indirectly contributes to the understanding of the centrality of this genre for the development of a new harmonic language and thereby to my claim of the genre’s impact on the main musical style.

41. Moses Mendelssohn, in his *Rhapsodie oder Zusätze zu den Briefen über die Empfindungen* (1974 [1761]), was perhaps the first, in modern aesthetics, to recognize the compound nature of “fellow feeling” and its emotional implications in terms of different possible combinations of its elementary components. Baruch Spinoza (1955 [1677]: 100) much earlier observed that the “pleasure arisen from another’s good” is complementary to the pain “arisen from the hurt of another.” The second is *commiseratio* (compassion), but for the first he did not find a name.

Such textures eventually engendered the trio sonata, one of the most pervasive chamber genres of the last decades of the seventeenth century.⁴² But the internal sympathy communicated in these pieces turned out to be rather closed within itself, amounting more to a representation of two equal psychological entities: the inner voices of the self, the voices of two lovers, the voices of two friends; or the voices of any other pair sharing preestablished emotional and mutual accord.⁴³ Monteverdi was sensitive to the idea that echoes may function as sonic mirrors, which then turn into narcissistic reflections. But such reflections served for him only as starting points for an emotional process that always leads to compassionate eclogues.⁴⁴

But music and people alike aspired to more, to move beyond the similarities between sympathizing subject and sympathetic object (as discussed by Aristotle), beyond “sympathetic strings,” and to traverse psychological distances and mental gaps. Again Monteverdi searched for new forms to express this ambition.

5. Beyond the Immediate: Constructing Sympathetic Spirals

Presumably around 1632 Monteverdi came across a poem about a rejected woman, apparently a poem of the kind he had already set to music with the utmost success in the *Lamento d'Arianna* (1608). It was written by the same poet, the renowned Ottavio Rinuccini, but was different. Unlike Arianna (the famous Ariadne), the present heroine (an anonymous nymph likewise forsaken by her lover) does not wish to die. Disillusioned, she comes to terms with her tragedy, as if she finds the strength in herself to face her situation in order, perhaps, to start her life anew. Reading the poem, Monteverdi might have asked himself if this situation derived from her being surrounded in the poem by unidentified personae who accompany her in her distress. If so, he might have reflected, how could the tale be convincingly set to music? Whether he explicitly asked himself such questions or not, Monteverdi cer-

42. It is significant that probably the first person to employ instrumental trio sonata texture was Giovanni Gabrieli from San Marco, who devoted a lifetime to the *cori spezzati* technique (explained earlier). His former multipart *Canzon in echo* was rearranged in this way (Allsop 1992).

43. An example to this effect is Giovanni Battista Pergolesi's famous *Stabat Mater*, a double or triple act of compassion (of the two singers/souls toward the Holy Mother, of her toward her son, and of him toward humankind) carried out by musical sympathetic techniques of the kind found in Monteverdi's madrigals.

44. Examples in the seventh book abound. Two of the most clear-cut examples of this effect are: “*Io son pur vezzosetta pastorella*” [It is true I am beautiful shepherdess] and “*O come sei gentile*” [How sweet you are].

Canto
A - mor A - mor

Tenore primo
Di - ce - a il ciel mi -

Tenor 2
Di - ce - a il ciel mi -

Bass
Di - ce - a il ciel mi -

[repeating tetrachord]

A - mor A - mor do - ve dov' e' la fe' - ch'el tra - di - tor

ran - do il piè - fer - mò

ran - do il piè fer - mò

ran - do il piè fer - mò

ch'el tra - di - tor giu - rò fa che ri - tor - ni il mio a - mor co - m'ei pur fu

mi - se - rel - la

mi - se - rel - la

mi - se - rel - la

Figure 2 Claudio Monteverdi, from *Lamento della ninfa: Amor* (for 4 voices, soprano, two tenors, and a bass) mm. 1–20. The nymph carries her soliloquy on a “fixed ground” with determination and flexibility; the male voices fit into her rhetoric. [Translation: ‘O Love,’ she said, her gaze/upon the sky, her feet still, ‘what, oh what has become of the faith the betrayer swore?’].

The image shows a musical score for a vocal piece. It consists of two systems of staves. The top system has a vocal line (soprano) and three empty staves (likely for alto, tenor, and bass). The bottom system has a keyboard accompaniment (piano) with a right-hand and left-hand part. The vocal line contains the following lyrics: "o o tu m'an - ci - di ch'i - o non mi tor - men - ti più non mi tor - men - mi - se - mi - se - re - la". The music is in a major key and features a descending tetrachord in the bass line.

tainly abandoned his former echoing technique in favor of an original solution that presented a new embodiment of sympathy.

Three men, two tenors and a bass, create the frame of the *Lamento*. They picturesquely set the scene and narrate the sad events in homophonic declamation, with poignant dissonances on the appropriate words. All is done in accordance with well-established conventions. When this frame has been established, the three men quite unexpectedly enter *into* the scene. Their “sympathetic comments accompany the Nymph’s plaint [and they] have their parts integral to the score as they must follow her tempo, governed by emotions expressed and not by that of strict time,” Monteverdi (1991 [1638]: 26) writes in the “stage directions” to this piece;⁴⁵ same singers, same voices, but altogether new dramatic personae. With this change from a narrative to a dramatic mode, they become the nymph’s invisible comforters. They do not have much to say, except “*miserella ah, più no, no tanto gel soffrir non può*” [wretched maid, ah, no, no longer so much iciness can bear] (see Figure 2).

Consolation is no longer constructed on sameness, that is, on responsive echoes, but rather on difference, as embodied in nonthematically related voices. A simple, recurring bass pattern—a descending tetrachord—that unceasingly repeats itself thirty-two times regulates the scene. On this “ground” the voices assume their flexible flow, negating or affirming the underlying semantics of the basic harmonic functions.⁴⁶ The nymph, re-

45. “. . . le altre tre parti che vanno commiserando in debole voce la Ninfa, si sono poste in partitura, acciò seguitano il pianto di essa, qual va cantando a tempo dell’affetto del animo e non a quello de la mano” (Monteverdi 1966 [1638]: 266). The “stage directions” appear in the original score, just below the title.

46. Each note of the descending tetrachord (A, G, F#, E) implies certain possibilities of vertical chord constructions, conveying different meaning in terms of the underlying harmonic structure. When the voice sings in accordance with one of the tones of this vertical chord, it is perceived as affirming its function, and vice versa. Semantics is thus doubly implied in this syntax, which is perhaps best conceived in terms of tension and resolution. According to Ellen Rosand (1978), the *Lamento*, among a number of works of the 1630s based on descending tetrachord, is distinguished by its intense dramatic style. Rosand argues that, compared with

sponded to and assisted, is thus more likely to free herself of the emotional fixations of a rejected woman, the lot of so many of her sex on stage and elsewhere. Alien but sympathetic voices, reverberating and responding, encourage “working through” melancholic situations.⁴⁷ In this they differ significantly from eyes that disturbingly shift between reflecting and observing images of the self.

My interpretation should be read against a recent attempt to analyze this piece as an example of a madwoman’s utterance, an archetype for many who later, mainly in the nineteenth century, populated the musical stage. According to Susan McClary (1991: 89), “the trio situates the nymph’s outburst as a display designed by men chiefly for the consumption of other men” (as opposed to women). The “mediating musical filters” the three males create are “something like the grilles that used to be put over the asylums at the time when gentlemen liked to witness the spectacle of insanity for entertainment” (ibid.). In her argument McClary relied heavily on Foucault (1967). Attractive as this interpretation may be, musical signs of madness are lacking here, especially those that Monteverdi himself designated for such a purpose.⁴⁸ Generally speaking, Foucault is deployed too literally

Arianna’s lament, in which the creation of effect was largely in the hands of the performer, here a higher degree of control over the performance was achieved (Rosand 1978: 351) and with it, I maintain, over the desired sympathetic affect.

47. In the psychoanalytic vernacular, *working through* stands as the counterterm for *acting out* and signifies the process by which a patient faces his or her real self and the reality in which he or she lives while creating new resources for coping with reality and self.

48. “The imitation of feigned madness must take into consideration only the present, not the past or the future, and consequently must emphasize the word, not the sense of the phrase. So when she speaks of war she will have to imitate war; when of peace, peace; when of death, death and so forth.” Thus wrote Monteverdi in his letter of 7 May 1627 to Alessandro Striggio (the librettist of *Orfeo*) in recommending that a singer playing such a role “must be a woman capable of leaving aside all other imitations except the immediate one, which the word she utters will suggest to her” (Stevens 1985: 64). Quite ingeniously, as McClary herself noted, Monteverdi proposes here a semantics of madness that derives its values from madrigalistic techniques, which were criticized by the creators of the new operatic style as breaking up the semiotic wholeness of the text into unrelated semantic units. The correlation of madrigalism with madness, which Monteverdi intended to use in his *La finta pazzia Licori* [Licori the mad girl], did not leave a trace in the *Lamento*. Quite the contrary. The composition, as noted above, is one of the most striking examples, quite advanced for the time, of a coherent musical and expressive structure, reflecting a most sober frame of mind on the part of the protagonist from the point of view of both Rinuccini’s text and Monteverdi’s symbolic language. True, the ostinato structure does imply deterministic frame; at the same time, however, its regularity as well as that of the strict strophic form give vent to the nymph’s rhetoric, which appears as free and flexible. In the final analysis, it is her rhetorical flow that determines the three men’s responses. By contrast, Mozart’s employment of similar cast and texture for his Donna Elvira’s famous “*Chi mi dice mai*” in *Don Giovanni* results in a scene of male condescension to and derision of a deserted woman because of the obvious buffa semantics the composer uses. On the other hand, the three boys consoling Pamina in the second finale of *The Magic Flute* are most clearly, and even more actively, playing the comforters’ role.

and too exclusively. Yet it is not so easy to refute McClary, for by recognizing difference she justifiably identifies a possible position of condescension, so endemic to compassionate behavior, as testified to by Descartes.

Still I would argue that Monteverdi went beyond such ambivalence. He erected no stage, nor did he forge asylum grilles. Remaining in the domain of spatial metaphors, I would instead view the work as a spiralic carousel. Through the intermediate frame of the three males, the audience, wherever we are in time or place, approaches the *miserella* nymph. With them or through them we take part in the sympathetic act. In contrast to pictorial representation, we are not supposed to stand where they stand. Rather, like the males themselves, we move inside and outside the frames at will, modulating through a musical strain (in the double sense of the word) that overcomes ontological barriers.

What does the metaphor of spiral mean here? It implies a concentric structure in which the internal audience (the three males that populate the scene and the narrators outside of it) and external audience (in Monteverdi's time and after) are located. Though the spiralic circles measure distance, they are combined through the spiral's route that smoothly leads from one circle to the other. Sympathetic projections from each and every point along the route of the spiral thus can be imagined as individual arches directed straight toward the object of compassion, located at the center of the spiral and mobilizing it. The spiral, moreover, can be expanded in space, where its center is lower or higher than the concentric lines. Each such structure implies a distinct sympathetic dynamics, as I shall explain below.

Within such spirals the Aristotelian dichotomy between theatrical compassion and real compassion dissolves. Nonreflective mixes with reflective sympathy. In his late, Jacobean dramas—*The Tempest* (1611), *The Winter's Tale* (1610), and others—Shakespeare anticipated such spirals. An example from *The Tempest* demonstrates how sympathetic dynamics joins dramatic structure and cathartic effect into a new kind of aesthetic unity.

The tempest is conjured up by Prospero, sage and magician, in order to capture and bewitch his wicked brother and his friends, who did Prospero wrong. Prospero's main objective, however, is to summon sympathetic feelings in various characters and even to increase his own toward those who did him wrong. The drama's apotheosis is reached when Ariel, Prospero's faithful spirit, a creature of a reverberative nature, expresses his compassion for Prospero's prisoners, for their repentance and distress.

Ariel: The king,
His brother, and yours, abide all three distracted,

And the remainder mourning over them,
 Brimful of sorrow and dismay; . . .
 . . . Your charm so strongly works 'em,
 That if you now beheld them, your affections
 Would become tender.

To which Prospero reacts:

Dost thou think so, spirit?

And Ariel replies:

Mine would, sir, were I human.

And Prospero concludes:

And mine shall.
 Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling
 Of their afflictions, and shall not myself
 One of their kind, that relish all as sharply,
 Passion as they, be kindlier move'd than thou art?
 (Shakespeare 1954 [1611]: 113)

In contrast to Descartes's persona, Prospero is actually compelled to feel compassion because he is human, constituted of the same physical, mental, and spiritual materials. He is neither psychologically nor morally privileged. He is commensurable with the others—a "sympathetic string." For that matter he even forgoes his magic powers, which give him an advantage if not control over his fellow humans. In terms of the spiralic structure, Prospero stands close to the author of the drama, the activator of all compassion. Sometimes, however, he may be close to us, sympathetic readers and spectators. He, however, is the object of the absence of compassion, which is the source of all sympathetic routes in this drama. Like Joseph in Egypt, who likewise suffers from his brothers' cruelty and the exile they force on him, Prospero works out (or through) his agony, envisioning reconciliation. But this, as Prospero understands it, should be based on real psychological change brought about through the wonders of sympathetic feelings. The dramatic action thus is determined by the dynamics of such feelings. Sympathy moves from Miranda to Prospero through the prisoners themselves, via its negation by creatures considered as belonging to a lower moral order. It is interwoven with the "fellow feeling" of a creature belonging to a supernatural circle in this spiral, Ariel.⁴⁹

49. Stephen Greenblatt's (1988: 146) reading of the play emphasizes the role of anxiety, from which "reconciliation and pardon can issue forth," in Prospero's vision of shaping the inner lives of others, young and old. This does not contradict my argument but reconnects it to the Aristotelian dyad of pity and fear (assuming that anxiety is close to theatrical fear).

If Shakespeare devised such sympathetic spirals before Monteverdi's *Lamento*, what did the latter achieve beyond their musical representation? Why should one insist on music's unique contribution to the elaboration of sympathy beyond its powerful use of echoing textures of sameness and responsive structures of difference? Do musical sympathetic vibrations—the artistic rather than the purely acoustic ones—throw any new light (or perhaps sound) on the order, frame, reflection, and comparison that lie at the heart of sympathy?

6. Time and Passions in Music and the Musical Com-passioning of Christ

The advantage of music in this regard is found in two main areas that received special attention in the seventeenth century. The first relates to musical time; the second, to musical expression. In music, time moves in spirals. It dissects, negates, and affirms its own movements. It expands and contracts them. It has its own experiential duration and at the same time a symbolic dimension. Music thus can bring disparate levels of reality—personae of all kinds and ranks, close and distant in time and in spirit—into the arena of sympathetic action. This general propensity was heightened in the seventeenth century through configurations based on tonal harmony that was developing. Tonal harmony made possible an ordered and continuous movement from one tonal area to another by diatonic modulations. Through its flexible recursive structure, tonal spirals were produced easily. At the same time the increasing use of chromatic and enharmonic chords also made possible the dissection and immediate projection of musical utterances from a remote tonal area to a central one and vice versa.⁵⁰ Unexpected sympa-

50. Tonal harmony crystallized during the seventeenth century and became the most pervasive and enduring perceptual and conceptual frame of reference for organizing large and small stretches of music through its highly cohesive, generative, and hierarchical tonal relations. It rendered each musical composition into a sophisticated recursive “text,” the units of which could be defined in terms of higher and lower syntactical units. It also defined, through the same musical materials (tones and chords), the rules of transition from each unit (called key or tonal area)—main or subsidiary—to the next. The transition from one key to the next was termed *modulation*. The system was created by reducing the modal system of the Renaissance to two predominant modes, major and minor. They could be constructed on each of the twelve tones (semitones) contained in the span of an octave. Each half-tone (C, C#, D, D#, etc.) thus could function as a starting point, or a tonic, of a new key. In addition each of the seven tones of the key could function within the key as a “root” for chordal construction, i.e., for vertical (simultaneous) combination of thirds (altogether three or four simultaneous tones—C, E, G or G, B, D, F and the like). Because of the tonal distance from the tonic (in terms of the circle of fifths), each chord of the key “functions” differently, i.e., gives a different sense to tension/resolution. One could easily move from one key (tonal area) to another through such shared chords (a homonym of sorts). This smooth transition is called “diatonic modulation.” The other two kinds, the chromatic and enharmonic modulations, make shortcuts in the overall tonal space and as such are perceived as more affective, startling, or dramatic moves.

thetic mobilizations or their negation could be implemented subsequently. In addition composers after Monteverdi also used the potential of tonal harmony to extend and intensify echoing textures of various kinds.

With respect to musical expression, its evolution enhanced sympathetic projections by means of the ever-expanding scope of its emotional vocabulary. This vocabulary was defined mainly in terms of melody, harmony, and rhythm and was encoded through textual and other labels. Despite the fact that this vocabulary was a recent innovation, the musical gestures it gave rise to were perceived by listeners as immediate and natural, especially when compared to verbal utterances.⁵¹ Sympathy was enriched by this development, for the kinds of emotion to which it was joined—sadness, joy, anxiety—became more distinct and assumed a vitality and directness that allowed it to overcome fictional, historical, and other barriers that separated sympathizers from sympathized. Music thus accentuated an important component in the arousal of sympathy that was less prominent in drama and life: sympathy as effected by expression, by “look and gestures,” as Adam Smith (1976 [1759]: 11) suggested, rather than by incidents, as Aristotle claimed.

Toward the end of the Baroque, composers enjoyed full control over all such procedures—tonal, expressive, and the like—in addition to a rich array of echoing dramatic devices. Works in the genres of opera, cantata, and oratorio exhibit that control. With Johann Sebastian Bach this even reached new heights. Since his Orthodox Protestantism favored the recourse to theatrical and other sensual means in the church service, as against Pietism’s strict and ascetic idea of religious behavior and worship, Bach could represent Christian compassion, one of the highest religious objectives for both factions, in the richest and most dynamic form it ever had, most of all in his *St. Matthew Passion* (1729). At the same time his multilayered artistic message eventually succeeded in transmitting its basic emotional and humane values to audiences of the most varied religious affiliations.

I would accordingly view *St. Matthew Passion*, based on the complete 141 verses of the Evangelist’s narrative of Jesus’ crucifixion, as animated and consolidated by sympathetic spirals of various kinds. They are projected from textual scaffoldings of arias, chorales, and the like, interwoven (by Bach and his librettist Picander) between the biblical verses. The object

51. Documentation of this abounds and is beyond the scope of this essay. Most typical in this connection is Monteverdi’s own self-persuasion of being the one who “discovers” new expressive vocabularies, which are perceived by listeners as most powerful and affective (see Strunk 1965 [1950]: 53–54). Similar declarations were made by other composers (Peri, Giulio Caccini, and Cavalieri) and theorists regarding “the state of the art” (Christoph Bernhard, Heinrich Mattheson, and Jean-Philip Rameau, to mention but few).

of sympathy—Jesus the suffering Lord, the crucified Savior—is, however, elusive if not altogether vocally absent. Only a few verbal traces are left on his way to the cross. Embodying the paradox of sympathy in a unique way, Jesus, the compassionate persona who suffers for all, an “Echo” magnified and idolized, can only redeem those whose own compassion is awakened toward him. Only then can he become a redeemer, *Christos eleon*. The Lutheran principle of guilt is atoned for here in ways that the Protestant from Geneva, the famous Jean-Jacques, could have partly embraced through an all-encompassing sympathetic act.

Jesus’ absence stands in direct proportion to the voices of guilt—the behavior of his unsympathetic disciples and the cruelty of the crowd. He is there in person all the way to his burial, but most of the time silent. This is already conveyed by the Gospel drama, to which a new sphere of action is annexed, populated by unnamed, virtual souls. Frames and distances are the starting point for this vast interactive interplay. First are the Gospel figures: Jesus, his disciples, Pontius Pilate, the high priest, the people, and others, each represented by a voice or voices. The frame of the story is carried by the voice of the evangelical narrator, who brings it to the congregation. Individualistic and collective utterances of various personae, invented by Bach and Picander, are interpolated in the drama at various strategic points. Their expressions are embodied in distinct personae, expressing themselves through different speech acts, gestures, and genres.⁵² In order to behave sym-pathetically, *mit-leidig*, in order to go beyond their time and position and be with the sufferer, those unnamed souls transcend their frames and express on each particular occasion their feeling toward the suffering Savior, as if they became part of the historical scene itself.

Take, for instance, the scene in Gethsemane a moment after Jesus, having envisaged his coming suffering, exclaims, “*Meine Seele ist betrübt bis an den Tod, bleibt hier und wachet mit mir*” [My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death, tarry ye here and watch with me] (Matthew 26:38; Bach 1972 [1729]: 61). “Wachet mit mir”—sympathize with my deadly sorrow—and so the abstract tenor soul attempts to do in the following number (see Figure 3). A new character in the arena of the crucifixion (brought to it, as it were, by a time-compassion machine), he is watching Jesus in the present continuous tense, unseen by Jesus. He is describing Jesus’ pain and the setting as an omniscient witness-narrator who knows what is about to transpire. “O Grief,” he complains, “How throbs His heavy-laden breast! His spirit faints, how pale His weary face! He to the Judgment Hall is brought” (the

52. In HaCohen 1999 I analyze the semiotic framework that makes possible the working of *Mitleid* in *St. Matthew Passion* and its manifestations in various parts of the work.

Recit a doi Cort
Tenore (Ch. 1)

Tenore
(Ch. 1)

p O Schmerz! hier zit - tert das ge - qual - te Herz! Wie sinkt es

Fl
Ob da caccia

ppp

hin, wie bleich sein An - ge sicht
Chent Der Richter -

p Was ist die Ur - sach' al - ler sol - cher Pla - gen?
A.
p Was ist die Ur - sach' al - ler sol - cher Pla - gen?
T.
p Was ist die Ur - sach' al - ler sol - cher Pla - gen?
B.
p Was ist die Ur - sach' al - ler sol - cher Pla - gen?

Cont. Org. 2 Ch. 1

führt ihn for Gericht, da ist kein Trost, kein Hel - fer nicht

Ach, mei - ne Sün - den ha - ben dich ge - schla - gen?
A.
Ach, mei - ne Sün - den ha - ben dich ge - schla - gen?
T.
Ach, mei - ne Sün - den ha - ben dich ge - schla - gen?
B.
Ach, mei - ne Sün - den ha - ben dich ge - schla - gen?

Figure 3 Johann Sebastian Bach, “O Schmerz!” from *St. Matthew Passion*, mm. 1–14. Tenor and chorus unheard by each other alternately sympathize with suffering Jesus.

[Translation: *Tenor*: O grief, How throbs His heavy laden breast! His spirit faints, how pale His weary face!

entire text is in Figure 3). At that point he melts in pity and sympathy. He is not alone. In the same musical time but on a different temporal plane, Bach's contemporary congregation watches. From their vantage point they directly address the Savior and turn the whole notion of Sympathy into a great Protestant credo.

Embodied in two distinct musical genres, the two temporal levels of the tenor and the congregation alternate. One is presented by a poignant arioso (considered a most personal and spontaneous expressive form) accompanied by an echolike instrumental procession of flutes and oboes; the other is presented by a choral melody (the most obvious musical expression/representation of a Lutheran congregation). The result is a unified construction of their respective musical forms (achieved mainly through tonal continuity) that is neither a reflection of a world nor a simple reference to one (in terms of the existing musical-dramatic conventions). Existence is turned into utter sympathy, almost in its magical-Renaissance appearance, which was capable of merging distinct temporal and ontological planes and distinct points of view into a unified expression (Foucault 1972). This is fully realized in the subsequent aria, which carries Jesus' words to a new hermeneutic height.

As he declares in the aria's opening line, the tenor will watch over Jesus. Text and music reveal the underlying belief that sympathy thereby would be aroused in Christ and would turn back on those repentant sinners who, in their turn, would beg to be redeemed. Tenor and choir are no longer set apart. Their different planes have merged. They are carried along by an underlying musical structure supplied by the opening instrumental ritornello, a powerful late-Baroque tool for erecting spirals. The ritornello's theme is both majestic and lulling, fanfaric and placating. Still its combinatorial character allows the differences between the main protagonists—tenor and choir—and their expressive characters to be retained. Sympathetic time-space is thus constructed.

The *Passion* gradually is filled with the emotional surges projected from various planes of existence and emotional positions, rendering a kind of negative image (in the photographic sense) of Jesus, the absent subject. Thus he comes into being. The problem Madame Lafayette and other seventeenth-century writers had with communication based on representation is solved here by sympathetic expression of a dialogic kind. By listening to their own and others' voices vis-à-vis the elusive, suffering subject—

Choral: My savior, why must all this ill befall Thee? *Tenor:* He to the Judgement Hall is brought, There is not help, no comfort near.

Choral: My sin, alas! From highest Heaven did call Thee . . .]

the object of their indifference, denial, or cruelty—the people of the *Passion* not only realize their own and others' emotions, they create an emotional bridge, otherwise barred, to the sufferer. A previously unknown mind, an "other mind," the sufferer thus transfigures into a self that can finally be buried in genuine mourning, as Freud would say.

7. Conclusion: Structural and Historical Consequences

Moving back from the specifically musical to a wider aesthetic frame, one can ask how all this pertains to privileging sympathy over mimesis. The two concepts, in our long and basically Aristotelian artistic heritage, always have been bound together, as we have seen, and will probably continue to be so.⁵³ In the frame of the present article, however, these two large concepts are defined more strictly as forms of self-representation versus modes of sympathetic projection. How, in the final analysis, do they differ from each other? We have seen that major conceptual pairs (absence and thereness, frames and perspectives, inside and outside, illusion and reality) are played out in the artistic games of sympathetic projection no less than in self-representations. Moreover sympathetic projections, like self-representations, also may be entangled in loops, in recursive chains. Since they are caused by others' self-expression, once they are projected back on the sufferers they modify the course, intensity, and character of their own emotions, which bounce back on the projector.

From a more-comprehensive epistemological point of view, an analysis of the differences between the two—self-representation and sympathetic projection—would necessitate a more-refined distinction between the general categories of *representation* and *expression* beyond the limits of this essay. The above discussion may yield, however, some important clues for such an investigation. As indicated, whereas in the case of self-representation, recursive frame-within-frame loops imply ontological ranking, sympathetic projection yields cause-and-effect chains, coalescing distinct realities. Accordingly, self-representation tends to be spatial and "objective," while sympathetic projection is temporal and intersubjective, traversing in one "shot" the distances separating sympathizer from sympathized. As such its routes, progress, and dynamics are unpredictable, blurring all barriers not only between reality and fiction but also between worldly and otherworldly entities as well as between races, genders, and other real or artificial domains of existence.

53. This is the case with film theory, especially the branch that links it to psychoanalysis and feminism, as exemplified in Kaja Silverman's (1988) study of *acoustic mirrors*.

There are dangers here, as later history proved. Sometimes, as in the case of Richard Wagner, reality was swallowed up by illusion through modes of sympathy and compassion. Drama, music, theater, and politics were *gesamtkunstwerkly* conceived in his works so as to erase, via *Mitleid* (compassion) psychological distance, enhancing new political modes (HaCohen 1998). However, these problems did not apply to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century audiences and artists, especially musicians, who were preoccupied with giving sympathy a shape, making it a configuration of sentiments. The fact that in this case music anticipated other cultural forms should not surprise us. Music, as Jacques Attali (1985 [1977]: 4) argues, “makes mutations audible . . . it obliges us to invent categories and new dynamics to regenerate theory.” Indeed, by synchronizing in experiential time diverse emotional temporalities, music pre-echoed the shift from expressing sympathy through sameness to expressing it across differences, a process that, according to Hartman (1997), took place in literature only in the nineteenth century. In so transfiguring old compassions, music paved the way for the release of social and mental powers from local commitments and fixed reflections.⁵⁴ These powers later collaborated with new developments in music, and together they compose still newer configurations in the history of sympathy.

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54. Significantly, *Daniel Deronda* (1876), George Eliot’s novel that goes beyond local and immediate sympathies to sympathies toward the foreigner and the different, is the most musicalized of her novels. See my analysis of these aspects in the novel vis-à-vis those in Wagner’s *Parsifal* in HaCohen 2000.

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