

THROUGH THE LENS OF FREEMASONRY: THE INFLUENCE OF ANCIENT
ESOTERIC THOUGHT ON BEETHOVEN'S LATE WORKS

BY

BRIAN S. GAONA

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Doctoral Committee:

Clinical Assistant Professor/Artist in Residence Brandon Vamos, Chair
Professor William Kinderman, Director of Research
Associate Professor Donna A. Buchanan
Associate Professor Zack D. Browning

ABSTRACT

Scholarship on Ludwig van Beethoven has long addressed the composer's affiliations with Freemasonry and other secret societies in an attempt to shed new light on his biography and works. Though Beethoven's official membership remains unconfirmed, an examination of current scholarship and primary sources indicates a more ubiquitous Masonic presence in the composer's life than is usually acknowledged. Whereas Mozart's and Haydn's Masonic status is well-known, Beethoven came of age at the historical moment when such secret societies began to be suppressed by the Habsburgs, and his Masonic associations are therefore much less transparent. Nevertheless, these connections surface through evidence such as letters, marginal notes, his *Tagebuch*, conversation books, books discovered in his personal library, and personal accounts from various acquaintances.

This element in Beethoven's life comes into greater relief when considered in its historical context. The "new path" in his art, as Beethoven himself called it, was bound up not only with his crisis over his incurable deafness, but with a dramatic shift in the development of social attitudes toward art and the artist. Such portentous social changes cannot be accounted for through the force of Beethoven's personality, or the changing role of the Viennese nobility. Many social forces were at work in the late Enlightenment period, but within this context Freemasonry assumed special importance for Beethoven.

I attempt to show in this thesis that Beethoven's musical concepts were deeply enriched through the influence of Freemasonry and other types of ancient philosophical and esoteric thought. The composer integrated these concepts into his world view as well as his music. Evidence of this philosophical/musical synthesis can be seen by comparing

his personal writings with certain of his compositions that reflect such thought and attitudes. Three works are examined from this point of view: the Bagatelle, op. 119, No. 7, the Piano Sonata in C minor, op. 111, and the String Quartet in C-sharp minor, op. 131.

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To Raul and Carol

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Introduction

Many instances and anecdotes exist in which Beethoven expressed opinions about the power and potentiality of music that reflect a divergence from the pragmatic view adopted by many in the musical community of his time. Some of these quotations are famous, and some stem from sources less reliable than others; still, the existence of a deeper and more philosophical view of music attributed to Beethoven is comfortably agreed upon by scholars. The quotes given below reveal either a spiritual dimension of the composer's relationship to music, or a view of the artist that stands in contrast to the musical community of his day. For instance:

-I must despise the world which does not know that music is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy.¹

-Music is the one incorporeal entrance into the higher world of knowledge which comprehends mankind but which mankind cannot comprehend... every real creation of art is independent, more powerful than the artist himself and returns to the divine through its manifestation. It is one with man only in this, that it bears testimony of the mediation of the divine in him.²

-Only Art and science can exalt men to the point of divinity. ...The true artist has no pride; unhappily he sees that Art has no bounds; Obscurely he feels how far

¹ Quoted by Bettina von Arnim, in John Crabbe's *Empire of the Mind*, p. 92. See also Thayer-Forbes, p. 502, on the reliability of Bettina von Arnim's reports. See also William Kinderman, *Beethoven*, (new Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 168-169.

² *Ibid.*, p. 102.

away he is from his aim, and even while others may be admiring him, he mourns his failure to attain that end which his better genius illumines like a distant sun.³

-Prince, what you are you are by accident of birth; what I am I am through my own efforts. There have been thousands of princes and will be thousands more; there is only one Beethoven!⁴

Compare this view to that of the great pedagogues and masters of the music world of the eighteenth century to which Beethoven had entered, starting with Leopold Mozart:

What is slight can still be great, if it is written in a natural, flowing, and easy style—and at the same time bears the marks of sound composition. Such works are more difficult to compose than all those harmonic progressions, *which the majority of people cannot fathom*, or pieces which have pleasing melodies, but which are *difficult to perform*.⁵

In his 1752 benchmark treatise, Johann J. Quantz, though less patronizing, is equally pragmatic in his view of music:

Reason teaches us that if in speaking we demand something from someone, we must make use of such expressions as the other understands. Now music is nothing but an artificial language through which we seek to acquaint the listener

³ Hamburger, Michael, *Beethoven*, pp. 114-115, this excerpt comes from a letter Beethoven wrote from Teplitz on July 17, 1812 with some pedagogical intent to a young admirer from Hamburg, addressed as “Emilie”. Also, Brandenburg, Sieghard, ed., *Ludwig van Beethoven: Briefwechsel Gesamtausgabe*, Band 2, pp. 274-275, #585.

⁴ Crabbe, *Empire of the Mind*, p. 38, in a letter to his friend and patron, Prince Lichnowsky. Also, Brandenburg, ed., *Briefwechsel Gesamtausgabe*, Band 1, p. 290, #258.

⁵ Einstein, Alfred, *Mozart*, p. 120, from a letter from Leopold Mozart to his son, Wolfgang: August 13, 1778.

with our *musical ideas*. ... Thus it is most important that the professional musician seek to play each piece distinctly, and with such expression that it becomes intelligible to both the learned and the unlearned, and hence may please them both.⁶

Beethoven's teacher, Franz Joseph Haydn, was in complete contrast to his pupil regarding the social status of the musician. His contract of employment at the House of Esterhazy stated its expectations that:

[Haydn] will strictly observe not only these regulations, but all others that may from time to time be made by his highness, and that he will place the orchestra on such a footing, and in such good order, that he may bring honor upon himself and deserve the further favor of the prince his master, who thus confides in his zeal and discretion.⁷

There are nevertheless roots for this apparently dramatic shift in perspective. It was not Beethoven alone who revolutionized the general perception of music, moving from a craft designed to "please the ears" or "public", to an art whose purpose was less clear and less superficial—an art that would certainly transcend at least this mundane view of music, extending well into metaphysical and spiritual realms. While composers such as the ones above wrote with a great deal of concern for public and aristocratic taste, they nevertheless anticipated the direction in which Beethoven was to take the art. Mozart, for instance, made an attempt to support himself in the free market as a composer, though with much difficulty. Both Mozart and Haydn were also among those composers integrating themselves in an organization which was to formally

⁶Quantz, chap. XI. taken from Weiss and Taruskin, *Music in the Western World*, p. 263.

⁷ Haydn's employment contract, section 10, 1761. also taken from Weiss and Taruskin, *Music in the Western World*, p. 300.

resurrect to its members many of the ancient lofty and metaphysical views of music as a part of a general plan to alter, perhaps even radically, social thought: Freemasonry.

Lest it be doubted that Beethoven ascribed a higher spiritual goal to his art, consider the inscription from the Temple of Isis in ancient Egypt that Kant described as perhaps the most sublime of thoughts, and that Beethoven adopted from Friedrich Schiller's essay, *Die Sendung Moses*, and kept under glass at his desk during most of the last decade of his life:

I am everything, what is, what was, and what will be. No mortal human being has lifted my veil.

The origin of Schiller's essay, in turn, was a publication by Carl Leonhard Reinhold that was written for the Freemasons at Vienna in the 1780s.⁸ Schiller, like Beethoven, was closely associated with Freemasons, even if it has never been proven that he himself was a member.

While the most famous composers of the world into which Beethoven entered were for the most part hanging on to the old patronage system, their involvement in Freemasonry and its ideals pointed the way for a new view of music. The impact of such a trend cannot be underestimated. In the history of music, it is one of the most direct and significant catalysts in many aspects of the following era, the Romantic Movement. Indeed, the context in which this phenomenon of deepening and spiritualizing the art of music for its own sake can be more usefully viewed within the larger context of the modernization of the Western world.

I intend to argue two major points in this dissertation. First, that Beethoven may be viewed as a sort of cultural funnel through which disparate and large-scale currents in this society become concentrated and then distilled through his musical activities. Consequently, the second

⁸ A recent and detailed study of this and two other ancient Egyptian inscriptions embraced by Beethoven is *Beethovens Glaubensbekenntnis: Drei Denksprüche aus Friedrich Schillers Aufsatz Die Sendung Moses*, edited with a commentary by Friederike Grigat (Bonn: Beethoven-Haus, 2008).

item will be the ramifications of these currents as incorporated into his music. Certain late compositions of his have integrated the esoteric currents present in the eighteenth century not only in recognizable mood or aesthetic, but in concrete compositional techniques and devices that either utilize, emulate, or symbolize concepts found primarily in the esoteric circles with which Beethoven was in contact.

In almost all ways, the boldest and most substantial of these distillations and musical syntheses in Beethoven's work occur after his emergence from a nearly barren compositional period, which ended in 1818 when the *Hammerklavier* was completed. From this work on, his music enters a different mode of thought. Maynard Solomon, an authority on the intersection of Beethoven biography and Freemasonry, states:

...[There] appears to be a striking metamorphosis in Beethoven's system of beliefs, proposing that a thoroughgoing transformation was under way by the years around 1810, gaining momentum as the decade proceeded, and that this eventually amounted to a sweeping realignment of his understanding of nature, divinity, and human purpose, constituting a sea change in Beethoven's system of beliefs."⁹

This "sea change" had a major personal impact on Beethoven as these new concepts and attitudes of thought would settle and develop in him. They would then become concentrated and manifest themselves into reality, making his personal "sea change" tangible for the musical community of Europe. Compare, for instance, the extra-musical dimensions of the Ninth Symphony¹⁰ with earlier works of that genre, which tend to appear almost formalistic and pre-

⁹ Maynard Solomon, *Late Beethoven*, p. 2.

¹⁰ Authors discussing these extra-musical dimensions include Esteban Buch, *Beethoven's Ninth: a Political History*, Solomon's discussion of Utopian symbolism and fulfillment in his essay "Beethoven and Schiller"

determined in comparison. Also note the presence of such mystic and suspended psychological states¹¹ as well as extra-musical dimensions in the Ninth Symphony and afterward¹² as contrasted with music before that period.

History allots Beethoven much credit regarding issues of musical standards and innovation, as well as artistic vision and spiritual depth. Without diminishing the composer's remarkable feats achieved through music, it seems that to attribute his prodigious level only to his own talent, vision and drive, would be an unfair assessment in many respects. Omitting a study of circumstance and environment also puts one in danger of overlooking larger contexts that more fully explain the Beethoven phenomenon. Accordingly, we shall now turn to the unique situation into which Beethoven was born as the focus of Chapter 1.

from his *Beethoven Essays*, and William Kinderman's discussion of epistemic and ontological significance in the chapter titled "Triumph: 1822-1824" from his *Beethoven*.

¹¹ Most notably, the section of the choral finale that treats the text "Seid umschlungen Millionen..."

¹² Consider, for example, Berlioz's programatic *Symphonie Fantastique*, op. 14, the symphonies of Mahler that he titled, the autobiographical monograms of Brahms' symphonies or the suspended states of Bruckner's symphonies.

Part I.

The Cultural Background of Beethoven's Life Path.

Chapter 1

***Zeitgeist* and Freemasonry of Beethoven's Time**

A survey of commentaries on Beethoven's work reveals a pronounced theme of the metaphysical, including morality, fate, and concern with man's relationship to divinity, as well as optimism and humanitarianism. These characteristics are present from his earliest works through his last. We can see such trends beginning in his work even as a teenager in Bonn when he wrote a cantata to honor the passing of Austria's enlightened despot, Joseph II. Though the Fifth Symphony, for example, operates without such overt political and social implications on a much more abstract level, it still demonstrates many of the above themes. One can see this trend developed well into Beethoven's last compositions such as the Ninth Symphony, the *Missa Solemnis*, and even in the *Heiliger Dankgesang* of his very late Quartet, Op. 132.

Beethoven had a predisposition toward daydream, aloofness and metaphysical thinking. Such documentation can be found in associations dealing with Beethoven in his childhood, for instance:

[He was] a shy and taciturn boy, the necessary consequence of the life apart which he led, observing more and pondering more than he spoke, and disposed to abandon himself entirely to the feelings awakened by music and (later) by poetry and to the pictures created by fancy.¹³

Cäcelia Fischer, observing Beethoven as a child staring through a window fixedly, quotes him: “I was just occupied with such a lovely deep thought, I could not bear to be disturbed.”¹⁴

These tendencies toward aloofness, attraction to abstract beauty, and escape through contemplation and fantasy are characteristics that stayed with the composer through his entire documented life. Many psychological profiles have been generated in order to account for these trends in Beethoven study, modern attempts including gestalt,¹⁵ cognitive-behavioral,¹⁶ and psycho-analytic approaches.¹⁷

No examination of personal character or achievement can be sufficiently appreciated or accurately estimated without taking into account the environmental factors of which the subject was or is a part. That Beethoven was a rather unique historical figure is difficult to contest, but the setting into which he was born plays a major role in accounting for his rise. This setting could be said to be one of the most critical and significant moments in the shaping of our modern world: the Enlightenment, as well as its correlating Counter-Enlightenment. His personal traits mentioned above were also major points of the Enlightenment, either in confluence or opposition.

¹³ Alexander W. Thayer- Elliot Forbes, p. 20. Thayer’s source is referred to only as “Dr. Müller”.

¹⁴ Solomon, *Beethoven*, p. 20.

¹⁵ Ler Dahl and Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music* MIT Press, 1983.

¹⁶ Two books use Beethoven as a model for cognitive-behavioral therapies: Benzon, William. *Beethoven’s Anvil* Basic Books, 2002, and Pearsall, Paul. *The Beethoven Factor*. Hampton Roads Publishing Company, 2003.

¹⁷ Most notably, Maynard Solomon’s *Beethoven and Beethoven Essays*, (see bibliography).

There existed, therefore, in this setting a pre-existing momentum for these characteristics of the composer, functioning as mutually intensifying vehicles for each other; or in some cases, such as Beethoven's mystic tendencies, for providing an opponent against which to strive. From either angle, these traits were relevant to his era.

Beginning his life in Bonn, Beethoven lived in a city whose situation in the years surrounding his birth through his formative years exemplifies the political and social progress of this period. The German *Aufklärung* essentially shared the same intellectual and philosophical roots as the Enlightenment in the rest of Europe, and with similar impact. Bonn would become a progressive city through this time, providing the young Beethoven with a fertile environment where these enlightenment trends could be found and integrated into his own thinking and spirituality. It is the intent of this chapter to identify those aspects of his environment in Bonn and Vienna of the late 18th Century, and explore their consequences through the composer's development and maturation, with an emphasis on their resonance in his last years.

1.1 The Roots of Intellectual Revolution

While the nature and outcome of the *Aufklärung* are well known, identifying and highlighting some of its major and specific causes can greatly clarify the directions that Europe and its leaders took as well as providing a more refined understanding of their motivations. It is well-known, for instance, that Kant, Hume, or Voltaire tended to advocate rationalism and skepticism above pious religious devotion when the two conflicted. What may not be immediately evident is the reason for so much zealously anti-Christian or anti-Catholic thought that arose at this time. Consideration of major social strife and intellectual constraint caused directly or indirectly by Christian institutions makes clear much of the circumspection and even

animosity exhibited by individuals such as early David Hume, Thomas Aikenhead,¹⁸ or Adam Weisshaupt and his group, the Illuminati.

The Thirty Years War and the Inquisition-led witch hunts are primary examples of such social disasters that contributed to this strife and growing animosity. Owing to the scale on which these events occurred, they made impressions felt on a deep personal level rather than remaining only at a level of social awareness. Some estimates project the casualties of the Thirty Years War at one-third to two-thirds (one source estimates the population at about 15 million in 1600 to around 10 million in 1650¹⁹) of the population of the German-speaking lands,²⁰ and that of the witch hunts are estimated at around 100,000.²¹ One source, though undocumented, places the witch hunt casualties at the highest end of speculation with “nearly a million innocent lives”.²² These figures indicate not only that the populace would surely be aware of such hardship occurring in their communities, but that any given individual is more likely than not to have suffered serious loss or grave intimidation directly from church-related endeavors.

¹⁸ A university student hung by Edinburgh officials in 1697. Howell, T.B. *A Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings for High Treason* T.C. Hansard: London, 1816.

¹⁹ Estimate provided by <http://www.tacitus.nu/historical-atlas/population/germany.htm>

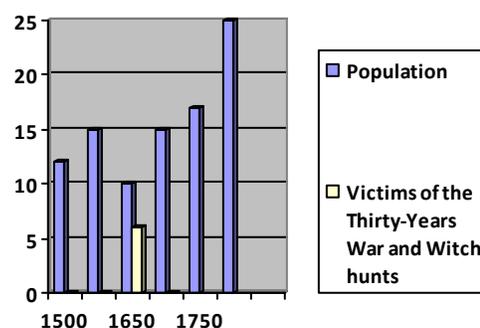
²⁰ Wedgewood, C. V., *The Thirty Years War*, pp. 510-515.

²¹ Levack, Brian P, *The Witch-hunt in Early Modern Europe*, p. 19.

²² Howard, Michael, *The Occult Conspiracy* p. 43.

Figure 1.1

Impact of religious strife on population of the German-speaking lands²³



Many other well-known major problems faced the church's goal of unanimous Catholic control, the most damaging result of which was of course the Reformation. Even in Beethoven's day, the split between Catholics and Protestants was likely to have serious practical ramifications because of political alliances: Prussia was officially Protestant, while the Habsburg Empire remained Catholic. The bitter struggle for religious dominance during the two centuries leading up to Beethoven's birth in 1770 had been a bloody one. And though the Thirty Years War—the climax of this religious tension—had ended more than a century earlier, the long-term impact of such an extended religious civil war made Europe desperate for smoother and less violent trends in its culture. Residual doubt in the value of religion in general had persisted in certain circles in Europe. This lingering doubt and distaste for the warring Christian Churches harbored by those Europeans left pockets of spiritual vacuum. This naturally provided an opening for Masonic organizations to emerge, most significantly in this specific context, in portions of Bonn's intellectual life.

Nevertheless, both Protestantism and Catholicism maintained their positions as the primary spiritual (though no longer socio-political) institutions of Beethoven's lifetime.

²³ For comparative purposes, the casualties listed for 1650 include not only the victims of the Thirty Years War and the witch-hunts occurring at that time, but the estimated total of all witch-hunts in early-modern Europe. Population statistics are measured by millions. Both statistics are highly-contested and approximate; however this chart reflects the trends as accurately as possible. Data taken from Levack, Erick H. C. Midelfort, Howard, and Martinsson.

Beethoven's family, a case in point, was decidedly of a less questioning sort than the company that Beethoven would later keep as he grew up. Ludwig himself, in spite of the far and wide spiritual journey made through his life, would never renounce or protest the merits of Catholicism, no matter how distant or contrary were the texts that entered his serious study and consideration. The seeds of Christian belief were sown and retained, and perhaps even flourished, through the composer's life. It is a critical point of this dissertation that Beethoven sought to reconcile and/or synthesize spiritual concepts of disparate religious systems as well as the spiritual elements of various literary bodies and contemporary philosophies.

Though most of Europe stood firm in its outward traditional Christian convictions, an intellectual fracture was growing in the collective mind of Europe, dividing the church's socio-political dominance, from which the church would never fully recover. This fracture could not be restricted to the intellectual realm either. The confusion of the era leading up to the Enlightenment is worth emphasizing. In a world where a culture accepts theocracy with its dogma, a shift in the direction of serious inquiry and the newly developed application of scientific method can yield unfamiliar areas for thought and unanticipated conclusions. What could easily qualify as heresy and a consequent death sentence in Germanic areas in 1670²⁴ could be tolerated or even supported in Bonn of 1770 in the right circles. This is a small enough time span to cause significant tension at a domestic level, as one generation would not adjust easily to the next ones' quickly changing views regarding issues considered very serious at that time.²⁵

These were likely the most powerful stimuli for the shift in the spiritual perspective during this era, and it was not without consequence for Beethoven. Social change invariably

²⁴ Midelfort, *Witch Hunting*, p. 71.

²⁵ The case of Thomas Aikenhead, cited in footnote #15, epitomized the tension of this era. As a university student in Edinburgh in 1697, in the wake of the Inquisition's peak power, he openly disparaged Christian theology and was consequently tried in a court of law and sentenced to death by hanging.

elicits debate whose intensity is proportional to its perceived relevance and impact in any given setting. The polarity of religious conservatism, as this pulled against the rationalistic tendencies of the day, could be stressful on any individual when forming a world-concept, but can be a further-reaching burden for an artist.

In this era, the artist did not only share the responsibility of self-definition as do all people; he or she must accurately assess the awareness and receptivity of his/her audience, and creatively balance the opposing forces to the best of his/her intuitions, either diplomatically or in conflict, with the aim of successfully persuading society to embrace his/her artistic view. In no other way could an artist attempt to successfully navigate the free market that was beginning to emerge for composers.

The challenge of dealing with and sharing effectively these issues can cause cognitive dissonance not only in the sense of struggling with ideas that are hard to reconcile, but also in the sense of struggling to see oneself as complete and comprehensible in two ways that logically do not tolerate each other. Both Mozart and Beethoven, for example, suffered from a desire to be good and pious toward God, yet be forward-looking “enlightened” men, both assuming what were effectively leadership positions of social consequence. The reconciliation of apparently conflicting ideas will be discussed in musical contexts and elaborated in the chapters dealing with Beethoven’s own solutions and syntheses in sound in his opus 111 and opus 131.

1.2 Orientalism and Indology

During this time of re-evaluation of its core spiritual tenets, Europe faced many other challenges. One beneficial factor for Europe was the great progress of global exploration. Such progress had strong implications that the world and its knowledge were ultimately knowable. It contributed greatly to the confidence and spirit of the Enlightenment, and reinforced its

momentum. Beethoven was in no way exempt from the ripples of excitement that were cast through his circles when informed of new reports of exotic discovery from abroad. Explorers such as Captain James Cook and Samuel Wallis of England, and Louis Antoine de Bougainville of France led expeditions to remote places of the globe for which Europe had no record. By the end of Cook's voyages, cartographers, accounts, and reports of the distant Pacific had mapped and described what 300 years prior had been mistaken for the edge of a flat world. Thus the last earthly frontiers were de-mystified in the minds of many of that time. Reports circulated widely in Europe, reaching Beethoven in their readership.

These reports of the explorations of the Far East generated a taste for anthropological studies of anywhere east of the Ottoman Empire among Europe's intellectuals. Interest became so great in areas such as India, the newly-discovered Tahiti, and the myriad of Pacific Islands that this trend developed into a serious movement whose studies began to assemble under the term *Orientalism*. Of all these areas, perhaps the most captivating for eighteenth-century Viennese scholars was India.

At this historical juncture, India studies began to exert a strong influence on Western thought, with many of these influences filtering through Vienna during Beethoven's life. Judging by the amount and serious treatment of Hindu reference made by Beethoven in his *Tagebuch*—his diary—that he kept in his forties as well as in his correspondence, it becomes clear that this culture was very meaningful to him.²⁶ While he did seek out Hindu studies on his own, he did so in a culture that was growing more and more saturated in Indology (South Asian/Indian subcontinent studies) every year. This movement gained significant momentum in the 1780s, precipitated by William Jones's seminal work in the field. Because of its critical impact on his late compositions (discussed in Part II), highlights of European interest in India and the resulting

²⁶ In his commentary of the *Tagebuch* in *Beethoven Essays*, Solomon cites numerous references to the Bhagavad-Gita, Rg Veda, and writings of contemporary indologists.

tone during Beethoven's lifetime are summarized briefly here, with an emphasis on studies known to the composer.

Until the 1780s, eighteenth-century Europe's experience with India was most prominent in the turbulent interactions it had with the British East India Company. Founded in 1600, this company viewed India as a less civilized culture and behaved with a distinct mercantilist outlook in its dealings. Naturally, at this stage, commercial ties and cultural interest were generated by Indian imports as well as by British accounts of India. Then in 1757, as part of the Seven Years War, India was brought further into the European public awareness as the East India Company established British company rule by military means in West Bengal, India in the battle of Plassey. This battle, a key victory for the English, bridged the state of English-Indian affairs from mercantilism toward colonialism and imperialism. Consequently, Plassey brought India and the East much closer to the foreground of the thoughts of many Europeans.

A decade later, in the mid-late 1760s, Captains Cook and Bougainville embarked on voyages (though not including India at that point) which would generate waves of excitement; news of these excursions reached the general public as well as scholarly circles. A decade after that in 1777 Georg Forster published a chronicle of his experiences aboard that circumnavigation. His influential *A Voyage Round the World* spearheaded the spread of anthropological interest in popular and intellectual circuits. He, and later Alexander von Humboldt, would bring further prestige to cultural studies and exploration.

Regarding Indic interest specifically, the prime stimulus had been made in 1786 by the English philologist William Jones. In his essay, *The Sanscrit Language*, he connected European language families to Sanskrit. The likelihood of an ancient historical, linguistic, or even genetic connection between Europe and India opened an entirely new dimension to cultural scholarship and to Europe's own self-understanding. During that same time, Jones also founded the *Asiatick*

Society, a research group mostly centered on Indic studies, based in Calcutta. His 1789 translation of the ancient play *Sakuntala*²⁷ had a particular impact on Johann Gottfried von Herder, whose mythopoetic works proved most influential in the German-speaking lands.

In the same year as Jones' *Sanscrit Language*, a French orientalist named Abraham-Hyacinthe Anquetil Duperron contributed *Recherches historiques et géographiques sur l'Inde*. The influence of this author can be most clearly felt when reading Schopenhauer's acknowledgement of his academic debt to Duperron regarding the Hindu influence of his *The World as Will and Representation*. Writing on this topic, Harry Oldmeadow has stated:

Schopenhauer, at the age of twenty-five, was given a copy of Anquetil Duperron's *Oupnek'hat*. It was a revelation to him: he later praised it as "the most profitable and elevated reading which ... is possible in the world. It has been the solace of my life, and will be the solace of my death." After his introduction to the *Upanishads* Schopenhauer immediately embarked on the collection and study of such Asian texts as had been translated into European languages, claiming that "Sanskrit literature will be no less influential for our time than Greek literature was in the 15th Century for the Renaissance."²⁸

Duperron also provided Europe with a Latin translation of the Upanishads in 1804.

The 1790s continued the production of more Indology. In 1796, the missionary Paulinus Bartholomaeo published his own accounts in his *India Viaggio alle Indie Orientali*, translated into German by Forster in 1798. He also published some of the earliest European texts on Sanskrit grammar. In 1794, the Scottish professor William Robertson published his lengthy *An Historical*

²⁷ Beethoven also had an interest in this play, having quoted it in his *Tagebuch* entry #63b. Solomon, *Beethoven Essays*, p. 267-268.

²⁸ Oldmeadow, *Journeys East*, pp. 22-23.

Disquisition Concerning the Knowledge that the Ancients had of India, focusing on the dissemination of knowledge in the ancient world.

Vienna had numerous translations of these and other works available to interested parties. Nevertheless, even with the prestige of all the names above, it should be said that the greatest impact on Viennese Indology was affected by a small group of German thinkers: most notably, the Schlegel brothers, Herder, and Josef Hammer-Purgstall. In 1808, Karl Wilhelm Friederich Schlegel published *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* (On the Language and Wisdom of India). His brother, August Wilhelm Schlegel, was in 1818 appointed professor of literature in Bonn, thereafter dedicating himself to Sanskrit studies.

The names of these scholars are naturally most associated with such studies, but it was not only a specialist academic community that felt the depth of their impact. As a Yale PhD candidate in the 1950s, Leslie Willson's researches led him to an understanding of the extent to which Indology had permeated the German-speaking lands at this time. His dissertation, *A Mythical Image: The Ideal of India in German Romanticism*, traces the development of India as a symbol of a sacred land in the German mind and its roots in early and proto-Romantic German writings. An article distilled from this dissertation, "Herder and India," cites several specific instances of Herder's interest in Indic studies and the cultural ramifications manifested by his readership. In this article, Willson says of Herder's view of India:

...[It is] an attitude of extreme reverence and adulation which resulted finally in the formulation of a mythical image. The term 'mythical image' implies an imaginative conception of India, and one can trace the development of such an image in the fancy of Herder.²⁹

²⁹ *PMLA*, 1955, p. 1049.

Willson emphasizes Herder's persuasive power and the resulting influence over German writers of this time later in his essay. It is significant that this "mythic" aesthetic came to be so strongly associated with India in German-speaking lands, contrasting with the more academic appeal that seemed to prevail in the rest of Europe. To cite an example in Beethoven's own work, Birgit Lodes reveals a connection of this mystical and reverent view to a late quartet, citing Herder specifically:

This movement [the first of Beethoven's op. 127] can be read as a myth, spiraling around the fundamental question of a cosmos, deity, or fate governing an enduring human essence that can only partially, at most, mold its own life, but that is part of an ongoing, cyclic *Weltgeschehen*. In this context, I suggest that our understanding of Beethoven's late works in general may be enriched by taking into account the idea of myth and mythology.

...At the outset of the nineteenth century, *myth* resonated deeply with many German-speaking intellectuals. In 1800, Friederich Schlegel proclaimed a "New Mythology," intensifying a trend that had begun several decades earlier with Johann Gottfried Herder..."

...That Beethoven, too, was caught up by that fascination is revealed in many ways... [In his *Tagebuch*], we find ample evidence of Beethoven's preoccupation with not only Greek and Roman mythic literature, but also with texts by Johann G. Herder, a key German figure in mythopoetic writings..."³⁰

Josef Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall was one of Austria's most important orientalist of any period. While his work was not as specifically focused on India as other prominent

³⁰ See Lodes, "So träumte mir ich reiste, ... nach Indien." Kinderman, et al; *String Quartets*, chap. 7, pp. 168-169.

Indologists, his career and influence grew large enough to have impact on Viennese academics as a result of his later becoming the first president of the *Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften* in 1847. Earlier in his career, accompanying diplomats, he held posts in “Constantinople, Egypt, England, Dalmatia and Moldavia—as secretary and translator. He returned to Vienna in 1807, occupying himself with his literary work and oriental research.”³¹ His presence is most notable here because of his personal interactions and correspondences with Beethoven regarding exchanges of Hindu literature that were intended for his musical setting.

Beethoven’s readings and discussions of such authors on world affairs reflect a keen interest in his times.³² He is often misleadingly popularized as a man so completely enveloped in his art that he lost all connection to outside reality, living in his own synthetic one of sound and time. If this were to be argued at all effectively, it seems only his last five to ten years or so could possibly be even considered. While it is true that Beethoven was often aloof, he was throughout his life intensely curious about the nature of humanity in many of its diverse forms. In the realm of current events, his political opinions were informed and often voiced. Most famously called to mind are his disparaging opinions of Metternich and Napoleon.

Philosophical, scientific, and anthropological texts were owned and/or cited by him throughout his life. “...The personal library of 200-300 volumes left at his death included a considerable number of religious and speculative texts”³³ as well as travel and cultural texts. It included many writings of the major figures mentioned above, for example, the reports by Johann R. Forster and his son Georg, those of Bartholomaeo, and at least excerpts from Jones’s

³¹ Solomon, “A Beethoven Acquaintance”, p. 14.

³² John Crabbe presents this argument in chapter 8 of his *Beethoven’s Empire of the Mind*. Excerpts from this chapter that include specific authors and works are included in Appendix A.

³³ Crabbe, *Empire of the Mind*, p. 79. See also Appendix A.

Orientalist chronicle, *Asiatick Researches*.³⁴ Also conspicuously present here are works of Herder, Hammer-Purgstall, William Robertson, and Sir William Jones. Birgit Lodes has provided a table of Solomon's identifications of various mythical writings that are quoted in his *Tagebuch*.³⁵

1.3 The Backdrop of Revolutionary Europe

The age in which Beethoven lived is often called the "Age of Revolution." These cultural researches and their ramifications were very much in step with the trend of dramatically shifting perspectives of this time: The introduction to new cultures reached by explorers coupled with the increase of study of known cultures by Orientalists was rapidly changing the European intellectual landscape. Some of this knowledge, as conveyed in Jones's *Sanscrit Language*, for instance, would fundamentally change Europe's understanding of itself. The results were of the same revolutionary nature as many other movements of the time in which Beethoven lived, such as the Scientific Revolution, the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the American Revolution, the many revolutions in colonial Latin America, and the French Revolution.

The Industrial Revolution and the Scientific Revolution had their own impact on the composer's outlook on humanity. While this could not be considered a wholly positive phenomenon as these changes proved difficult in many ways, Beethoven seems to have embraced an optimistic view of this evolution. The following anecdote, as related here by Solomon, could serve well to illustrate his attitude toward the rapidly evolving progressive science of the day:

³⁴ This was a periodical which functioned as a vessel for the relaying of anthropological interests from Orientalist research happening in that time, as disseminated through William Jones' establishment, the *Asiatick Society*. It included a variety of topics including geography, cultural issues and linguistics.

³⁵ Kinderman et al., *String Quartets*, p. 170, reproduced in Appendix A.

“His trusting qualities predominated to such an extent that when a fellow composer Friederich Himmel slyly wrote him from Berlin that a lamp for the blind had been invented, Beethoven unhesitatingly broadcast the remarkable news to all his friends.”³⁶

This anecdote serves to show at once the composer’s enthusiasm and faith in human advancement as well as his decided bent toward optimism, even if occasionally ill-founded or naive. Such an attitude may seem foolhardy, but such dedication to humanitarian feeling and thinking with unshaken faith may have been necessary on some level for the production of visionary humanitarian works such as the Ninth Symphony or his *Missa Solemnis*. This trend can be seen throughout Beethoven’s output, notably in works such as the cantata written for the death of Emperor Joseph II, through the *Choral Fantasia*, and later his *Fidelio*.

The composer’s naïveté regarding such issues as the “lamp for the blind” becomes slightly mitigated when faced with the dynamic world of his time. In the realm of science, his generation saw the development of other such Industrial Revolution inventions and developments such as the Spinning Jenny, the steam engine, and the implementation of fossil fuels as an energy source. Only two centuries earlier such advances could not be imagined without invoking concepts of magic. Though formulated in the early seventeenth century, Francis Bacon’s “scientific method” gradually secured its place in European intellectual thinking throughout the eighteenth century. In that growing tradition, Newton’s academic feud with Leibniz stimulated university thinking throughout Europe for the rest of that century. In economics, Europe began a stunning ascent as its population once again began to expand, its banking practice grew and became refined, and the above factors took effect. The financial benefits of colonization also brought a great deal of revenue to parent countries, further inflating European wealth under its mercantilist view of global economics.

³⁶ Solomon, *Beethoven*, p. 84.

These historical factors become necessary for understanding Beethoven scholarship in general, as contextual differences often lead to subtle misinterpretation of biographical facts; it is too easy to see too much of our own background in distant or historical settings. That so much change in so many areas of human experience happened roughly simultaneously is marvelous, but it should be noted that change will elicit more change. Beethoven, for example, can well be viewed as part of a larger arena of transition. He did indeed revolutionize many aspects of the tradition of Western art music, but did so with the spirit of revolution (of many kinds) in the air—when Western art music was *ready* to undergo that transformation.

1.4 The Masonic Factor

The reaction of groups and individuals to these changes occurred in a variety of ways. Some of these could be seen as predictable, and others more remarkable, even if only by virtue of their existence having been made possible by a historically unprecedented setting. A prime example of change eliciting more change in this era that bore major consequence for Beethoven's life path was the emergence and presence of Freemasonry in Europe and its permeation into Bonn. This section will provide a picture of the nature of this group and its place in European society until Beethoven's time.

Freemasonry is a fraternal organization at least in part dedicated to mutual aid of a restricted membership, positive social impact, and general philanthropy.³⁷ It is also probably the most famous example of a secret society. Though its presence is obviously not at all secret, its origin, rituals, aspects of its overall purpose, moral teachings, and community involvement are all

³⁷ The outside opinion of the purpose of Freemasonry varies a great deal, but these descriptions seem to reflect the self-image of Freemasonry. This impression is encapsulated in the writings of Albert Pike, a prominent American Masonic leader of the nineteenth century. See his *Meaning of Masonry*.

ambiguous and sources of curiosity and speculation for the general public. While there is strong evidence and documentation to provide us with answers to some common questions, it appears that much about this group remains officially unconfirmed or unknown, either to the public or perhaps even to the Masonic leadership itself. It is central to the essence of Freemasonry that its teachings and symbols work through the lens of an architectural and building perspective. For instance, Freemasonry utilizes the image of the draftsman's right-angle square at least in part to symbolize a striving for moral straightness through the discipline of the Masonic society.³⁸

We do know that the group can trace its origins to prototype assemblies at least as far back as the early seventeenth century. It is at this point that we have the earliest concrete documentation of a specifically Masonic source,³⁹ though the group likely existed in earlier forms during the Middle Ages. Literature on this topic, much of it of Masonic origin, ascribes mythical beginnings ranging as far back as the College of Roman Architects, Hiram Abiff and his work on the Hebrew Temple of Jerusalem with King Solomon,⁴⁰ or even ancient Egypt.⁴¹ Through the Middle Ages up until the early eighteenth century, the group developed an educational and spiritual self-sufficiency. This was a necessity resulting from the traveling that was imperative for their work: whenever one project was completed, they needed to travel to their next project. The best builders could be expected to be summoned across large distances in Europe.

The professional nature of this group was in some ways peculiar in Medieval and Renaissance Europe. Relatively frequent traveling kept them from forming community roots

³⁸ Mackey, Albert G., *The Lexicon of Freemasonry*, pp. 450-451.

³⁹ McIntosh, Christopher, *Rose Cross*, p. 39. McIntosh cites Elias Ashmole's initiation into a Masonic Lodge in 1646.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 24 and 43.

⁴¹ Howard, p. 5.

wherever they stationed themselves. This stands in stark contrast to most Europeans who remained bound to one place for generations as a result of widespread feudalism. It also would likely encumber facility in communication with surrounding people and authorities, as the language and dialect, as well as the culture would usually not be one's own. The work was also intense, so outside socializing would not necessarily occur frequently. The business aspect of dealing with the Catholic Church also likely had a de-mystifying effect that would not likely be shared or understood by the majority of Christians of the time. Such insularity and feeling of social difference would most likely have been reciprocated and intensified by the surrounding community.

Yet, these traveling builders required great knowledge, skill, and social discipline to support their activities. The solution that appears to have arisen was to educate themselves. While today, this may seem unremarkable, it becomes significant that these builders developed their skill, science and social organization largely apart from the dominant ecclesiastical forces that shaped the rest of society around them. Some pagan traditions were retained, and some ancient educational tactics were developed and employed, such as dividing knowledge into the seven liberal arts.⁴² The lifestyle of these groups had set them apart from the rest of Europe, and the isolation grew into a culture within a culture, with its own insights and perspectives as well as those of its surrounding world.

Because of its characteristic secrecy, it cannot be stated with authoritative certainty what was taught in these guilds or in the modern lodges of Freemasonry. Nor is it clear what the exact scope of Masonic study included at any given historical point. Through its existence, nevertheless, information about the organization has emerged from various venues, such as

⁴² Although some authors imply this to be a Masonic development, this division seems to have been borrowed from the standard curricula of Gothic universities, founded in the eleventh through thirteenth centuries. Older roots of division of knowledge still can be seen in works such as Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. See also footnote 51.

membership lists, publications of essays initially intended for Masonic audiences, or minutes of meetings that somehow ended up in public libraries or private collections. In any case, at least part of the curricula that could be studied in the lodges has therefore become known. While the subjects were wide-ranging, for the purposes of this study, I will list a limited and relevant selection.

In any given Masonic literature, a strong element of Judeo-Christian esoterica prevails. This appears to be the most fundamental element of the group's spiritual system, with a heavy emphasis on the Hebrew lore of the Old Testament. In particular, the passages dealing with the Temple of Solomon in the book of Kings and Chronicles hold central meaning and symbolism for the group. Studies of Greek thought are prevalent as well throughout Masonic sources, especially Pythagoreanism. The Greek myths are also frequently referenced. Egyptian, Babylonian, and other Middle Eastern belief systems and lore are present as well, as are resulting syntheses such as Hermetism and Neo-Platonism. The Freemasonry from Beethoven's time also includes a heavy element of ancient Egyptian influence:⁴³ "Egyptomania gripped the educated classes."⁴⁴ Hinduism certainly captured the Masonic imagination as can be gathered from contemporary writings, but it likely became an integral part of the Masonic system at least as early as the late eighteenth century when men such as Hammer-Purgstall, William Jones, and Herder, himself a Mason, were writing about it in lofty tones.

It seems that no spiritual system appeared uninteresting to Masonic thinkers; reading Masonic discourse reveals a striving for this kind of awareness. It must also be noted that this erudite literacy extended well into the mathematical and astronomical aspect of each culture studied. Whether or not these subjects were all present in the early centuries of Freemasonry is

⁴³ For instance, Peter Branscombe cites Ignaz von Born's essay, *Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier*, as an influential work within the Masonic community in *Die Zauberflöte*, p. 20.

⁴⁴ Solomon, *Late Beethoven*, p. 147.

difficult to ascertain, but the inclination to scrutinize these venues must have been very present from early in its history.

To summarize: in its general philosophy, Freemasonry also assimilates thought from, but not limited to, the following: paganism, the Kabbala, Hermetism, ancient Egyptian thought, Rosicrucianism, Alchemy, Theurgy, Platonism, Neo-Platonism, various mystery schools, the Knights Templar, various philosophical and scientific studies, Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism.

In the early to mid-seventeenth century, English Masonic lodges began to admit non-stoneworkers, accepting dedicated and distinguished men for their ranks. This expanded the membership from professional Masons, who practiced *operative* Masonry, to those who acquainted themselves purely with the non-physical dimension of Freemasonry, which was rooted in metaphor and symbolism. It is this latter form with which it is now most associated. This theoretical and philosophical study of the *Craft* (Freemasonry) became known as *speculative Freemasonry* in distinction to *operative Freemasonry*, which dealt with the physical practice of construction. Whether this was a result of pressure from curious scholars and nobles, or a persuasive stratagem of the Masons to procure positions of large-scale social influence, desire to spread philosophical thought, or any other specific reason is unclear. Whatever the case, the Masonic community since then has become primarily an organization consisting of men of extremely varied backgrounds, fulfilling a spiritual/moral/intellectual purpose for its members rather than merely a practical architectural, engineering, or brick-laying one as had likely been a primary dimension of the group its earliest times.

Freemasonry, developing into its speculative state as we know it today, began its ascent to international influence in 1717, when Masonic lodges in London bound themselves into an organization with centralized authority. After this point, Masonic influence quickly spread to

mainland Europe via France, and within several short decades, throughout the German-speaking lands.⁴⁵

The admittance of non-stone workers into Freemasonry was a major social occurrence that moved in tandem with the blossoming of the Enlightenment. While many fine points of Freemasonry remain even now disputed or misunderstood, it is evident that the group has been driven toward social reform at least in a broad sense.⁴⁶ As it became fashionable and advantageous for monarchs to become or appear benevolent and/or enlightened despots, Freemasonry provided a venue in which they might develop themselves in various ways without publicly losing face or threatening their power. It was also prestigious to be initiated into a society that was shortly before a restricted one, reputed to hold esoteric secrets. Conversely, the growing influence of egalitarian ideals as exemplified by the Freemasons, ever growing in stature and power at that time, applied pressure on all European monarchies to concur with these trends.

The struggle between the ideals of Freemasonry and the preservation of aristocratic systems developed into a waxing and waning battle. When the teenaged Beethoven was old enough to begin partaking in Freemasonry, which given his professional and personal background, would have been a logical step, Imperial favor again fell with concrete consequences for these groups. Several repeals of the freedom of Freemasons to assemble occurred at this time. In Bavaria in 1784, its Elector banned secret societies. Later, on March 2, 1785, a further prohibition was issued banishing the Illuminati founder, Adam Weisshaupt.⁴⁷ The son of a Freemason, Emperor Joseph II was on some level appreciative of the Masonic social

⁴⁵ McIntosh in *Rose Cross* states the date of the first recorded German Masonic lodge as 1737, p. 42.

⁴⁶ While this view of Freemasonry can be sensed in most of its literature, one may consult Albert Pike's *The Meaning of Masonry* as an authoritative statement of the group's self-image. Though this address was likely written at least 25 years after Beethoven's death, its principles seem consistent with those reflected in various sources from Beethoven's life.

⁴⁷ Nettl, *Mozart and Freemasonry*, p. 9.

contribution⁴⁸ which largely coincided with his own social agenda. He was nevertheless wary of the group's secrecy, and consequently imposed the *Freimaurerpatent*, a prohibition of secret assembly on December 11, 1785.⁴⁹

Shortly after Masonic lodges opened their doors to aristocrats and men of distinguished learning for speculative membership, men of distinction from various fields were both attracted to and recruited by the group. The abstract, metaphorical outlook and philosophies proved fascinating and/or inspiring to many of Europe's leading intellectuals of the day. By Beethoven's time, aristocrats were joined by doctors, artists, lawyers, military men, and many other significant figures in seeking admittance into the ranks of the Masons.

1.5 Related Groups

It is important to the understanding of the history of the Freemasons to realize that it was not developing in a linear or neat fashion. Parallel groups such as the Rosicrucians often claimed Masons as members, often confusing members as to the aims of both groups. Splinter groups such as the Illuminati and derivatives of the Knights-Templar broke off from their Masonic parent group. Conflicting divisions existed even under the banner of Freemasonry proper: "Blue Masonry," the form practiced in England emphasizing human equality stood subtly in contrast to the Masonry developed in France, known as Scottish Rite, or "Red Masonry." This emphasized Freemasonry's esoteric side, generating interest in attaining higher levels than the three offered in

⁴⁸ Einstein, Alfred. *Mozart*, p.82. More details appear at: <http://www.mastermason.com/wilmettepark/mozart.html> This source cites: "An e-Zine of Masonic Re-Prints and Extracts from various sources. Compiled by Hugh Young linshaw@cadvision.com". It credits specifically: "BROTHER MOZART AND "THE MAGIC FLUTE" by Newcomb Condee 33 deg". Here, in the Masonic viewpoint, is described an official statement from Joseph II of 1785 on the Freemasons that limits the group's membership, but acknowledges its social advantages.

⁴⁹ Nettl, *Mozart and Freemasonry*, p. 12.

Blue Masonry; the initiate thereby gradually gained the teachings guarded by the enlightened few. Some subtleties of Beethoven's spiritual makeup that evidence themselves in his late works parallel trends of thought that reveal a close kinship with these contrasting groups, particularly the Illuminati.

Several of these groups demand some clarification regarding their place in Beethoven's society. To begin with, Rosicrucianism forms some of the foundation of the emerging Masonic forms of organization. Freemasonry, while having its own doctrines and methods, drew on the model of assembly and outreach strategies of this group, including recruiting learned and influential men, as well as developing lodge confederacies. Rosicrucianism differs from Freemasonry in that it is more centered on traditional Christianity and Gnosis, and more firmly connected with alchemy. Its other primary sources of wisdom are the Old Testament, ancient Egypt, and other arcane writings and thus it "evinces an outlook that runs counter to the *Aufklärung* spirit".⁵⁰

Special mention must be made of the Illuminati, since Beethoven's most influential childhood mentor, Neefe, was a leader in this group. The Illuminati came later than other such societies, and the group could trace their official origin very specifically: It was founded in 1776 in Bavaria by an Ingolstadt University professor of law at that time, Adam Weisshaupt. The structural organization of this group was modeled largely on Freemasonry and the Jesuits⁵¹ under which Weisshaupt was educated. Though ambiguously worded, the Illuminati mission statement declared a more specific sense of purpose and vision for its members than other similar groups of the time:

⁵⁰ McIntosh, *Rose Cross*, p. 35.

⁵¹ Nettl, *Mozart and Freemasonry*, pp. 9-10.

The secret society has for its aim the uniting in a single, lasting group, by means of a given higher interest, of men of independent mind from all parts of the world, men of all conditions and all religions, without prejudice to their freedom of thought, and despite their differences of opinions and emotions; to arouse in them a burning desire for this higher interest and such a responsiveness to it that they will behave though away as if they were present; though subordinate, as equals; though many, as one; that they will do of their own accord, from true conviction, that which no overt force, since the beginning of the world and men, has been able to make them do.⁵²

The Illuminati grew rapidly through its gestation in Masonic lodges, persuading many Masons to join. It is distinguished by its strong anti-religious stance (in spite of its adherence to the Jesuit organizational structure) as well as its commitment to the rise of the business class over monarchy. While these characteristics of the group are more visible now, those who were persuaded to become members at that time were not necessarily clear about the ultimate sense of purpose or self-image of the group's core during this unstable fledgling period against the setting of massive civil and social growth.

The Rosicrucians, Illuminati, Freemasons, and other similar societies (German lands had many) were fast approaching their peak of power and influence. They often intermingled to varying extents, often sharing the same members, most of whom were motivated toward implementing some sort of social change. Dissolution of monarchies and social reform were common goals of these three groups as well as others, so sharing membership was natural at this time. Today, substantial differences of purpose and vision have split common constituencies

⁵² Einstein, *Mozart*, p. 83. Einstein states that this excerpt was taken from Weisshaupt's "sketches of the statutes of the order."

between these organizations, but in Beethoven's day, they remained largely, if coincidentally, bound to each other in the lodges of the most ubiquitous of these groups, the Freemasons.

It was this constellation of esoteric and mystic groups, validated by ancient stature and the interest of brilliant and aristocratic members, which permeated Bonn's intellectual circles in the 1770s. These Masons, in Bonn and elsewhere, were often the same people that were so excited by the progressive tendencies in the sciences, politics, and other spheres. These include many of the above names associated with the dissemination of mythical and Hindu thought, including Herder, Lessing, and Klopstock (see Appendix B). The intellectual current in these organizations had an unusual mixture of liberalism (democracy, rationalism, dissolution of monarchies) and conservatism (preservation of ritual, lore, and archaic wisdom in the hands of initiates). Beethoven's social connections and biography reflected this dichotomy of forward- and backward-looking patterns, especially as evidenced in his later years. Indeed, his whole life proved to be rich with Masonic connections, as will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Chapter 2

The Masonic View of Music

In the last chapter, the various situations that gave rise to the type of speculative thinking that eventually culminated in Freemasonry were examined. As Beethoven's Masonic influence will be traced through several of his late works in Part II of this dissertation, it becomes pertinent to elucidate the view of music that Freemasons held.

Much has been made of Masonic influence in various historical settings when it can be documented. Its egalitarian and benevolent rhetoric can in some cases be easily traced to establishments or deeds associated with the groups, from Shriners' Hospitals to Masonic involvement in the American Revolution. While the depth of consequence is not at all easily assessed or provable, connections persistently exist in certain settings. It is logical that the Freemasons should at least attempt to involve themselves in spheres such as politics, economics, education, philosophy, and medicine, because their goal is essentially the constant improvement of the human race through striving.⁵³ This happens most concretely in the aforementioned spheres of involvement, and therefore the Masonic influence becomes most visible in these contexts.

Yet this group, along with many such groups of the Western esoteric tradition, seems to have a strong interest in music. We shall see in the next chapter the trouble through which so many Masons went in order to launch Beethoven's career. In another example, Mozart was welcomed into the Freemasons and subsequently relied on the financial support of some of his

⁵³ As earlier, for an inside perspective, see Albert Pike's essay, *The Meaning of Masonry*.

brethren, especially Michael Puchberg. In this and other ways, he proved to be less than an ideal personality for the group (financial self-sufficiency is often a prerequisite for admission into Freemasonry), but was very valued nonetheless.

Another example of primary consequence for the music of the Viennese *Aufklärung* is the Baron Gottfried van Swieten, the Prefect of the Imperial Library, a Freemason who was intricately involved with both political and musical figures of the day. Though a distinguished noble and not a musician, van Swieten devoted a large portion of his life, spending large sums of money and energy, to promoting the music of old masters, particularly Johann Sebastian Bach.⁵⁴ Interestingly, he learned of Bach through none other than the Rosicrucian/Masonic King Frederick the Great of Prussia in 1774.⁵⁵ The king was himself a gifted musician dedicated to cultivation of the art and had expressed profound admiration for the old Leipzig master. It seems that many nobles of the late eighteenth century were inclined to revere music and composers in ways that went beyond mere admiration, or certainly at least beyond mere entertainment.

While it is possible that this elevation of the stature of music and permeation of Freemasonry into the highest levels of society could be merely coincidental, the insistent backdrop of Freemasonry and related groups remained ubiquitous wherever there was fine music in the high courts of Vienna or Prussia during the mid- to late eighteenth century. This parallelism becomes a more concrete connection when we examine the view of music held by Masons. The nature and significance of music are philosophically meaningful to the Freemasons. A most relevant passage from the *Confessio Fraternitas*, a defining document of the Rosicrucians, states:

⁵⁴Baron van Swieten at this time founded the *Society of Associated Cavaliers*, a musical association devoted primarily to Baroque masters. Both Mozart and Beethoven received at least some professional and financial assistance from this figure.

⁵⁵ Einstein, *Mozart and Freemasonry*, p. 150.

Whosoever can sing with the voice or play on an instrument so as to attract not the rocks of Amphion, but pearls and gemstones; not the beasts of Orpheus, but the spirit; not Pluto from Tartarus, but the mighty princes of the world: he shall enter the Brotherhood.⁵⁶

This document marks the thinking of the very earliest documented stages of Rosicrucianism, being published in 1615 in Kassel.⁵⁷ This view in turn finds itself representative of Freemasonry since modern *speculative masonry* in large part grew out of the seventeenth-century Rosicrucian movement. Tracing this musical outlook, though rooted in the abstruse recesses of Masonic speculation, to its concrete historical manifestations can become urgently relevant in its implications.

2.1 Prototypical Organization of Masonic Musical Philosophy

In the forming Masonic dogma, music had many different functions, categories, and meanings. Freemasonry strove to understand all esoteric thought, as this undertaking would be necessary for the perfection of the human spirit. To begin with, Masons held to the ancient tradition of epistemic division of learning into the seven liberal arts:⁵⁸ Grammar, Rhetoric, Dialectics (Logic), Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, and Astronomy.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Godwin, Joscelyn, *Harmonies of Heaven and Earth*, p. 24.

⁵⁷ McIntosh, *Rose Cross*, p. 25.

⁵⁸ Though commonly attributed to Martianus Capella, the scheme of a multi-course study for individual development has been traced by Christopher Flannery, in his article “Liberal Arts and Liberal Education” to Marcus Trentius Varro, ca. 1st century B.C.

⁵⁹ Howard, *Occult Conspiracy*, p. 4.

The seven-point scheme has mystical underpinnings,⁶⁰ and was subsequently divided in a set of three, the *Trivium*, plus a set of four, called the *Quadrivium*. The *Trivium* (Grammar, Rhetoric, and Dialectics) contained essential knowledge for communication and served as a fundamental basis for the higher studies of the remaining four, which comprised the *Quadrivium*. Music was understood in this context not as entertainment or an art, but as an abstract mathematical form, which can be traced to traditions at least as old as those of Pythagoras. Morris Kline, a historian of mathematics, cites an example of this perspective in Leibniz, showing that this perspective survived even into the modern era: “Music is the pleasure the human soul experiences from counting without being aware that it is counting.”⁶¹ Kline continues: “Arithmetic, geometry, spherics (astronomy), and music comprised the famous quadrivium. The four subjects were linked further by being described as pure, stationary, moving, and applied number, respectively.” Proclus’s succinct definitions of the *Quadrivium* subjects give another insightful view of the meaning that music held in this system:

Arithmetic is the Discrete At Rest
 Astronomy is the Discrete In Motion
 Geometry is the Continuous At Rest
 Music is the Continuous In Motion⁶²

This system was the common method employed in Gothic universities. The most revered figure for the study of music in this setting, however, was Anicius Manlius Severinus Boëthius, writing in the early sixth century. When the Roman Empire disintegrated part by part during the fourth through sixth centuries, it left a widening vacuum of central authority and communication

⁶⁰ See Mackey’s entry on the number seven in his *Lexicon*, p. 437-8.

⁶¹ Kline, *Mathematics*, p. 287.

⁶² Proclus, *Euclid’s Elements, In primum Euclidis elementorum librum commentarii*.

lines in the arts, just as it did in politics. Much knowledge on ancient theory and practice of music was lost, and remaining writings were dispersed, thus increasing the difficulty of assembling the overall “big picture” of the art held by the ancient western world. This musical diaspora was mirrored in the performing community as well as that of the learned; renowned performers and scholars could not easily assemble across an economically depressed and war-ravaged Europe.

Rome still maintained a certain cultural primacy in Boethius’s day, which allowed him to ascend to a position of prominence, attaining the position of “Consul in 510 and subsequently counselor to Theodoric, King of the Ostrogoths.”⁶³ Influential in philosophy in general, his view of music became a standard of Medieval Europe and continued to be studied seriously well into the Enlightenment.

The writings of Boethius sustained the view of music as a subject worthy of the most serious reflection. He divided music into three categories that encompass not only all that we now consider and debate to be music (that which is audible) but extending to the realm of general human experience (for instance, the non-audible “music” of the soul), and finally to the nature, mechanics, and spiritual aspects of the cosmos in general. These categories are:

1. *Musica instrumentalis* – that which can be produced on instruments, and is audible to the ear.
2. *Musica humana* – that which is of the human body
3. *Musica mundana* – That which is produced by heavenly bodies moving through their orbits

Musica instrumentalis was, as its name implies, music that would be produced on musical instruments or sung. This is music in its most familiar sense: that which is audible, whether used

⁶³ Godwin, *Music, Mysticism and Magic*, p. 43.

for entertainment, study or worship. It is considered to be the lowest of the three divisions.

Important to the Masonic view is that in spite of its low stature as compared with the other two, *Musica instrumentalis* can be viewed as a metaphor for the higher two realms of musical experience.

The other two divisions enter speculative realms; in this system, both are held to be inaudible except in rare cases. In his *De Institutione Musica*, Boethius writes of *Musica humana*:

Now one comes to understand the music of the human being by examining his own being. For what unites the incorporeal existence of the reason with the body except a certain harmony (*coaptatio*) and, as it were, a careful tuning of low and high pitches in such a way that they produce one consonance? What unites the parts of man's soul, which, according to Aristotle, is composed of a rational and irrational part? In what way are the elements of man's body related to each other or what holds together the various parts of his body in an established order?⁶⁴

Describing *Musica mundana*:

... [The music of the universe] is best observed in those things which one perceives in heaven itself, or in the structure of the elements, or in the diversity of the seasons. How could it be that such a swift heavenly machine should move silently in its course? ... For some stars drift higher, others lower, and they are all moved with such an equal amount of energy that a fixed order of their courses is reckoned through their diverse inequalities. Thus there must be some fixed order of musical modulation in this celestial motion.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 46-47.

The musical views espoused by Boethius in his *De Institutione Musica* along with the light-hearted and satirical *De Nuptiis Harmonie et Philologie* of Martianus Cappella form the crux of learned musical studies in the Middle Ages. In some cases, this view held even through the eighteenth century, though by its late decades, serious students of speculative music or philosophy would have been aware of and had access to the sources from which Cappella and Boethius drew, though often misinterpreted or misrepresented.⁶⁶

Since all of academic Europe at this time was heavily influenced by these two authors, for better or worse, it is likely that the Freemasons also took their systems of thought seriously from them during these peak centuries of their prestige. Although connections between Gothic academia and Masonic dogma can be seen, it is also clear that Freemasonry took a central interest in other sources as they became more and more available. Notably, these two works drew from sources much older and more prestigious (at least from our modern perspective) than themselves. During Beethoven's lifetime, these sources became more prevalent and familiar to those who would seek them. They reveal many of the reasons why music was viewed by the Masons as seriously as it was and in some cases, still is: as a profound intellectual and spiritual pursuit in no way inferior to any other discipline, providing sacred and secular enlightenment to those who were gifted and disciplined enough to attain it. The rest of this chapter will explore the most fundamental and influential of these sources as understood and utilized in Freemasonry and similar groups.

2.2 Pythagorean and Platonic Roots

The oldest traceable body of knowledge and intellectual tradition from which Boethius and Cappella draw is that of Pythagoreanism (sixth century BC). It is also one of the most

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35, 43-44.

fundamental of these sources. Though Pythagoras left no extended writings, he inspired several speculative biographies from authors of a much later date, including Iamblichus of the third and fourth centuries AD, and Simplicius in the sixth century. His ability extended beyond the fields of mathematics and philosophy with which he is most often associated. Regarding music, he is most famous for his theoretical mathematically-based study of acoustical properties of the monochord. More unusually however, he is also credited by his worshipful followers with the rare ability of “hearing and grasping the universal harmony and consonance of the spheres, and the stars that moved through them...”⁶⁷ Allegedly this was accomplished “by the employment of a certain indescribable divinity, difficult of apprehension, through which he extended his powers of hearing, fixing his intellect on the sublime symphonies of the world.”⁶⁸

Pythagoras’ significance in the history of the Western world is vigorously asserted by Joscelyn Godwin:

Pythagoras is the very midwife of our epoch, ushering it to birth from the dusky, mythic past, sowing the seeds of a new consciousness, a new possibility for growth after the plan laid up in heaven.

...In his emphasis on Number—the keystone of his doctrine—he revealed the secret without which modern technology would have been impossible. It is applied mathematics, after all, that has led to the so-called conquest of Nature.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras*, chap. 15, can be found in Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie’s translation in *The Pythagorean Sourcebook*, p. 72.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ From the forward to Guthrie’s *Pythagorean Sourcebook*, p. 11.

In the same essay, Godwin squarely states the esoteric meaning of music in this system. It is this ancient root from which so much esoteric musical understanding and speculation grows. He states:

In the first place he seems to have used Music, both for the intellectual benefits of its speculative side and for the effects of practical music on psycho-physical health. Music is the art in which the Numbers penetrate directly to the heart; in Mathematics they occupy the brain. But it is not music alone that incarnates the transcendent virtues of Number. As it does so in time, so the visual arts do in space, depending no less for their beauty on harmony and correct proportion. ...Disobedience to harmonic laws leads to ugliness, which is a sin against the Muses and a denial of the divinely beautiful order of the cosmos. Obedience to them, on the other hand, presupposes a state of soul open also to Intelligible Beauty; music and architecture open our souls in the same way.⁷⁰

While Pythagoras may be the most fundamental philosophical source, perhaps the weightiest from which the Masonic/esoteric view of music emerges is the corpus of musical writings of Plato. While there are no single works of his devoted exclusively to music or its theory, his thoughts are woven with musical threads throughout other philosophical fabrics. Most notably, *The Republic* and *Timeaus* deal with musical phenomena involved in the creation of the world, its material and spiritual integrity and its role and nature in the afterlife. A perspective on the power of music that was widespread in the ancient world is articulated in *The Republic*. Plato argues here that music has the power to either elevate or degrade a civilization by its power over

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

human mood, or passions. Arguing why music and poetry are the most important subjects of education, Plato's character *Socrates* explains:

First, because rhythm and harmony permeate the inner part of the soul more than anything else, affecting it most strongly and bringing it grace, so that if someone is properly educated in music and poetry, it makes him graceful, but if not, then the opposite. Second, because anyone who has been properly educated in music and poetry will sense it acutely when something has been omitted from a thing and when it hasn't been finely crafted or finely made by nature. And since he has the right distastes, he'll praise fine things, be pleased by them, receive them into his soul, and, being nurtured by them, become fine and good. He'll rightly object to what is shameful, hating it while he's still young and unable to grasp the reason, but, having been educated in this way, he will welcome the reason when it comes and recognize it easily because of its kinship with himself.⁷¹

Music's role in the divinely apportioned cosmos is expressed in the last book of *The Republic*, with some references outright and others veiled in mathematical symbolism in the style of *Timeaus*. Here is a prototype of a major concept of ancient theology related by the character *Socrates*—*the music of the spheres*.

This idea, variously termed *music of the spheres*, *harmony of the spheres*, or similar variants, was a cosmological model growing out of various mystery schools of the ancient world. Early traces can be detected in Pythagorean thought, gaining more definition in Plato's works, and eventually predominating cosmological thought from roughly the third century BCE to 1619 CE, when Johannes Kepler completed his astronomical treatise *Harmonices Mundi*, the last

⁷¹ *Republic*, bk. III, ch. 401d-402a, ed. By John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson.

serious treatment of this system. In short, it describes a geocentric model of the universe surrounded by a series of concentric orbits through which various heavenly bodies revolve.

This prototype, appearing at the end of *The Republic*, describes a cosmic axle around which the heavenly bodies rotate in their circular orbits:

And up above on each of the rims of the circles stood a Siren, who accompanied its revolution, uttering a single sound, one single note. And the concord of the eight notes produced a single harmony. And there were three other beings ... the Fates, the daughters of Necessity: Lachesis, Clotho, and Atropos. ... they sang to the music of the Sirens. Lachesis sang of the past, Clotho of the present, and Atropos of the future.⁷²

The cosmology described above is expressed both in mythical allegory and numerological/arithmetic symbolism. Dimensions of music such as theoretical, mathematical, and temperament formulae as well as the Harmonic and Arithmetic Mean are probed in these works. They function sometimes as metaphors for proper socialization, government, celestial mechanics, the structure of the soul-journey after death, or possibly even for their own abstract beauty. These writings often simultaneously lay foundations for a variety of topics upon which later thinkers would develop and differentiate entire philosophical systems. Music theory, mathematics, or numerology, for example, were all inextricably interconnected and not clearly differentiated in this setting. A prime example occurs in Plato's Chapter 35 of *Timeaus*, where he describes his very abstract view of Creation:

From an essence impartible, always subsisting according to sameness of being, and from a nature divisible about bodies, he mingled from both a third form of essence, having a middle subsistence between the two. And again, between that

⁷² *Ibid.*, bk. X, ch. 617b-c.

which is impartible and that which is divisible about bodies, he placed the nature of the same and different. And taking these, now they are three, he mingled them all into one idea.⁷³

This excerpt is in some sense an articulation of Pythagorean philosophy. Plato's discussion of the "essence impartible" occurs often in his theological discourses, and is reflective of Pythagoras' *Monad*. The *Monad* is the state of unity expressed in Pythagorean terms by the number One. Plato's concept of "a nature divisible about bodies" reflects the Pythagorean *Dyad*, or the phenomenon of difference and plurality. That they should be "mingled ... into one idea" shows a most important early phenomenon for Western thought and its esoteric traditions—an overarching oneness co-existing with plurality forms the foundation for Monotheism within the context of an outwardly polytheistic ancient world. This concept shaped not only the Jewish and Christian religions but many other movements as well, and held a central place in many philosophical trends and alchemy, to name only a few.

It must be duly noted that forms of monotheism exist prior to Greek philosophy in Egypt and among the Hebrews. Yet the presence of Greek monotheism doubtlessly had a facilitating and validating effect on its general Western adoption by virtue of its rational and civilized approach to living. Otherwise, this topic seems to be presented in a more purely mystical framework. This theme of plurality out of oneness would later become a cornerstone of the Freemasons and other esoteric groups.

The emanation of music out of the Monadic "One" was studied in this context in terms of various aspects of mathematics associated with music. These were often in veiled terms, but unmistakably musically based. These musical sections occur in various parts of Plato's work, some significant ones concentrated in sections dealing with cosmogony or genesis issues.

⁷³ *Timeaus*, 35a.

Continuing his discourse in *Timaeus*, for example, Plato's main character explains the proportioning of the cosmos:

...In the first place, he received one part from the whole. Then he separated a second part, double of the first; afterwards, a third, sesquialters of the second, but triple the first; then a fourth, double of the second; in the next place a fifth, triple of the third; a sixth, octuple of the first; and lastly a seventh, twenty-seven times more than the first.⁷⁴

This portion of this difficult excerpt illustrates the importance of numerology and the level at which mathematical phenomena were scrutinized in this system. Essentially, this excerpt “clarifies the sequence of numbers as being the squares and cubes of 2 and 3, expanding the Pythagorean ‘first female’ and ‘first male’ numbers into the three dimensions required to form a spatial cosmos.”⁷⁵ The paragraph continues in a similar style, later explaining that the Demiurge who creates the cosmos utilized the formulae for arithmetic and harmonic means. To clarify, let us list the set of numbers resulting from this exponential formula:

Powers of two: 2^1 , 2^2 , and $2^3 = 2$, 4, and 8

Powers of three: 3^1 , 3^2 , and $3^3 = 3$, 9, and 27

The above powers in order: 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, and 27.

The ratios resulting from the above adjacent numbers provide us with standard acoustical ratios forming the fundamental musical intervals of this era:

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 35b-c.

⁷⁵ Godwin, *Harmony of the Spheres*, p. 404.

1:2 = octave; 2:3 = perfect fifth; 3:4 = perfect fourth; 4:8 = 1:2 = octave; 8:9 = whole step; 9:27 =
1:3 = perfect 12th.

Limiting these ratios to the span of an octave, and converting the 1:2 octave to 6:12 for the purposes of avoiding decimals, yields:⁷⁶

Harmonic Mean	Arithmetic Mean
$A : 2AB/A+B$	$\dots (A+B)/2$
6	8
C	F

: B
: 9 : 12
: G : C

This musical structure defined by a root and the intervals above it of a Perfect Fourth, a Perfect Fifth, and its octave, is known in Pythagorean thought as the *Musical Tetraktys*. It forms the skeleton of our modern major scale, and provides the materials with which to complete it as well. Within the octave, the formulae for both the Harmonic and Arithmetic Means provide us with the Perfect intervals of a Fourth, a Fifth, and the Octave. The difference between the two means yields the whole step. The remainder of the scale was formulated by insertion of the whole step into the gaps between the root and the Fourth and then between the Fifth and the upper octave. It is not a perfect fit, so the result was another smaller interval between the third and fourth scale degree and the seventh and upper octave. This interval assumed the rather tiny ratio

⁷⁶ This method taken from David Fideler, *Pythagorean Sourcebook*, pp. 26-27.

243:256, and bore the name “*Leimma*,” translating to: “leftover.” To our modern ears, this tuning system results in large whole steps, and half steps that sound quite small.

This fascinating process is no mere historical novelty. This tuning system, derived experimentally from the monochord, revealed a most elegant and simple numerical theory behind the nature of musical scales. Fidler notes that “It also suggested for the first time that if a mathematical harmony underlies the realm of tone and music, that Number may account for other phenomena in the cosmic order—for example, planetary motion...this being the famous ‘Music of the Spheres.’”⁷⁷ The consequences of this association between music and learnedness (especially astronomy) amongst the Pythagoreans clearly resonate for approximately two millennia, ending with Kepler’s *Harmonices Mundi*.

This topic was explored by many brilliant minds over the two millennia during which it thrived, including Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Boethius, Philo, and even Copernicus from his heliocentric position. Although this scientific view was dropped after Kepler’s attempts, the concept of *music of the spheres* continued to be studied primarily for its abstract meanings, whether in a theological, allegorical, or poetic setting. It metamorphosed from a model of the physical universe into moral and spiritual analogies which remained meaningful to some groups. Some sects of the Rosicrucians, for example, deal seriously with astrology in this context even in modern times.⁷⁸

Freemasons are also likely to include this study as a metaphor for the soul’s progress toward enlightenment, particularly as reflected by the study of the ascension through the spheres in the style described in the *Corpus Hermeticum*. This allegedly Egyptian text (it was discovered

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* p.28.

⁷⁸ Even in the twentieth century, astrological models were being taught by Max Heindel to his organization, the Rosicrucian Fellowship as can be demonstrated in their periodical, *Rays from the Rose Cross: A Magazine of Mystic Light*. Oceanside, Calif.: Rosicrucian Fellowship.

only much later in Latin) is of a more mystical nature than its Greek counterparts, and deals with the spheres as a narrative of the afterlife as each one purifies the soul of the deceased.

2.3 Greek Myth

While writings on the *music of the spheres* yield a great deal of articulate and technical thinking, there exists an influential dimension of Greek thought dealing with music either in a mysterious way or one whose symbols and meanings have since been obscured or lost. The two most substantial mythological examples are the myth of Orpheus, and that of Amphion.

In the myth of Orpheus, Apollo's divine tutelage causes his skill of singing and playing the lyre to become so great that he can charm people, beasts, and even sticks and rocks. The story seems to be a dramatization of the persuasive power commonly attributed to music, and seems to support such ideas as Plato's suggestion that music had power over the character of the individual and society in his *Republic*. His descent into the underworld and success in the charming of Persephone and Hades provides metaphorical lessons on many levels of interest to those who seek to persuade. Orpheus' death also provides a view of immortality that appears to promise illumination of the mystery of death: after he was torn apart by the Maenads while singing in the throes of grief, his head was preserved and worshipped, while occasionally singing post-mortem.

The myth of Amphion seems to suggest applicability of technical musical secrets, should only they be learned. In this lesser-known myth, Amphion and his brother Zethos grew up together with contrasting personalities. Amphion as a boy received a lyre from Hermes, who instructed him on the instrument. Robert Graves summarizes:

Zethos, the more practical brother, taunted him for his devotion to the instrument, which seemed to prevent him from doing anything useful. But later when the

twins had conquered Thebes and were occupied in fortifying the city, it was Amphion's turn to smile. The music of that lyre caused the stones to slide effortlessly into place, while Zethos toiled to shift them with his own brawn. Thus the walls of Seven-Gated Thebes were raised through the power of music.⁷⁹

Godwin opens his book, *The Harmonies of Heaven and Earth*, with this myth. He discusses its notable similarities with the myth of Orpheus, but with a significant difference. Amphion's myth involves stones, and again like that of Orpheus, even sticks and rocks were charmed, but in Amphion's story, he constructs an engineering feat—one which requires knowledge and skill: a feat of masonry. This reference would not be overlooked by the Freemasons.

One argument put forth by Godwin is that this could be a metaphor for the superiority of mathematical skill and understanding over toilsome ignorance, which is often scornful of higher knowledge as a result of a lack of understanding. Amphion's musical skill is not just a metaphor for knowledge of engineering; it exemplifies the power of musical knowledge itself, as intimacy with this art could lead to mastery over the abstract framework of human and/or earthly endeavor.

2.4 Judeo-Christian Concept of Esoteric Sound

Freemasonry does not appear to dismiss any form of theology easily, but it could be said that Greek and Hebrew thought enjoy positions of primacy in Masonic dogma. While Hebrew esoteric writing appears to deal less with music and sound than that of other cultures, it nevertheless has instances of great influence on later musical esoteric thought. It is of a decidedly more mystic nature than that of most other mathematically inclined cultures, including those of

⁷⁹ Graves, *Greek Myths*, vol. I, p.257.

Greece, Persia, Egypt and Babylon. Two examples stand out for their meaningful implications: the Creation myth of Genesis, and the battle of Jericho.

Creation as accounted in *Genesis 1-2:4* can certainly prove interesting in its open claims, but some things, namely here the role of sound, come clear by implication. Here, God states: “Let there be —” At this moment by the will of God, aspects of Creation come about *ex nihilo* (from nothing) or *ex deo* (from god). In either case, the role of sound becomes most significant. Here God’s will is manifest in spoken word. With the great powers attributed to the Hebrew god, it is interesting to note that God speaks things into existence, not *only* wills them so. Prior to creation itself, he has nothing to command, therefore it cannot be said that the spoken word here has a communicative role. This sounding “word” of God has formative and creative power in this account.

As a possible view of the matter: in the case of *ex nihilo*, God’s spoken word is loaded with conceptual power, bringing the world into being, thereby inventing what is ultimately a sonic existence. In the case of *ex deo*, the spoken word is loaded with God’s own divine substance. The words emanated from God create the world out of this divine substance, here in the form of sound, implying all matter is somehow based upon divine sound. With either interpretation, the meaningful aspect to this essay is that sound bears all creation, either in the form of mental conception, or as sound being the purest, the prior, divine substance or divinity itself. Remarkably, the implication of the “spoken Creation” presupposes that sound is the initial thing of the cosmos – before matter or even light. Very much like Plato’s concept, but without explicit mathematics, this Creation account casts sound and its formal study, music,⁸⁰ into a most prestigious position by those who would consider these implications.

⁸⁰ It should be emphasized here that in the ancient world, the study of music did not distinguish its artistic principles from acoustical ones.

The other prime example of the power of sound in the Old Testament is the story of Jericho, *Joshua, 5:13-6:27*. This bears some resemblance to the myth of Amphion, though with a destructive rather than a constructive aim. In this legend, Joshua had crossed into the outlying territory of the city of Jericho. While the city remained fortified in its state of siege under the Israelites, Yahweh gave his most unusual military instructions to Joshua to overcome the stalemate:

Have all the soldiers circle the city, marching once around it. Do this for six days, with seven priests carrying ram's horns ahead of the ark. On the seventh day march around the city seven times, and have the priests blow the horns. When they give a long blast on the ram's horns and you hear that signal, all the people shall shout aloud. The wall of the city will collapse, and they will be able to make a frontal attack.⁸¹

In the rest of the account, Joshua in turn obeyed, the city wall fell as predicted, and the Hebrews won the battle.

How to interpret this passage presents difficulties of varying sorts. Often such passages are explained away as yet another example of how one must obey divine law with exactitude, no matter how strange or illogical each step may seem—a lesson of faith. Examining this story just one step further could be said to reveal a respect for the power of sound as a potential martial manifestation of God. A further interpretation could be that the spirit and morale of the Israelites, raised by shouting and use of proper modes of music, as Plato would prescribe, while under the sharpening sociological effect of perceived divine intervention, ascended to heights that allowed them to overcome physical barriers that were before impassable while in a more normal state of mind. This would be consistent with the interpreters of the myth of Amphion who view the ease

⁸¹ *Joshua, 6:3-5, New American Bible.*

of the wall's construction as a result of morale improvement by way of actual workers who indulged in work song.

While these interpretations are entertained by many, they do not account for some details that seem to be significant. A most notable example, and a subtlety which will receive treatment in the discussion of Beethoven's Op. 131,⁸² is the numerological parallelism that exists between this story and the other Biblical sound reference—Creation. In addition to the sonic aspect of both stories, both also share the same time frame: seven days, grouped six days plus one. This grouping seems to suggest a numerological or mathematical meaning which has been peripherally discussed by Ernest McClain,⁸³ and will be examined in the discussion of the Op.131. While there does not yet seem to be a satisfactory explanation for the numerical structure of the tale of Jericho, the presence of a numerological/mathematical meaning seems very plausible.

A last but remarkable possibility is to interpret this story in a literal way—either wholly or partially. While too many specifics are missing to thoroughly investigate the matter of Jericho, scientific advances in the twentieth century have provided hitherto unconsidered hints that sonic power could indeed have destructive capability over dense or rigid matter. This conjecture is based on many examples of the physical powers of sound as demonstrated by modern acoustical developments. Two instances of this phenomenon will be elaborated here.

The first is the power residing in nodal points in vibrating, string-like bodies, and is exemplified in the collapse of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge in Washington in the 1930's. The bridge was carefully constructed and well engineered. Even after the disaster, the engineering inspection committee assigned to the investigation stated that they would have decided identically

⁸² See Chapter 6.3, Creation Cosmology.

⁸³ *Myth of Invariance*, pp. 124-26. He also cites Philo's "rigorously Pythagorean interpretation" of the Creation story.

with the initial engineers regarding design. Ultimately, the bridge was stated to have been destroyed by clashing nodal points as a result of high winds swaying the bridge in several different simultaneous waves, *not* the high winds themselves.⁸⁴ While this example is not audible, the sonic principle remains clear. This case was unusual in the engineering world, and is still taught in physics classes today to exemplify physical ramifications of waves and their nodes—identical phenomena to those studied in acoustics.

The other example, more relevant to Jericho, is that of the relatively recently developed field of Lithotripsy, which utilizes shockwaves to break up gall and kidney stones as a non-invasive alternative to surgery. No incision is made; only pressure waves focused on the specific area is asserted. This acoustically-based practice, while statistically less effective than surgery, has succeeded in destroying gall and kidney stones by sonic means. Similar effects in a different arena can be observed in minor property damage caused by the sonic booms of supersonic aircraft.⁸⁵

That sound has substantial physical power is now widely acknowledged. Many other examples exist, and applied acoustics is a steadily growing field, including a broad range of implementation. One company, Qsonica, LLC, states:

Misonix Sonicators are now owned by Qsonica, LLC, in a partnership that brings together decades of ultrasonic engineering and application expertise. Since the early 70's, the applications for ultrasonic liquid processors have grown exponentially. Today our products can be found across the globe in thousands of

⁸⁴ U.S. Federal Works Agency, *Failure of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge*.

⁸⁵ For a list of sonic impact power potential, see Dryden Flight Research Center's *Space Shuttles and Sonic Booms*. Pub. As FS-DFRC-95(09)-017, by NASA, Aug. 1995.

laboratories with applications spanning the fields of microbiology, geology, life sciences, research, engineering and food processing, to name just a few.

Over the years, our product line has also expanded to include ultrasonic cleaners, ultrasonic soldering irons, and a full line of sonicator accessories, such as probes, cup horns, floccells and sound enclosures.⁸⁶

In light of such modern insights, the myths of Amphion and Jericho could conceivably be based on high-level insights into acoustics stemming from an unseen source. While many other such examples regarding scientific knowledge of the ancient world exist, at present this hypothesis remains only conjecture. What emerges as indisputable is that these myths warrant music and sound as sources of knowledge or power or both, whether directly or in metaphor.

2.5 Om

Hinduism occupies a crucial place in this study in spite of its late entrance into Masonic consideration. There is little if any mention of India among early writings of the Masonic tradition. Albert G. Mackey, for instance, cites not a single chapter dealing with India in his authoritative collection, *The History of Freemasonry*. Chapter 1 discusses the dissemination of Hindu concepts through Europe in the Enlightenment via fascinated Indologists, notably William Jones, Hammer-Purgstall, Bartholomaeo, Herder, the Schlegel brothers, and Duperron. This explosion of Indic study generated great interest in the contemporary Freemasons. These scholars provided translations of sacred Hindu text and literature, as well as their own essays of reflection on these texts and general cultural observations. The linguistic connection between Sanskrit and European languages discovered by Jones, for instance, would have been of prime importance to

⁸⁶ <http://www.sonicator.com/site/about-us.aspx>.

Freemasons. The depth and scope of the Vedas and Upanishads,⁸⁷ of which European intellectuals were becoming increasingly aware, captivated many scholars, and would have also been aligned with much Masonic philosophy.

The fever of Indic study that swept through European universities and academies revealed a contribution to the study of sacred sound/music that was distinct from its Western tradition. There are aspects of Hindu study of sacred sound that resemble such study in the West, such as similar mathematical basis. Its most prominent phenomenon however, the sacred syllable *Om*, is quite unique.

The meaning of the “Om” or “Aum”, as it is often spelled, is complex, and has elusive layers of meaning in denotative, connotative, symbolic, and metaphorical dimensions. A cursory explanation crafted for the Western mind is provided in an old *New York Times* article:

Meditation on the syllable Om consisted in a long-continued repetition of that syllable with a view of drawing the thoughts away from all other subjects, and thus concentrating them on some higher object of thought of which that syllable was made to be a symbol.⁸⁸

The Om is one of the most profound concepts of Hinduism, and naturally any succinct account of it such as the article above, no matter how articulate, could illustrate the scope with which Hindus view it. Among their scriptures, its most thorough discussion takes place in the *Mandukya Upanishad*, an Upanishad, or Hindu sacred philosophical text, dedicated entirely to the elucidation of the “Aum” (as it is articulated in this Upanishad). Though it is the shortest of the Upanishads (12 verses), it is densely

⁸⁷ The *Upanishads* became available in Latin for the first time in 1804, translated by Duperron.

⁸⁸ Müller, Max. June 15, 1879.

written and reveals a great deal of the Hindu ontology that is embodied in their concept of Aum. The opening verse provides a thesis of the subsequent elaboration of the syllable's meaning:

Harih Aum! AUM, the word, is all this, the whole universe. A clear explanation of it is as follows: All that is past, present and future is, indeed, AUM. And whatever else there is, beyond the threefold division of time—that also is truly AUM.

Aum is spelled with its three-letter version here because of a four-part symbolism that resides in it. Each letter symbolizes a different state of consciousness, with the fourth part, that which is beyond time and space, being represented by the silence—the lack of Aum's audibility before and after its physical utterance.

The Bhagavad-Gita provides at least two important instances of the of the meaning of Om. The first, 8:13, regards the Om and its understanding as a key to entering Brahman, the utmost of spiritual attainment. Lord Krishna, in the context of explaining yogic focus and devotion as a means to end the cycle of reincarnation and finally unite with cosmic oneness, states of Om: “Uttering the single syllable ‘Om’—Brahman—meditating on me, he who goes forth, renouncing the body, goes to the supreme goal.”

The other example from this text, 9:17, impresses upon the reader the scope and pervasiveness of the Om. The avatar Krishna, while verbally revealing the nature of his purely divine self, Vishnu, equates himself with the syllable. Though only the said verse is quoted here, the implications of the Om equating with Vishnu only really become clearer within the context of the entire Bhagavad-Gita as intending to be the most ubiquitous and awesome of conceptions. The passage reads: “I am the father of the universe, the mother, the establisher, the grandfather,

the object of knowledge, the purifier, the sacred syllable ‘Om’, the Rig, Sama, and Yajur Vedas.’” While this bears some relation to European cosmology of mystic sound, the inner dimension of soundless sound or silent music is much more prevalent and has the function of liberation from the burdensome eternal striving that Hinduism associates with living.

To European minds, sacred sound emerges from Hinduism as new and conceptually unique among the corresponding Western concepts. The various meanings of Om clearly impressed those Masonic initiates who studied esoteric sound and music. What warrants so much discussion regarding Freemasonry as related to Indology in this period is that these initiates were not merely peripheral groups or individuals of little immediate or tangible consequence. These figures were often in the center of intellectual or social influence, such as Herder, the figure largely responsible for the spread of an inflated view of “sacred India”. Because the profusion of Indic studies were produced mostly after Jones’ 1786 essay in Sanskrit linguistics, this view would have emerged simultaneously with Beethoven’s own career. This accounts for the absence of Indic influence in his predecessors’ work, even though the two most prominent—Mozart and Haydn—were both Freemasons. This metaphysical dimension of sound, fresh to European thought, captured their imaginations and logically found its way into Masonic circles.

2.6 Hermetic Studies

The secret societies concurrent with Beethoven would characteristically have assumed into their own systems a body of thought known as Hermeticism. In this regard, Harvard Professor Emeritus Gilles Quispel has said that “[during the seventeenth century] Hermetic writings lost their general fascination but lived on in secret societies such as the Freemasons and the Rosicrucians.”⁸⁹ Ascribing a region and era of origin to this movement seems to be split

⁸⁹ Quispel, in his preface to *The Way of Hermes*, p. 9.

between ancient Egypt and Greece. This comes as no surprise as there was a strong flow of mystery teachings between the two countries since at least the days of Pythagoras. While much Greek esoteric knowledge could be traced to Egypt, the intellectual bond between the two is most visible in this movement, as they claim authorship of their sacred texts from the god Hermes himself, who is acknowledged as one in the same among initiates as the ibis-headed scribe god of Egypt, Thoth. By other Hermetic accounts, Hermes is thought to be “an ancient Egyptian sage”.⁹⁰

The primary source of this system is *The Corpus Hermeticum*, discovered in 1460 by Leonardo di Pistoia, a monk assigned to find and retrieve various types of ancient texts by Cosimo d’Medici. This text became famous before eighteenth-century Freemasonry was developing in its prototypical forms, such as early Rosicrucianism. It was concurrent with the Renaissance, and was very much a part of its inspiration. This text has strong Gnostic implications, and like its Hindu counterparts, deals heavily in ontological and metaphysical thought. Its subject is primarily the relationship between the individual and an all-pervading god via the *nous*, or roughly, “mind,” “intellect,” consciousness, or “spirit.” This text, rich in sonic contemplation and awareness, is a distinct body of thought, though some of these aspects echo those of various other traditions. Sacred sound appears here in several different forms.

The first instance to appear in the *Corpus*, unfolding in the first six chapters, is consciousness conceptualizing clear thoughts in the form of what is called the *Word*. This comes through what initially appears to be the *Nous* of the individual. Upon later enlightenment however, this *Word*, along with our sense of individual consciousness, is realized to be only a portion of an ultimate framework of the supreme divine spirit. The first example of this bears a strong conceptual resemblance to Judaic Creation:

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

Since the Creator made the whole cosmos, not with hands, but by the Word, understand that he is present and always is, creating all things, being one alone, and by his will producing all beings. ...[The Creator's body] is not fire, nor water, nor air, nor breath, but through it all things exist.⁹¹ (4:1)

The Judaic resemblance is present not only in that the cosmos in this context is created by a *Word*, but also in its implications. Here, the last sentence clarifies that the cosmos is created *ex deo*, and the added phrase “not with hands” also draws attention to the holy nature of the *Word* of the Creator. It is also explained earlier in a passage whose meaning seems suggestive of the Greek *logos*:

...That light [of consciousness]... is I, *Nous*, your God, who was before the watery substance which appeared out of the darkness; and the clear Word from *Nous* is the Son of God. ...That which sees and hears within you is the Word of the Lord, and *Nous* is God the Father. They are not separate from each other, for their union is life. (1:6)

The next instance of divine sound is one of fundamental importance to many schools of esoteric thought. In the first book in chapters 24-26, the *Nous* of Hermes reveals to him an account of the *music of the spheres*. This clearly has less mathematical basis than Plato's account in *The Republic*, but is of a more allegorical nature. In these chapters, the soul which has heeded the *Nous* departs after death and begins to ascend through seven spheres, each of which strips him of earthly energies until he/she is only his or her purest self. In the eighth sphere, the soul experiences welcome among other souls who have completed like journeys. The ninth and final

⁹¹ Hermes Trismegistus, *Corpus Hermeticum*. Nock, ed. Trans. A.J. Festugiere.

sphere merges the last bit of individuality in a state of unity with God, thereby “becoming God” (1:26).

Another major sonic topic surfaces here—its absence, silence:

...The sleep of the body became the sobriety of the soul, the closing of the eyes became true vision, my silence became pregnant with the Supreme Good, and the utterance of the Word became the generation of riches. (1:30)

Many esoteric societies place value on silence, whether for meditation purposes, initiation rites, or otherwise. The starkness of physical silence can have an intellectually germinating effect as a result of increased awareness and inner stability.

Lastly, in book 13 of the *Corpus*, after so much philosophical probing, there is a display of peak emotion by Tat, one who has pursued wisdom. Until this point, Tat has tried and failed to become spiritually enlightened and liberated. In the thirteenth chapter, he finally breaks free of his earthly illusions and is overcome by a sense of illumination and gratitude. He asks to be taught the secret hymn he knows to exist, and Hermes agrees. Below is a large portion of the last chapters of Book 13, which tie many of the other concepts of divine sound together in one passage. Significant similarities can be seen in many other faiths such as Christianity, Platonism, and various pagan religions.

This excerpt provides examples of *logos*, sound as a power substance, *music of the spheres*, music as the appropriate means for divine communication, the role and power of silence, and musical thinking resulting from heightened emotional states. In this section, Tat has died either literally or metaphorically: he has been freed from “the tent of the body” (13:15) and is now entering a state of illumination. Because of its length, it has been abridged here to illustrate only those concepts which seem pertinent to the topic. This excerpt is in the form of a teacher-student dialogue between Hermes and Tat whose cues will be H. and T., respectively:

15. T. – Then, O father, I wish to hear the hymn of praise which you said there was to be heard from the powers, on my birth into the eighth sphere.

H. – I will recite, O son; just as Poimandres revealed the eighth sphere to me.

You do well to free yourself from the tent of the body, for you have been purified. Poimandres, the *Nous* of the Supreme, gave me no more than what has been written, being aware that I should be able to know all things by myself and to hear what I wanted to hear, and to see all, and he charged me to create works of beauty. Wherefore the powers in me sing also in all things.

T. – O father, I want to hear and to know these things.

16. H. – Be still, O son, hear the harmonious song of praise, the hymn of rebirth, which I had not thought to impart so easily, if you had not reached the very end. For this hymn is not taught but hid in silence. ...

Secret Hymn

17. Let every creature in the cosmos give ear to this hymn.

Open, Earth.

Let the rains pour without restraint.

Trees, be not shaken.

I am about to praise the Lord of creation, the All and the One.

Open heavens; winds, be still

Let God's immortal sphere receive my song.⁹²

For I am about to sing praise to the Creator of all, who fixed the earth, who
suspended the heavens,...

He is the eye of the *Nous*, may He receive the praise of every power within me.

18. O powers within me, sing to the One and to the All; with one accord, all you
powers, sing praise at my bidding.

Divine knowledge, illumined by you, I sing through you of the spiritual light, and
I rejoice in the light of the *Nous*.

Sing praise with me, all you powers...

Your Word through me sings to you.

Receive all back through me by the Word, a spoken sacrifice.

19. Thus cry the powers within me...

Receive an offering of speech from all beings. ...

For *Nous* guides your Word, O bearer-of-the-breath-of-life, O creator of the
world. You are God. ...

21.T – O father, I have set this hymn in the cosmos within me.

⁹² "God's immortal sphere" is not mere imagery. Earlier, in 1:26, Poimandres revealed to Hermes that God resides in the area above the eighth cosmic sphere, where souls blissfully await their union with God.

H – Say: In the world of *Nous*, O son.

T – In the world of *Nous*, O father, I am full of power. By your song and praise, *Nous* in me has been fully illumined. I, too, strongly wish to give praise to God from my own heart.

H – Do so with care, O son. ...

H – O son, offer an acceptable sacrifice to God, the Father of all. But also add, O son, ‘through the Word’.⁹³

The Hermetic account of divine music provides an amalgam of many potentialities of sacred sound. It seems to be a meeting ground of several important views, such as the Greek *logos*, emotionalism in praise-singing, sonic power, *music of the spheres*, and interestingly, hints of what could be gestated in silence.

2.7 Mozart’s Impact

While all of the above examples deal with ancient practices in which Freemasonry is rooted, there was at least one contemporary phenomenon that caused a great deal of serious speculation about music and its relationship to divinity and human potential that was also tightly connected to the life path of Beethoven. This phenomenon was the child prodigy Mozart. As a young child, Mozart provoked not only amazement and amusement, but philosophical wonder as well that stimulated inquiry into the human potential. Although it is generally acknowledged that Viennese Freemasonry made a strong impression upon Mozart, it will be demonstrated here that

⁹³ 13:15-21. From *The Way of Hermes*, pp. 68-71.

Mozart had earlier connections to Masonic and like organizations, and had conversely made significant impressions on those groups.

Mozart is commonly associated with Freemasonry primarily through his induction into the lodge “Beneficence” in 1784⁹⁴ and his subsequent interactions and associations thereafter with other Viennese lodges. Earlier influences exist however, that likely have more formative power for both Mozart and Freemasonry. Adam Wiesshaupt, in the adjacent territory of Bavaria, had been organizing the closely related Illuminati throughout Mozart’s teens. Later in 1776 in Ingolstadt, only 95 miles away from Salzburg, Weisshaupt officially established its charter. Paul Nettl found a letter written by Leopold Mozart in 1785⁹⁵ which reveals a curiosity about the Illuminati, as well as a few friends of the Mozart family who were cited as members. Leopold writes about some Illuminati persecutions to his daughter:

You may have heard that Dr. Hutterer was taken to the fortress by five men eight days ago at seven o’clock in the evening. For how long? They say for an indefinite period. Even Profos Rieder is supposed to go there for four months – or perhaps he is already there—because he sent Guttman some papers, or had him send them—nobody knows for sure. From Rahm, and already from Marchand’s letters, I learned that not even one-hundredth of the rumors told here about the Illuminati in Munich is true.⁹⁶

Though it seems implicit from the letter that neither Leopold nor his son was a part of the Illuminati, it does show a very accessible connection between the Mozarts and the members Rahm and Marchand, one which also reveals a significant amount of trust. It is therefore very

⁹⁴ Deutsch, *Mozart*, p.230.

⁹⁵ Nettl, *Mozart and Masonry*, p. 11.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

likely that Illuminati philosophy was reaching the Mozart family at least via second-hand sources several years before Wolfgang's initiation of 1784.

An earlier, more crucial interaction occurred in Mozart's childhood. A great deal of wonder and speculation was caused by the *Wunderkind*, culminating in several serious and methodical interviews by individuals for their own study or representing scholarly institutions. Of these, probably the most famous is the 1769 report of a 1765 interview and assessment that Mozart had with an English lawyer named Daines Barrington, who shared his findings with the Royal Society.⁹⁷ This report was directed to London's famed Royal Society as a scientific matter. While there exist many other interviews, this one is particularly significant because of the nature and background of the organization with which it is associated.

Though it is true that the Royal Society does function as a scientific bureau of the British Government at present, it had been a private institution for its first century or two, gradually developing a clearer inner structure and attracting more and more government subsidies as time progressed. From its origins in the 1640s to Mozart's time, its interests were diverse, with a distinct inclination to probing the developing sciences. Predictably, the early leaders of this group, including Christopher Wren, Isaac Newton, and Robert Boyle, were heavily involved in occult studies, some members openly embracing Freemasonry.⁹⁸ In short, the nature and outlook of the organization at this time is the same as its leadership: one which pursues knowledge through science with interest and faith in occultism.

The interview addressed several issues with which occultism is concerned. The focal point in this regard was the extraordinary development of the mental faculties of the child Mozart,

⁹⁷ Deutsch, *Mozart: Documentary Biography*, pp. 95-100.

⁹⁸ Royal Society Website: <http://royalsociety.org/>

including not only musical, but moral sensibilities as well. Though many parts of the interview deal with basic inventories of his abilities, parts of the interview reveal a fascination with the totality of Mozart's early yet great development. Though the Royal Society is usually seen as essentially a scientific group valuing empiricism and objectivity, many of the issues discussed in this interview are recorded in a tone clearly reflecting subjective amazement. For instance:

As during this time I was witness of his most extraordinary abilities as a musician ... I send you the following account, amazing and incredible almost as it may seem.⁹⁹

The score was no sooner put upon his desk, than he began to play the symphony in a most masterly manner, as well as in the time and stile which corresponded with the intents of the composer.¹⁰⁰

The precocious Mozart exhibited a mature demeanor when dealing with officials such as Barrington. This indicated that he sensed to a degree his own gifts and consequent celebrity as a child, and would most likely have been aware of the seriousness with which this speculative group viewed him. The meeting had a mutually impressing effect on both parties. Clearly from Barrington's reports, the Royal Society would have great interest in this child, and Leopold, though now accustomed to general parental praise, would rarely receive it from a more authoritative and scholarly institution. Deutsch's commentary on this occurrence reveals the extent to which this group considered Barrington's report:

This report was handed on 28 September 1769 to the Secretary of the Royal Society in London, Dr. Mathew Maty (Cf. 19 July 1765) and read on 15 February

⁹⁹ Deutsch, *Mozart: Documentary Biography*, p. 96.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

1770 ... It was reprinted, revised, in Dr. Barrington's *Miscellanies*,...
supplemented by a communication from Charles Burney¹⁰¹

Through this and other similar encounters, Mozart could see which types of groups were most interested in him. More pertinent to his peculiar personality, such groups provided the sense of approval and validation that proved so important throughout his life.

This interest from scholarly and occultist circles and the steady flow of intellectual feats from the young Mozart proved to be mutually incendiary, each feeding each other into greater attentions and greater feats. The result on Wolfgang Mozart's musical development was a child pushing evermore to the realization and extension of his natural gifts. Beyond that, a potential seed of Masonic thought may have been sown in his mind, and he certainly would know where some of his greatest sources of admiration and approval were.

The effect of this interaction on the part of the Royal Society, and via its inquiry, on the Masonic and intellectual community of Europe, was also strong, perhaps even profound. Solomon reveals the extent to which the child prodigy impacted these communities. In his *Prologue to Mozart*, he illustrates this trend and draws several conclusions from their study:

Thus, beyond the miraculous surface, [the child] Mozart was held to be ... 'not only a natural but a moral human being; a splendid object, in truth, worthy of study,' and his parents were to be congratulated for knowing 'so well how to unite and nurture in [him] the moral and the natural man.' Leopold Mozart was regarded as God's surrogate in this matter, guiding the development of his son...¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

¹⁰² Solomon, *Mozart*, p. 4.

Solomon then states the resultant lines of thought of these observations:

...He was a gifted child, one who not only could perform wonders and miracles but was the very incarnation of a miracle, one whose small body exemplified the infinite perfectibility of the child and, by inference, of mankind.

The early literature about the child Mozart inevitably drew on a variety of rich traditions about other child heroes... Legends of the Christ child readily attached themselves to him.¹⁰³

Because Mozart's talent and abilities were not only extreme, but apparently beyond the paradigm of what was at that time conceived as reality or possibility, the boy's talents forced a re-evaluation of the bounds of human achievement, and in some cases, excited mythic and/or supernatural speculation.¹⁰⁴ Though it remains unclear exactly how much momentum Mozart alone added to the esoteric movements of the day, the depth of fascination and wide circulation among Masonically-influenced groups from Barrington's report alone seem to warrant serious consideration of this possibility. It must be stressed that the findings of such reports (advancement of the human state and potential) would be of fundamental importance to Masonic thinking.

2.8 Musical Exegesis

The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to providing an account of an important facet of the Masonic view of music that proved alluring to many intellectuals. It reinforces the

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁰⁴ Solomon cites an account from Naples of a "maigic ring" that Mozart allegedly wore that accounted for his ability. *Mozart*, p. 5.

point of view that the connection between music, its mathematical aspect, and spirituality/theology is more exact and literal than is generally understood, as opposed to the more familiar poetic or loosely metaphorical views more commonly held.

Much study and devotion to the above various schools of thought has been undertaken by those who, not satisfied with the standard world view of one's own culture, have sought answers to the great questions of life, religion, and philosophy in outer venues. While it is true that the changing political climate outlined in Chapter 1 could well warrant clandestine meetings about the future political landscape, many of the members of these societies of Beethoven's life may have also been motivated by this shared fundamental curiosity. From an outside perspective, there does indeed appear to be an excess of formality, secrecy, and hierarchy that would certainly be off-putting to many talented minds. The question then arises: what interest could such an environment hold for the bright people it wants to attract? Clearly, the factors of prestige, political aim, and sense of belonging to an elite group have been important to many, but minds already renowned such as that of Mozart, Ashmole and probably Newton would not have required such distinction.

Through the ages, but especially since the mid-twentieth century, a rigorously literal and mathematically-based approach to studying major sacred and philosophical texts has become more and more prominent. This has yielded many surprising phenomena as well as inter-textual and interdisciplinary relationships. Particularly important for this discussion are those authors who have taken this approach through a musical lens. Major examples include Joscelyn Godwin, Morris Kline, Ernest McClain and Robert Brumbaugh.

McClain in particular has assembled and revealed important clues to understanding music's connection with other fields, particularly astronomical, mathematical, cultural, and theological domains. He has collected and accounted for many relationships between music and

the other serious disciplines of the ancient world in Pythagorean, Platonic, Hindu, Egyptian, Judaic, and other contexts. This approach is consistent with the ancient view of music as a part of the high-level, mathematically-based *Quadrivium*, and reveals a great number of mathematical connections between music, theology, and the rest of the *Quadrivium* itself. McClain argues that much of the theology of the Rig Veda, for example, is based on mathematics defining harmonic and acoustical phenomena. He proposes:

This study will develop the hypothesis that [a logical thread] in the *Rg Veda* was grounded on a proto-science of number and tone. The numbers Rgvedic man cared about define alternate tunings for the musical scale. ...Vedic concerns were with those *invariances* which became the focus of attention in Greek tuning theory.¹⁰⁵

This passage introduces his Vedic study, but could be said to apply to the whole book, which is consistent with the application of Masonic numerology in music. In an exciting example regarding the Hebrew creation myth, he cites how Joseph Campbell reveals a mathematical link between it and that of Babylon by comparing time frames and conversion processes between the two cultures. The achievement here is that this conversion method reveals a distinct acoustical property. The section reads:

Joseph Campbell has discovered a correlation between the 432,000 years from the creation to the flood in Babylonian mythology and the 1,656 years from the creation of Adam to the flood in the Hebrew account. Campbell points out that these numbers have a common factor of 72, and that $1656 / 72$ is 23. Now 23 Jewish years of 365 days plus five extra days for leap years equals 8,400 days or 1,200 seven-day weeks; multiplying by 72 to find the number of Jewish seven-

¹⁰⁵ McClain, *The Myth of Invariance*, p. 3.

day weeks in 1,656 (= 23 x 72) years yields 86,400 (1,200 x 72). But the number 86,400 is 432,000/5 *i.e.*, the number of Babylonian five-day weeks to the flood. Thus there is *no necessary contradiction* whatever in these different flood chronologies. ... [The] numbers $3^{p5^q} < 86,400$ [is] the harmonical link.¹⁰⁶

It is important to realize that this comparison between the two myths is not only or merely a ratio, proportion, or a simple arithmetic operation. There is a way that these systems relate to each other that is at once mathematically intelligent and scientifically aware, yet at the same time poetically elegant and possibly bearing theological significance. The calculations expounded in Appendix D show another aspect of this relationship, one that is also harmonic: when the calculations are performed, including leap years, the two sets of years in the two myths divide out to be a ratio of one Hebrew year to 365 Babylonian years.

The meaning of this relationship between the two chronologies is at least on one level clear: a year in Babylonian experience is somehow but a day for the Hebrew sense of time. The Hebrew passage of time is slower, but exactly proportionally so to the Babylonian sense. Here, years in both systems exist relative to each other as days are to years. In just the same acoustical manner a pitch may precisely envelop its octave, embracing two waves for every one wave of the fundamental pitch; or similarly, the same as tracking a small rhythmic pulse while simultaneously sensing the larger one that it generates.

Such techniques are often overlooked by approaches which seek connection or even revelation in a merely literary or metaphorical realm. In this example, the mathematics do reveal correlation, but only through an acoustical perspective does richer meaning of such relationships manifest itself. Further, this reasoning presents an important parallel to Beethoven's musical thinking in his late years. It is conceptually related to temporal patterns created in his last

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*, p. 150.

movement of his final Piano Sonata, op. 111, as will be discussed in Chapter 5.2. Essentially, this phenomenon could be described as “time within time,” and is paralleled in a mystic part of Beethoven’s Christian faith: “But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day” (2 Peter 3:8). It may be that drawing from such a source as this short passage may yield the type of temporal patterns we witness in the op. 111, if contemplated with the same spirit of exactitude that may be applied to scripture.

It is this unique, musical style of reasoning that unlocks many ancient conundrums and bizarre, seemingly random numerology throughout many old texts and schools. For various reasons, we cannot know whether or not Freemasons of this setting had this kind of mathematical understanding combined with the acoustical-musical perspective to probe these mysteries. From the other angle, we do know that: 1. Freemasons were very interested in these issues, 2. Freemasons did have mathematically savvy, sometimes brilliant membership, and 3. They preserved a deep respect for ancient text and theory, and were likely to attempt to see from these perspectives. Bearing these points in mind suggests that Freemasons would have indeed discovered such a line of thought, or perhaps even have preserved it from another tradition.

Regardless of whether or not this specific skill or knowledge existed as an attractor to the assemblies for its members, the function of such groups remains. Esoteric organizations provide an optimal environment for probing areas that are too unorthodox or distant from mainstream thought to be easily understood by the public. Also, such topics are frequently inappropriate to be subjected to the empirical methods that dominated eighteenth century intellectual life.

It is Freemasonry and its related groups through which such a mathematical-musical perspective could thrive, free from the popular view that insists on the familiar role of art as entertainment and mere diversion. Not only did these groups embrace richer perspectives of learning in general, but being largely based in ancient Hebrew lore, *needed* those who could work

on such issues as this calendrical item for the sake of their own self-understanding. Only in a setting that values esoteric thought could music reveal itself as a phenomenon that could in one instance reveal higher physical and intellectual realities and in another act as a key to understanding historical issues.

Chapter 3

Beethoven's Specific Masonic/Esoteric Background

Whereas Chapter 1 outlines the general historical setting into which Beethoven was born, this chapter will connect those factors to his formative years as they intersected. It will include a view of Bonn's emergence as a progressive city, the educational/esoteric lineage of Beethoven's closest society, and an overview of his specific esoteric connections.

3.1 Bonn in the 1770s and 80s

The time and place into which Beethoven was born was as dynamic as any city of its small size. Its progress during the decades surrounding the year 1770, that of Beethoven's birth, kept measure with the spirit of the times as outlined in Chapter I. A few important items define this. The most concrete of these was that the local *Academy* was founded in 1777, and then elevated to the status of *University* in 1785.¹⁰⁷ During this time, two progressive leaders, Maximilian Friederich and Maximilian Franz, successively bore the Bonn title "*Elector*," indicating chief provincial authority. The first of these Electors, Max Friederich, ruled from 1761-84, and began progressive tendencies in his tenure, for instance, the founding of the aforementioned Academy.

His successor, Max Franz, was the brother of Joseph the II, who reigned for a decade as the Habsburg Emperor. Like his brother, and likely motivated by him as well, Max Franz

¹⁰⁷ Solomon, *Beethoven*, p. 34.

committed himself to improvement of the state from the mode of the eighteenth-century enlightened despot. Although they were almost certainly not Freemasons, both the Emperor and his brother came from a Masonic background created by their father, Francis I, a member initiated at *The Order of the Hague*.¹⁰⁸

It is in this environment that Freemasonry could enter, though with caution. The first Bonn lodge was formed in 1776. Bonn, when Beethoven was five years old, saw a year that would profoundly impact the minds of its citizens. Most strikingly, this year coincided with the American Revolution—a phenomenon whose architects included Freemasons, and whose major principles were of primary concern for the Masonic community. Also of Masonic interest that year was the publication of Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*. This same year a more immediate impact upon the Masonic community was the official emergence of the Masonic offshoot, one with lasting impact: the Illuminati of Adam Weisshaupt. 1776 would almost certainly have been a year that greatly excited the Freemasons in many dimensions.

The sparks created by such events would not soon subside either, as many great events naturally do; these lines of interest would find their climax in 1789, when the French Revolution erupted. Many of those in Bonn’s intellectual circles were drawn into this *Zeitgeist*, and the organization that promised involvement without extreme outward radical display was Freemasonry or its darker sibling group, the Illuminati. These years were formative ones for portions of Bonn as well as for the nascent composer.

Because the 1776 formation of the Bonn Masonic lodge happened while under the comparatively enlightened rule of Max Franz, it was not likely to have been motivated by desire for change at the local level. “Bonners in this period took pride in their town’s status...”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Einstein, *Mozart*, p. 82.

¹⁰⁹ Lockwood, *Beethoven*, p.26.

Solomon implies that the lodge was organized in wariness of political repression in spite of the liberal concurrent administration. It seems likely that this wariness would be extended not just to Bonn's citizenry, but to a growing quiet solidarity movement able to connect non-royal citizens of the German-speaking lands. In this formal network, communication could occur more freely and earnestly than elsewhere.

Because of official Imperial disapproval from Empress Maria Theresa, this lodge dissolved and was replaced in 1781 with one of the Illuminati.¹¹⁰ Shortly thereafter, the concern over suppression was harshly confirmed by the prohibition of assembly of secret societies by Emperor Joseph II in 1785. While many expected an imperial maneuver like this to be enacted at some point, it was a surprise that it came directly from Joseph II, the most "enlightened" despot of his century next to Frederick the Great of Prussia.

The repeal of freedom of assembly was clearly an alarming situation to all members of affected groups, who were probably the most concerned citizens to begin with. Punishment for continuing in such groups could result in imprisonment, but the most dedicated continued in a disguised form. Bonn's lodge was indeed disbanded, but like many other cities of the Holy Roman Empire *Aufklärung*, its members created a *Lesegesellschaft*, or "Reading Society". This innocuous title, ironic in its accurate implications, was a common designation for those disbanded members of societies who remained committed to their intentions by forming what nominally sounded to be the equivalent of a library club, whose assembly would be nearly impossible to enforce without endangering basic public education. Many of Bonn's former Masons and Illuminati continued their involvement through this venue.

¹¹⁰ Solomon, p. 35.

3.2 Beethoven's Peculiar Social Position in Bonn

In their contemporary biographies, both titled *Beethoven*, both Kinderman and Solomon spend approximately ten pages to describe the events and tone of Bonn in the 1770s through the 1780s. Along with Alexander W. Thayer's *Life of Beethoven*, it becomes clear from these sources that life in this city for a gifted young composer was not likely to be bettered by any city comparable to its size. Nevertheless, it would be a serious mistake to interpret this situation as one that Beethoven could find satisfactory.

The trenchant frustration of his familial state and social position likely intensified the longing to escape the mediocrity that his father, in the young Beethoven's eyes, came to epitomize with gross display. By way of compensation, Ludwig revered his grandfather, the elder Ludwig van Beethoven, Bonn Kapellmeister.¹¹¹ It seems clear that, even as a child, the younger Ludwig aspired to what he saw as the lofty level attained by his grandfather.

The hurtful nature of the relationship between Ludwig and his father, Johann, would most likely have provided a major thrust to the aspiring composer's ambitions past the borders of Bonn, progressive though it was. From the perspective of the young Beethoven, the anxiety of potentially remaining in the role of dutiful and accepting son of an unappreciative father in a region that could never give him the fame or distinction which he craved certainly would propel him to seek opportunity elsewhere. Bonn's progressive tendencies and spirit at this time can be forever credited with providing the essential connections to pave the beginnings of a path that would project the young composer into a larger arena in which he could prove himself.

¹¹¹ This view is thoroughly elaborated in several sources by Solomon (e.g., *Beethoven*, p. 21), where he compares Beethoven's family views to the template of a psychoanalytic escapist phenomenon developed by Freud, known as "The Family Romance."

The professional paths of Bonn through which the young Beethoven passed were fortuitously paved for him. It is true that in being a provincial capital politically connected with a major municipality like Cologne, one could expect Bonn to be rather rich in its opportunities for its citizens, especially promising ones like the teenaged Beethoven. Certainly, his early life path was not a smooth one, and had more than a few discouraging moments. Nevertheless, there are parts of it that went smoother than one could anticipate on some levels.

In particular, he received a great deal of psychological/emotional support and encouragement from certain teachers of his. Certain citizens seem to have gone well out of their way to advance Beethoven's chances at a great career. This might seem natural in some respects: a town would want to boast of a talent that could in some way further distinguish it; basic nurturing instinct would form at least partial motivation; even pity for a talented but abused child must be considered. Yet these mentors seem to be dedicated beyond these motivators, sometimes making significant sacrifices to their own careers, and for a student who was not always productive,¹¹² polite, or even grateful.

While one may point out that such support is to be expected for a promising young member of any community, Solomon has proved a drastically different situation for Mozart in his native Salzburg. His observations on the city's attitude toward Mozart show a city that felt snubbed by Mozart's leaving and responded with a "cold shoulder" mentality. This attitude in fact seems diametrically opposed to the support that Beethoven fortunately had. Regarding Mozart, Solomon goes so far as to say: "He was punished for leaving home, for preferring a different place, for dissatisfaction with a city that was good enough for everyone else. ... a kind of amnesia engulfs the traces of his existence."¹¹³ This juxtaposition of both composers'

¹¹² In his late teens, Beethoven went through a compositionally dry period of five years in which he produced very few works.

¹¹³ *Mozart*, Introduction, p. xv.

relationships to their hometowns should clarify that what civil and social support Beethoven had was certainly not a matter of course in eighteenth century German society. Beethoven's Bonn proved to be drastically more nurturing.

Neefe, for instance, suffered a fifty-per-cent salary cut as court organist so that Beethoven, then his thirteen year-old student, could receive income. Neefe was more than competent, being one of the finest musicians of Bonn. This was mostly the result of an extensive budgeting procedure that happened in 1784 when Max Franz took over the Electorship of Max Friederich through an unmitigating xenophobic view: he was not only an *Ausländer*, but a Calvinist in a Catholic land. Neefe was not by any means obligated to stay in Bonn. While it may have been true that secure positions were difficult to come by, he was well-trained, by all accounts agreeable and responsible in personality, and still in his early thirties—young and vigorous enough to pursue other posts.

Both Bonn's Elector and his personal friend, the recently-arrived Count Waldstein, made their own heavy contributions to Beethoven's progress. "...Elector Maximilian Franz surely exceeded the duties of an employer when in 1787 he financed Beethoven's trip to Vienna intending to study with Mozart, and in 1792 when he again sent Beethoven to Vienna, this time to study with Haydn."¹¹⁴ Count Waldstein, who in 1788 moved to Bonn as a personal friend to the Elector, befriended the teenaged Beethoven and, like the Elector, generously connected him with the Viennese aristocracy.

These were no small favors, especially in light of the financial and social costs generated by the young composer in his first years in the Habsburg capital. These costs were substantial enough as they were planned, yet Beethoven generated other expenses and trouble that were quite unanticipated. This included getting into tight financial problems that climaxed in being caught

¹¹⁴ Cooper, *The Beethoven Compendium*, p. 93.

in an embarrassing lie to Haydn, resulting in an awkward social position to the latter as a result of his student's dishonesty.¹¹⁵ One must also take into account Beethoven's strange behavior and rude manners that created significant social liability for these two early patrons.

The collective burden (professional, financial, social embarrassment, etc.) created by Beethoven rested most notably upon Neefe, Max Franz, Haydn, and Waldstein. Patience with Beethoven was not infinite, but it seems that there was an unusual amount of support and a sense of second chance that existed for him. It seems also that there is a conspicuous lack of jealousy thwarting the composer in his early professional undertakings, notably excepting his own father. It could not even be argued that his powers simply did not sufficiently manifest themselves in his early years, since several glowing accounts of his playing exist from his first two decades to show that the young Beethoven was not unnoticed.¹¹⁶

3.3 Beethoven's Early Masonic Web

Such workings seem unusually favorable for this young composer. Presented here as the primary unseen facilitator and motivator is the Masonic connection. This becomes plausible when considering the level of Masonic integration in Bonn's musical world combined with the seriousness with which Freemasons regarded the study of the art of music. Musical life in Bonn centered around the court, whose reputation "rested mainly on its orchestra."¹¹⁷ The court orchestra therefore held a leadership role in Bonn society, as this was a city whose pride was very

¹¹⁵ Kinderman, *Beethoven*, p. 29.

¹¹⁶ Outstanding examples include anecdotes by Wurzer, in the *Kölnische Zeitung*, Aug. 30, 1838; and Carl Ludwig Junker, found in Thayer-Forbes, p. 42.

¹¹⁷ Lockwood, *Beethoven*, p. 29.

much invested in its musical life. Out of an orchestra of 27 players¹¹⁸ in which Beethoven served as violist with other influential Bonn musical figures, a significant number were Masons or Illuminati, or members of their joint masked form of the *Lesegesellschaft*. Solomon explains:

The Bonn Illuminati, fearing a prohibition, dissolved their group in favor of a less dangerous forum, the *Lesegesellschaft* (Reading Society) which was founded in 1787 by thirteen “friends of literature,” who included most of the former Illuminati. Soon its members numbered 100, including Neefe, Eichhoff, Ries, Count Waldstein, Malchus, Schneider, and other associates and friends of Beethoven.¹¹⁹

In addition to these names, Solomon also lists Nikolaus Simrock as an Illuminatus. He was another close Bonn associate, with whom Beethoven learned about the French horn, and with whom he kept in touch through his later years in Vienna, owing to Simrock’s development of his own publishing firm.

These names are more than incidental associations of the young composer. In addition to Simrock, Beethoven’s insight into orchestration as well as character development was probably significantly influenced by Franz Ries. Lockwood cites accounts praising him as the most eminent violinist in Bonn,¹²⁰ his abilities well recognized throughout Beethoven’s years there. It is a common conjecture that the student composer in these years had a student-teacher relationship in string playing with Ries after his former violin teacher and cousin, Rovantini, passed away at the age of twenty-four years. This conjecture is consistent with Beethoven’s professional and financial assistance granted to Ries’ son, Ferdinand, when he rather desperately

¹¹⁸ Ibid. Lockwood here states this number as from the year 1783.

¹¹⁹ *Beethoven*, p. 35.

¹²⁰ Lockwood, *Beethoven*, p. 29.

came to Beethoven for professional/financial help in Vienna in 1802. Solomon seems more certain in asserting that Beethoven did indeed study French horn with Simrock and violin with Ries.¹²¹

We must return to Neefe's relationship to Beethoven as a teacher and mentor, as the closeness of this relationship would help identify and highlight the Masonic influence on the young student. As outlined earlier, Neefe's dedication to his student seems total. Willing to absorb a salary reduction of 50%,¹²² possibly in part to stay with his student, Neefe emerges as the one figure of Beethoven's youth that could be said to be closest to him. This seems certain in the professional aspect, but likely personally as well, excepting his own mother. Solomon potently illustrates this aspect of their relationship:

Neefe's teaching and encouragement provided the springboard of Beethoven's rapid development in the early 1780s. Moreover, by virtue of his own intellectual background and moral code Neefe was someone whom Beethoven could look up to, and even emulate at this critical juncture of his life.¹²³

He continues later:

His [Neefe's] moral code, as revealed in his *Autobiography*, was marked by a striving for ethical perfection and for the suppression of sensual desire through sublimated activity. Clearly, Beethoven had found a kindred spirit and a moral mentor in Neefe, whose puritanical presence and ethical imperatives were a superb counterbalance to the behavior and character of Johann van Beethoven.

¹²¹ Solomon, *Beethoven*, p. 21.

¹²² It should be noted that this salary reduction was not a permanent one; it lasted less than a year. Yet, at the time, it was evidently unclear whether this municipal decision was or was not permanent.

¹²³ *Beethoven*, p. 27.

This closest of all Beethoven associates from Bonn was also one of the most active in these secret societies. Solomon calls him a “radical.”¹²⁴ This seems entirely justified by his prominence in these groups: he was not only a prominent Mason, but the “Lokalberer” (leader) of the Illuminati lodge, *Stagira*,¹²⁵ as well as a central figure in its transformation to the *Lesegesellschaft*. It is possible that through Neefe at this time, Beethoven was first exposed to the writings of Lutheran minister and Enlightenment Christian, Christoph Christian Sturm,¹²⁶ whose writings had significant meaning to the composer, as will be discussed later.

In this environment, Beethoven would have likely been attuned to the portentous changes brooding in Bonn’s political atmosphere, possibly even at an early age. Social forces with Masonic implications influencing Beethoven’s life would have included:

- The vast majority of the most admired and intimate of Beethoven’s mentors and nurturers who were Freemasons, or who harbored Masonic sympathies.
- The new university which taught Greek thought and Human rights,¹²⁷ a considerably volatile topic under a monarchy.
- Joseph II, the enlightened rationalist and human rights crusader who sat on the throne of the Holy Roman Empire, whose rule was flanked by contrastingly more conservative leaders, Maria Theresa before and Leopold II after.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, p.28.

¹²⁵ Solomon, *Late Beethoven*, p.137.

¹²⁶ Solomon, *Beethoven Essays*, p. 220.

¹²⁷ Solomon, *Beethoven*, p. 34.

- France, volatile and stewing in its pre-revolutionary miseries, where revolution seemed ever more likely.

In short, though in a much better political state than France, the Habsburg Empire had serious concerns as to how to govern itself. It was becoming more and more obvious that this monarchy could not control with unlimited authority, in view of the success of the American Revolution and the foreboding that existed in France. This polarity, though it did not always directly impact the majority of people, at once put Freemasonry at risk of extinction while deepening the resolve and sense of purpose within its membership.

3.4 From Student to Professional—Bonn

The time during which a student emerges into a competent professional, while often an especially important period of growth in one's life, is often gradual and imperceptible at any given moment. In Beethoven's case, many of his professional abilities, such as pianism, improvisation, and cultivation of his personal style of composition, were already highly developed from an early age. Nevertheless, many of the fundamental challenges remained for him: to journey out into the world, carry out the mission he sensed, and finally count himself worthy among the musical pantheon he admired. These life objectives were met and satisfied in the one and only major regional move of his life—to Vienna. It is at this moment in the composer's life when he would have the chance to live out the life he sought.

Doing so, as is always the case, was a leap of faith. It also presented unexpected challenges including details of the move itself, the new experience of autonomy, the death of his father, and a surprising conglomerate of financial issues. In so many ways, it was at this juncture that so much of his outlook, convictions and manner of dealing with people came to solidify. It is also in this chaotic yet critical point in his life that the Masonic thread again becomes apparent,

now uniting many critical connections for him. Freemasonry, even if legally suppressed, still worked in Beethoven's favor.

It was Beethoven's second attempt at a move to Vienna in September 1792 that was successful after a balked initial attempt several years earlier. In at least one respect, this was fortuitous, since one of his strongest assets was a collection of introductory letters; these were provided to him from a man he met only after his first attempt to study and live in Vienna. Count Ferdinand Waldstein met Beethoven when he moved to Bonn in 1788, approximately ten months after the latter's first journey to Vienna. These introductory letters functioned as a key for the chance to play for those potential patrons who could quickly establish his career. Waldstein's encouragement, friendship, and recognition of the scope of Beethoven's vision and self-concept formed essential ingredients in the formula of Beethoven's early survival in Vienna, both practically and personally.

As Beethoven left Bonn for Vienna, he kept an album of farewells from many of his friends and associates. Waldstein's prophetic entry has resonated ever since:

Dear Beethoven! You are going to Vienna in fulfillment of your long-frustrated wishes. The genius of Mozart is mourning and weeping over the death of her pupil. She found a refuge but no occupation with the inexhaustible Haydn; through him, she wishes to form a union with another. With the help of assiduous labor you shall receive *Mozart's spirit through Haydn's hands*.

Your true friend,

Bonn, October 29, 1792.

Waldstein.¹²⁸

¹²⁸ Thayer-Krehbiel, v. I, p. 126.

Such words from a prominent figure of Bonn would certainly be quite encouraging to the then-twenty-one year old. But such words were not *merely* encouragement. The Count's introductory letters and companionship with the strange young Beethoven only a decade his junior indicate an interest not only genuine, but of notable intensity. Though little is known of Waldstein's specific personal convictions and beliefs beyond his Masonic status,¹²⁹ his interest in Beethoven's musical career settles more clearly in the context of the abstract world of the idea and imagination in which Freemasonry was structured. This is the same context in which musical insight and ability was so highly regarded in Masonic sources, such as the aforementioned Rosicrucian *Confessio Fraternalis* (see introduction to Chapter 2.)

In this crossroads of Beethoven's life, the Masonic world of abstraction would manifest itself in a concrete form that was able to transport the young musician from the Electoral Seat of Bonn to the capital of Vienna and begin life with fruitful opportunities. Waldstein's connections certainly have importance, but possibly the single most important connection made in this transition was the apprenticeship he made with the greatest musical figure in Europe at the time, Franz Josef Haydn. Exactly how Beethoven became connected to Haydn is unclear, but nearly every figure that is likely to have taken part is of Masonic background.

Clearly, there was already enough interest to send Beethoven to Vienna once, at least partially as a result of Neefe's urging.¹³⁰ Since this projected study of the spring of 1787 was terminated after only a few short weeks, a new effort at getting Beethoven to Vienna for study and opportunity began to manifest itself later, throughout the year of 1790. The thought of sending the composer a second time can be traced to the *LeseGesellschaft's* commission of a cantata to mourn the death of the Hapsburg Emperor, Joseph II.

¹²⁹ Solomon, *Beethoven*, p. 35.

¹³⁰ Thayer-Krehbiel, v. I, p. 89.

For once, it appears that it was not mainly Neefe vigorously promoting his student in the *Lesegesellschaft* meetings, but the Illuminatus Eulogius Schneider arguing for Beethoven as the projected composer.¹³¹ The *Cantata on the Death of Joseph II*, WoO 87, was quickly followed by its logical successor, the *Cantata on the Elevation of Leopold II*, WoO 88 to celebrate the new Emperor's coronation, as part of an event organized by the radical Schneider.¹³²

These works are of such a political character as to appear to be an appeal to “Enlightened” royalty for the possible employment of the composer. The patriotic implications may have also functioned as a device to smooth relations between the Emperor and groups like the *Lesegesellschaft*. Their choice of Beethoven as the composer for this event could have been influenced by his association with Neefe, who seemed to share some important political philosophies with Schneider.

Later, Beethoven's political inclinations would seem to persist with some quite progressive views, and may be viewed as consistent with this earlier perspective. Possible influences from Neefe and Schneider could be traced through Beethoven's lifelong dedication to a projected musical setting of Schiller's *An die Freude*, and his casual though revealing proposal to his friend Hoffmeister of a *Magazin der Kunst* resembling a “socialist ideal” of Louis Blanc.¹³³

Later, on Christmas day that same year, Haydn would visit Bonn during a journey from Vienna to London. To pass through Bonn could be expected, as it was the seat of the Elector of Cologne, providing a path of comfort and security. Certainly another attraction would have been

¹³¹ Solomon, *Late Beethoven*, p. 139.

¹³² Lockwood, *Beethoven*, p. 38.

¹³³ For a fuller discussion of these specific social views of Beethoven, see Solomon's *Beethoven Essays*, pp. 193-215. This reference is taken from p. 195.

the superior musical reputation that Bonn had. The next day, a Sunday, Haydn attended the court chapel to hear mass, and was welcomed with a mass of his own composition. The Elector Maximilian Franz arranged for a welcome in a grand manner that evening. This included a banquet with twelve of the “most capable musicians” of Bonn where it is likely that Beethoven would have first met Haydn.¹³⁴

It would have been in this general setting that connections would have formed between Haydn and those who would have spoken on Beethoven’s behalf. Though there is no surviving list of those present, it seems probable that the “most capable musicians” of Bonn would have included not only Beethoven, but also for example, Neefe, Ries, Simrock, and other prominent members of the court orchestra. These musicians held Haydn in the highest esteem, and Haydn was a natural and caring leader in his field. Therefore a bond of some sort would have been natural to form at such a juncture. That the above-listed names are documented Freemasons¹³⁵ would have further disposed them to a sense of bond with the old Mason, Haydn.¹³⁶

Approximately one year and a half would pass before Haydn’s return to Vienna, again passing through Bonn. Archduke Max Franz’s familial and political connection to the Habsburgs in Vienna surely provided safety and a sense of welcome to Haydn during his 1790 visit in the Rhineland city. The familiar and prestigious company of the royal Elector may have even been the prime attractor. Nevertheless, it cannot account for the return visit of July 1792:

¹³⁴ Thayer-Forbes, p. 41.

¹³⁵ See Appendix B.

¹³⁶ Einstein, *Mozart*, p. 82.

...it is pretty certain that the suggestion [for a return visit] did not come from the Elector, who, there is little doubt, was in Frankfort at the coronation of his nephew Emperor Franz (July 14) at the time of Haydn's visit.¹³⁷

A familiar city, and one that offered safety in travel during that time, would have been an attractive point on the route home for Haydn. Still, the Masonic brethren with whom he had become acquainted should not be thought as insignificant. Haydn was after all a man deeply concerned with Masonic issues such as the well-being of its members, as well as smooth socio-political workings.¹³⁸ Bonn was also a center for Enlightenment thinking as well as having recent Masonic and Illuminist activity. Thayer relates the next major encounter with Haydn and Beethoven:

The electoral orchestra gave him a breakfast at Godesberg and there Beethoven laid before him a cantata 'which received the particular attention of Haydn, who encouraged its author to continue study.' It is not improbable that the arrangements were in part now made under which the young composer became a few months later the pupil of the veteran.¹³⁹

That cantata would almost certainly have been the *Cantata on the Death of Joseph II*, WoO 87, a sound and mature work¹⁴⁰—one which would be paraphrased later in his opera,

¹³⁷ Thayer-Krehbiel, v. I, p. 123.

¹³⁸ Webster, p. 44.

¹³⁹ Thayer-Krehbiel, v. I, p. 116.

¹⁴⁰ Brahms' own evaluation can be found in Thayer-Krehbiel, v. I, p. 131: "It is Beethoven through and through. Even if there were no name on the title page none other than that of Beethoven could be conjectured."

Fidelio. An impressed Haydn would have been agreeable to be connected with this young composer in the role of master and student.¹⁴¹

The exact nature of the connections that brought the two together can only be conjectured, but it can at least be done so from a clear biographical outline. Neefe, as Beethoven's primary teacher, and also by his prominent position in Bonn's *Lesegesellschaft*, would have been a likely figure to have presented on behalf of his student. It is also possible that Ries might have made the introductions, being in the leadership position of that group as concertmaster. Also significant in the realization of the prospective apprenticeship is that "Whatever arrangements may have been made between the pupil and the master, they were subject to the will of the Elector, and here Waldstein may well have exerted himself to his protégé's advantage."¹⁴²

3.5 From Student to Professional—Vienna

In any instance, we find Beethoven writing in his journal that by the 12th of December 1792, Beethoven had paid "Haidn 8 Groschen."¹⁴³ Later in the same document, Beethoven records that interactions with his teacher continued via chocolate and coffee until at least October 24 and 29 of 1793, only two and a half months before Haydn left for London once again.

This was enough time for Beethoven to get a rough professional foothold in Vienna and to allow him to integrate himself into the musical community. He would thereby connect with other prominent composers, some of with whom he would later commence study. Most

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 150: Thayer relates correspondence between Neefe and Fischenich as proof of "how strong an impression Beethoven's powers, both as virtuoso and composer, had made upon Joseph Haydn..."

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 123.

¹⁴³ Thayer-Forbes, pp. 53-54.

prominent on this musical pedigree is Josef Haydn, but it also included Johann Georg Albrechtsberger, Antonio Salieri, Johann Baptist Schenk, and Emanuel Aloys Förster.

While Beethoven was able to impress these illustrious figures with his musical talents, he was nevertheless financially unstable. His income often appeared sufficient; nevertheless he experienced constant frustration over money. “His expenses were always high but were not reflected in his lifestyle; as Ries wrote: ‘Beethoven needed a good deal of money, even though he enjoyed very little benefit from it for he lived modestly.’”¹⁴⁴

For instance, the move to Vienna posed financial issues for the composer that prove difficult to trace for biographers. It was expensive, but “...the financial problems posed by the move were softened by the continued payment of his salary from Bonn until March 1794.”¹⁴⁵ Max Franz also provided a stipend for his living expenses, remarking to Haydn on Beethoven’s financial troubles:

“But in addition to this [stipend of] 500 fl. his salary here of 400 fl. has been continuously paid to him, he received 900 fl. for the year. I cannot, therefore, very well see why he is as much in arrears in his finances as you say.”¹⁴⁶

The second sentence of this excerpt touches on the more troubled side of Beethoven’s finances at this time. There were still real monetary blows, including the death of his father shortly after his move to Vienna. This resulted in the termination of the half of that salary that Ludwig won in the Bonn court, as well as the assumption of total responsibility of providing for his two younger brothers. A subsidy promised from the Elector Max Franz would also default

¹⁴⁴ Cooper, *Beethoven Compendium*, p. 110.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 94.

¹⁴⁶ Thayer-Forbes, p. 58: citing a letter written in late 1793—Brandenburg, ed., *Beethoven: Briefwechsel Gesamtausgabe*, Band 1, p. 22, #14.

after two quarterly payments.¹⁴⁷ Providing financial assistance to Beethoven fell to two generous individuals: his own teacher, Haydn, and his old colleague and mentor, Franz Ries. Ries's contribution of a quarter of his own annual salary to Beethoven on February 4, 1793, like that of Neefe in 1784, proved most generous and essential:

Franz Ries was again to befriend Beethoven and act for him in his absence, and the receipt for his first quarter's salary (25 th.) is signed 'F. Ries in the name of Ludwig van Beethoven,' ... The lapse of Johann van Beethoven's pension of 200 thalers, was a serious misfortune to his son, particularly since the 100 ducats were not forthcoming.¹⁴⁸

Haydn's contribution was also substantial. In his letter to Max Franz on Beethoven's behalf Haydn states:

...in order to prevent him from falling into the hands of usurers, I have on the one hand vouched for him, and on the other advanced him cash, so that he owes me 500 fl., of which not a kreutzer has been spent unnecessarily.¹⁴⁹

The Elector's reply to Haydn on this issue, cited above, implies that Haydn's generosity and good faith would likely never be repaid. Though it was not in Beethoven's ability to repay these benefactors in the next years after their loans were made, his sense of relief from them must not be overlooked. Even were he to have resented this financial dependency, Beethoven would have realized that this assistance was necessary for his survival in Vienna in his first years there.

¹⁴⁷ Thayer-Krehbiel, pp. 124-125.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 148.

¹⁴⁹ Thayer-Forbes, p. 57, from a letter dated November 23, 1793—Brandenburg, ed., *Beethoven: Briefwechsel Gesamtausgabe*, Band 1, p. 20, #13.

That Ries and Haydn acted out of such good faith to the young composer would surely have impressed him, even as preoccupied as he could be.

The Masonic status of both of these mentors may at first appear incidental viewed in this narrow time span, but it must be remembered that the first major financial sacrifice of this kind in Beethoven's life came when he was thirteen years old from none other than the *Lokalberer* of the Bonn Illuminati, Neefe. The latent conclusions that Beethoven would tacitly draw are surely not easily documented, but it must be admitted that the Masonic connection would likely be apparent to him. Those who would take action on his behalf when Beethoven faced serious financial trouble as a young man, especially via self-sacrifice in the manner of Neefe, Haydn, and Ries, would resonate in the composer, even if he were not generally gracious in character.

In his new career life, Beethoven faced the additional difficulty that his reputation did not entirely precede him in Vienna.¹⁵⁰ The lack of “fanfare” described by Thayer indicates that his only fame in Vienna would have been Waldstein's introductory letters and perhaps some rumors circulated from one Habsburg court to another.

Although Beethoven would rarely enjoy financial stability in his life, the professional aspect of his life was ignited with every opportunity that came to him, particularly as a piano virtuoso. Waldstein's introductory letters and family connections launched Beethoven's fiery creative powers into the private homes of his soon-to-be patrons—particularly Lichnowsky and Baron van Swieten. Within one year of his arrival in Vienna, Beethoven's unique musicianship generated eager invitations to venues such as van Swieten's home. The relationship that had

¹⁵⁰ Thayer-Krehbiel, p. 146: “Like the multitude of studious youths and young men who came [to Vienna] annually to find schools and teachers, this [Beethoven] of 22 years had quietly journeyed to the capital to pursue the study of his art...”

developed with Prince Karl and Princess Christiane Lichnowsky became so familiar that Beethoven would live with them in the years 1793-95, forming a strong, if sometimes ambiguous bond between the three.

Van Swieten's musical nature was so prevalent in his character that he invested a great deal of his life's energy toward the cultivation of fine older music. His meeting with Frederick the Great in 1774 and their discussion of Bach seems to have been a critical point of his life. The portrait that Alfred Einstein draws of this figure seems to place this meeting at the root of the Baron's subsequent musical devotion in his later years as Prefect of the Imperial Library in Vienna.¹⁵¹ This devotion was to manifest itself most clearly in his own organization that reflected his utopian vision of the art of music, the *Society of Associated Cavaliers*. These views on music reflect a conservative and lofty view, idolizing Bach above all others, with Handel a close second. Though this group does not have any formally documented links to Freemasonry, the most obvious precedents for such a group lie in Masonic groups devoted specifically to music in the 1720s.¹⁵²

Van Swieten's artistic attraction to Beethoven could be explained by the musician's overall excellence, but his daring and progressive musical outlook may not have been in step with the Baron's conservative musical utopia. When accounting for this, one must consider metaphorically or somewhat literally the Rosicrucian view of music outlined in their *Confessio* (see Chapter 2.0). If van Swieten seriously considered this document, which may have been

¹⁵¹ Einstein, *Mozart*, p. 150.

¹⁵² Nettl, *Mozart and Freemasonry*, p. 31. Nettl cites two such groups both based in London at that time: "Shortly after the founding of the Grand Lodge of London, not later than 1725, a society, *Philo Musicae et Architecturae Societas Appolinis*, came into being and was still in existence in 1727. Only Freemasons could be invited as its guests. ... It was to be an association of Masons interested in music. ... A similar [group] was the "Anacreontic Society..."

imparted via his musical discussions with Friederich the Great, this view would have secured Beethoven's good standing with a man such as van Swieten.

It may also be proposed that a connection between Beethoven and the Baron's ideal, J. S. Bach, may have endeared him to van Swieten. The connection is not only Beethoven's fruitful study of *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier*, but that Neefe provided a pedagogical link to Bach: Neefe himself was a student of Adam Hiller, who was Bach's successor at the Thomaskirche.¹⁵³ Just as Waldstein saw Beethoven receiving the spirit of "Mozart through Haydn's hands," van Swieten would have noticed that he also received, as Lockwood has quipped, the spirit of "Bach through the hands of Neefe."¹⁵⁴

Revolutionary as Beethoven often was, his commitment to understanding music, like van Swieten, frequently took him to the study of older music. His preparatory study for the much later composition of the *Missa Solemnis* involved heavy research and reference to old examples of the Mass. In a similar spirit, he has referred to Handel as "the greatest composer that ever lived"¹⁵⁵ and favored not any contemporary composer of sacred music, but held as the greatest in this respect the sixteenth-century Palestrina.¹⁵⁶ This perspective had probably gestated throughout his life, but van Swieten and his *Society of Associated Cavaliers* would surely have contributed to its development. Beethoven would also reciprocate with an expression of his appreciation of the relationship in part through his dedication of his First Symphony to van Swieten.

¹⁵³ Kinderman, *Beethoven*, p. 16.

¹⁵⁴ *Beethoven*, p. 31 – This is the title of a sub-chapter; See here for Lockwood's discussion of this issue.

¹⁵⁵ Thayer-Forbes, p. 476 – part of an 1824 report furnished by Edward Schulz, an Englishman visiting Beethoven in the summer of 1823.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 522 – part of an exchange recorded in the Conversation books between Beethoven and a visiting musician, Karl Gottfried Freudenberg.

Prince Lichnowsky is generally acknowledged as the most important and influential of Beethoven's patrons and associations throughout his first years in Vienna. This association grew quickly to a strong bond of friendship and a shared vision for Beethoven's musical success. Among the most notable contributions made to the composer include sponsorship of a tour from Prague to Berlin in 1796,¹⁵⁷ an annual stipend of 600 florins beginning around 1800, a donation of a fine quartet of string instruments, one of which was a Guarneri violin, in the same year,¹⁵⁸ and offering lodging in the prince's own home during the years 1793-95.¹⁵⁹

The tour to Berlin was an important one on professional and personal levels. Around February 1796, Beethoven left Vienna with Prince Lichnowsky, beginning the tour in Prague. Performing in the city that bore so much success for Mozart several years earlier would have impacted the young artist who was so frequently compared to Mozart. Dresden, Leipzig, and finally Berlin were next. Berlin also had an aspect to it that spoke intimately to Beethoven. This aspect was the rumored connection that he had to the House of Hohenzollern. Here he had the honor of interacting with King Friederich Wilhelm II and his own court musicians.

The success of this part of the tour can be attested to by the production of not just one, but several substantial works for the king's own instrument, the cello. Beethoven's first two cello sonatas, op. 5, are dedicated to the king, and two sets of variations, one on a theme by Handel, for cello and piano were also composed at this time, though bearing different dedicatees. The unusual choice of a somewhat outdated Handel aria for a theme and variation set seems most likely to trace back to van Swieten's influence. While it is true that the Baron and Beethoven had

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 121-22.

¹⁵⁹ Cooper, *Beethoven Compendium*, p. 49.

a good rapport with each other, it must be remembered that van Swieten's earlier post was as a state official to Berlin, and having spoken candidly with Frederick the Great, knew the taste of the Hohenzollern court well at that time. It would also be a gesture very much in the spirit of *The Associated Cavaliers*.

Success can certainly generate more of itself with the sort of momentum in the composer's life at this time, but a more personal dimension exists as well. Solomon draws attention to a more inward aspect of this relationship:

Reports that Beethoven was the illegitimate son of a king of Prussia—variously Friederich Wilhelm II and Friederich the Great—first appeared in 1810, and were repeated in encyclopedias, music dictionaries, and music periodicals throughout the remainder of his lifetime. At precisely what date Beethoven became aware of these reports is not known...¹⁶⁰

Late in life, Beethoven responded to the allegations of bastard parentage claiming:

Well, the same thing was said to me a long time ago. But I have adopted the principle of neither writing anything about myself nor replying to anything that has been written about me.¹⁶¹

In his copy of Homer's *Odyssey*, Beethoven marked of over fifty passages. His reasons for highlighting can only be hypothesized, but no matter what the motivation, one such passage is as revealing as it is relevant. In this setting, the hero Odysseus has been kept from home for a decade, and has become unknown to his son Telemachus, who has grown to doubt the certainty of his parentage. When confronted on this issue, Telemachus responds:

¹⁶⁰ Solomon, *Beethoven*, p. 5.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

My mother says indeed I am his [Odysseus?.] I for my part do not know. Nobody really knows his own father. But how I wish I could have been rather son to some fortunate man, whom old age overtook among his possessions. But of mortal men, that man has proved the most ill-fated whose son they say I am.¹⁶²

It has often been said that Beethoven in actuality did not wish to correct allegations of his highly unlikely parentage, a phenomenon which Solomon identifies as a “Family Romance,” where “the child replaces one or both of his parents with elevated surrogates—heroes, celebrities, kings, or nobles.”¹⁶³ This “Romance” at once could have allowed Beethoven a sense of escape through his childhood, and later would have further legitimized the already existing “Nobility Pretense” that existed in Viennese courts as well as in Beethoven’s mind.

Friederich the Great’s reputation for having considerable musical talent seems to have generated wild rumors in musical circles in this regard, persuading possibly even Beethoven himself. Nobility was clearly attractive to Beethoven, as he not only freely mingled with the aristocracy, but also actually attempted to pass himself for a noble when seeking legal advantage in the infamous custody battle he waged with Johanna Beethoven over his nephew, Karl. Friederich’s musical talent in tandem with the rumors of blood relation may have had a potent suggestive power over the composer. Though preposterous, this rumor quite possibly formed a part of Beethoven’s self-concept that somehow in his mind connected him to the house of Hohenzollern.

¹⁶² Marek, *Beethoven*, p. 184. Trans. by Richmond Lattimore, from *The Odyssey*, book I. Marek credits Ludwig Nohl with the preservation and tabulation of this passages, as Beethoven’s copy of this work is now lost.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.21.

That this inference would be clearly irrational even at the most cursory analysis was certainly no obstacle for Beethoven, who harbored similarly irrational beliefs about the year in which he was born as well as the aggrandized place he had in his nephew's life. Further solidifying a perceived bond between the composer and the house of Hohenzollern was the bond of "Brotherhood" of related secret societies; Beethoven growing up through these institutions, and King Friederich the Great being a Freemason and a Rosicrucian.

His embarking on this tour, especially given the time in which it occurred, might have also been seen as a political statement: perhaps saying that culture thrives under or is inspired by an enlightened monarch, (no dedications to the despotic Franz II of Austria, who ruled the Habsburg lands at this point, exist). In the age of Revolution, such a tour, especially one that courts a rival, more "Enlightened" monarch, could be seen as a strong statement. Beethoven after all was not, like Mozart, a child on tour with his father, but a politically minded young man travelling under the patronage of a well-known Freemason to visit a court with a strong Rosicrucian/Masonic background.

Though no mention of this tour having any Masonic basis or significance is extant, the Masonic factors present in that political climate suggest that even as a purely promotional or commercial tour, Lichnowsky and Beethoven at least coincidentally shared some important cultural and political views with King Frederick Wilhelm II. Even without intent, the Masonic connection exists, and would have been felt at this time when such movements were at or near their peaks. Beethoven then returned home from this tour with not only more fame but also knowing that he had faced some of the same trials as had Mozart, with whom comparison was always inevitable.

Four years after this, Prince Lichnowsky again provided for Beethoven by committing himself to paying Beethoven an annual salary of 600 florins, a sum that appears to be sufficient

for a modest lifestyle for about six months. This estimation is based on several items. This is before the Viennese inflation crisis of the years 1810 and 1811, and only approximately seven years after Haydn's correspondence with Elector Max Franz about Beethoven. Since 1000 florins in 1793 were expected to be sufficient for an annual sum from which the student Beethoven would be expected to live, this figure seems consistent with Max Franz' and Haydn's estimates in their earlier exchange, allowing for mild inflation.

The bond between Beethoven and the Lichnowskys was obviously a very close one, continuing Beethoven's Masonic connection through his life. Solomon cites the prince as a "prominent Freemason,"¹⁶⁴ as well as his membership in the Illuminati.¹⁶⁵ Awareness of this dimension of the prince sheds light on many issues: for instance, to be a member of a formal brotherhood based on equality and advancement of the human condition explains his tolerance of Beethoven's often frustrating and strange behavior. It also may account for the high value he placed on music and genius, a term with which Beethoven was becoming ever more associated. This bond between Beethoven, Lichnowsky and his wife, Christiane, would also have been strengthened by their devotion, practically and idealistically, to another important Masonic figure: Lichnowsky was also a close friend, pupil, patron and lodge brother of Mozart.¹⁶⁶

From this examination of Beethoven's life until his first years in Vienna, the esoteric thread via Freemasonry or Illuminist thought becomes very visible. He was, for instance, born into a politically and culturally progressive city that would host both Masonic and Illuminati lodges, and later the resultant *Lesegesellschaft*. The course of his most influential and serious

¹⁶⁴ *Late Beethoven*, p. 154.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 278, n 29.

¹⁶⁶ Einstein, *Mozart*, p. 131.

musical study would come from chartered members of these societies. His closest relationship in Bonn was with his teacher, Neefe, who led the Illuminati movement in that city. It was the former Illuminatus Eulogius Schneider who fatefully proposed that Beethoven compose the music for a politically charged commemorative cantata. This would soon afterward impress Haydn so much that he was willing to accommodate Beethoven as his student, an apprenticeship of considerable prestige.

Coincidence or not, it remains that everyone most likely to have taken part in that interaction, with the exception of the Elector Max Franz, was at one point a member of the Illuminati or the Freemasons. By far the most likely figures involved would have been of course Haydn, Neefe, Ries, Waldstein, and perhaps Schneider.

Bonn's esoteric connections and influence were not limited to its borders. Beethoven's friend, mentor, and patron, Waldstein, for example, used letters and familial connections to form a crucial bridge to the former's establishment in Vienna. Max Franz' contributions cannot be overlooked in this context, and it must be acknowledged that he was not a Freemason according to any account. Yet it should be mentioned that he was a member of the *Teutonic Knights*,¹⁶⁷ an organization with similar roots to the *Knights Templar*. This does connect him to the Western esoteric tradition, albeit with a group whose shorter-term goals likely differed greatly from the others discussed here. Both Max Franz and Waldstein allowed the practical and financial aspects of Beethoven's move to Vienna to be possible without great difficulty.

Once in Vienna, the influence of and ties to various figures involved in esoteric organizations continued to aid Beethoven in different ways. In this respect, two of his most important patrons must be acknowledged. The Baron van Swieten, whose Masonic membership

¹⁶⁷ Cooper, *Beethoven Compendium*, p. 13. It was 1791 when the Elector travelled to Mergentheim for this meeting with the Teutonic Knights, taking the Bonn court orchestra, including Beethoven with him.

is not evidenced, but with which he was clearly intellectually associated, and especially Lichnowsky would sometimes devote great energy to the promotion and sustenance of Beethoven's career. In light of these facts, Freemasonry then becomes not only an interesting peripheral issue, but the very soil in which Beethoven's professional life was rooted and flourished.

3.6 Masonic Motifs

The question of whether or not Beethoven at any point was a Freemason has been debated and closely examined without any direct proof save for two accounts. These come from Schindler, an unreliable source, and Karl Holz, generally reliable, who "maintained that Beethoven had once been a Freemason."¹⁶⁸ Other circumstantial evidence also exists, such as various entries in Beethoven's *Tagebuch*.¹⁶⁹ Such sparse evidence on this issue makes it difficult to trust completely in such a claim, particularly with Imperial prohibitions issued against such groups.

Nevertheless, the actual documentation of such membership is comparatively unimportant when seeking to understand Beethoven's beliefs and convictions. His Masonic background and connections present would exert their influence throughout his life, even if he did

¹⁶⁸ Solomon, *Beethoven*, p. 207.

¹⁶⁹ One of the clearest entries associating Beethoven with Freemasonry is #71, stating: "Our world history has now lasted for 5816 years." Solomon, *Beethoven Essays*, p. 270. Most likely written in 1816, Masonic tradition adds 4,000 years on to *Anno Domini* dates, thereby beginning their chronology at the biblical creation, rather than the prevailing European custom of beginning at Christ's birth.

not necessarily belong to any such group. Nor did he formally or dogmatically subscribe to fine points of any group's credo. Perhaps it was considering such points as well as Holz's assertion of Beethoven's Freemasonry that Solomon considered:

It is not my purpose to assert, nor do I believe it possible to demonstrate, that Beethoven was actually associated with, or a member of, an as-yet-unidentified clandestine fraternal society; nor do I wish to use the evidence of his links to Freemasonry as a rationale for esoteric readings of his works. (I do not, however, exclude the possibility that he belonged to a latter-day *Lesegesellschaft* or informal reading group with strong Masonic or Illuminist leanings.)¹⁷⁰

This Chapter has explored and emphasized the background and nature of Beethoven's associations with Masonic and other esoteric organizations spanning his formative years. These connections persist throughout his life, though as he passed through his forties, they began manifesting themselves more in personal reflection and less in worldly interaction. Their presence, nature and personal impact on Beethoven is well-traced in Solomon's work,¹⁷¹ to which the reader must be referred in order to gain a more complete and convincing picture of the extent of the influence of these esoteric organizations on the composer's life and thinking. The list in Appendix B as well as the chronology in Appendix C will also assist in gaining a sense of the sequence of these events in his life. The remainder of this chapter will address several significant Masonic phenomena and manifestations of the second half of his life. Masonic presence in this case differs from the previous two subchapters in that these items are largely productions of

¹⁷⁰ *Late Beethoven*, pp. 160-161.

¹⁷¹ Solomon, *Late Beethoven*, particularly the chapters titled "The Masonic Thread" and "The Masonic Imagination" provide detailed accounts of Beethoven's Masonic associations throughout his life. Many of his separately published articles focus on this aspect of Beethoven's life.

Beethoven himself, such as letters, diaries, and compositions, rather than meetings and connections with other institutions or individuals.

After he had established himself in Vienna, the outward connections generated and supported by Freemasonry did continue, though with less frequency. He remained in the close relationship with the most generous Prince Lichnowsky until a bitter quarrel in October of 1806. Until that time, not only did Beethoven receive semi-regular concert performances of his work by the Prince's sponsorship with his organizational talents, but also his apparently genuine friendship as well as several gifts on a grand scale.

Such generosity was rare in Beethoven's life, even more so in combination with the personal element of friendship offered by Lichnowsky and his wife. In spite of Beethoven's eventual break with this couple, the influence and importance of their relationship cannot be overlooked. Though it found greatest intensity in the Lichnowskys, this type of rebellious-dependent relationship that Beethoven cultivated extended to most of the aristocrats with which he had contact. Something unusual must be noted here. Beethoven, though the recipient of lavish support and gifts, was certainly not known to be very easily kept as a musical servant in the same way that Haydn had contracted himself to be. He was not even reputed to be polite, yet he was accepted and even lionized amongst the aristocracy. Yet often he was solidly supported.

Reconciling this, Solomon proposes that as Franz I, Maria Theresa, and later Metternich and his *Spitzelsystem* became ever more oppressive, many of their subjects found meaning and expression of their own wills in music.¹⁷² Beethoven's individualistic and often rebellious music could connect to the wills of the Viennese. This music gave voice and validation to the feeling of discontent of those whose freedom of speech had been muted, providing a preferable sense of

¹⁷² *Beethoven*, pp. 91-95.

reality to the narrow range of political topics permitted. This subtle yet powerful argument can account for a large part of this phenomenon of Beethoven's social acceptance.

In chapter 2.2 it was noted that in Platonic philosophy music can function as a metaphor for proper socialization. The power that music has over both the individual and society as described in the *Republic* or exemplified in Greek myth becomes meaningful in this example of Beethoven's treatment by the aristocracy; Beethoven's audience would join their stifled political impulses to the music, the psychological vehicle, which best connected to their inner vectors.

Beethoven's acceptance as a free man and a financially independent artist must also be considered within the web of contemporary Masonic connection outlined thus far. In this context, it becomes much clearer how Beethoven was able to establish himself on his own—to be viewed with greater autonomy and basic respect than the preceding generation of artists. Egalitarianism and abstract idealism were points that were impressed upon Masons in an emotionally charged and highly-ritualized environment that functioned in a sacred way. These rituals and philosophies excited members to embrace such concepts as the old Greek models of democracy and the emerging thought that was gradually eroding the perceived validity of monarchies—Adam Smith, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, etc.

The argument made in the first few pages of the introduction of this dissertation for Freemasonry's message of equality, the intrinsic value of genius and the mystic aspect of music can at least partially account for the tolerance of the composer's liberal social position as an independent artist in this case. Because of this tenet of equality widespread mainly by Freemasonry, Beethoven was able to break through conventions that earlier were too rigid for other composers to pass. While it seems true that Beethoven had very strong will power, being aware of this subtle sociological shift dispels the notion that his will and social intensity were of mythical proportions. This makes clear an element of his biography that tends to inflate his will

power and confrontational nature, thus making his character, environment, and interactions much more comprehensible. That argument also comes into high relief regarding Beethoven's relations with the Lichnowskys.

Many other important issues in Beethoven's life are linked to esoteric institutions and their modes of thought. Having explored the depth of their influence on the composer, this should serve to show how it reached far beyond a mere ideology discovered in adulthood, as many members of socio-political groups develop upon involvement. In a sense, his fate was saved by Masonic intervention of many sorts. One could for instance, say that he was saved from a neglectful and abusive domestic situation as a child that constantly pointed in dubious directions for his future. The same may be said of the composer in later stages of life as well, as outlined in the preceding two subchapters.

Beethoven's characteristics of probing and optimistically striving could just as easily, perhaps more accurately, be ascribed to Masonic ideals rather than simply to the spirit of the Enlightenment. Indeed, much of Freemasonry seems to have developed in confluence with the course of the Enlightenment.

As the development of the teenaged Beethoven was as much a product of Masonic figures as of any other community factor, it would have been expected that he would be initiated into one of these organizations. Imperial prohibitions cancelled such an opportunity, but he never seemed to let go of a fundamentally Masonic outlook. After he became established in Vienna as a virtuoso and eventually great composer, he continued much basic Masonic behavior and some specifically esoteric practices.

For instance, around the mid-1790s, while still university students, Beethoven would come into contact with Josef Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall, another intellectual with whom the composer would exchange Orientalist ideas. Later, in 1819, they would correspond over setting

works of his, an Indian Shepherd play, *Dewajani*; a Persian singspiel, *Anahid*; and a biblically-based work called *Die Sintflut*, to Beethoven's music.¹⁷³ This was at least partially prompted by Beethoven himself:

On 24 February 1819 Hammer-Purgstall, having apparently learnt from Johann Schickh that Beethoven wished to set to music 'an Indian chorus of a religious character', sent him a manuscript copy of an Indian pastoral play (*Dewajani*) which he had recently written.¹⁷⁴

Though not known to have been a Mason, he was a significant figure linking Beethoven to many of the esoteric pursuits that would surface in his *Tagebuch*. An undated document in Beethoven's writing exists as a re-written copy of entries #61 and #62, as well as two lines probably derived from "some essay or newspaper article."¹⁷⁵ This presents a view of his thoughts on this Near and Middle Eastern thread. The autograph is in two sections, the first untitled, and the second titled "Hymn." The influence of Hammer-Purgstall seems apparent here; it is probably a transcription of parts of his works in addition to the unidentified essay/article.

Relevant excerpts include:

God is immaterial; as he is invisible, he can therefore, have no form. He is...
almighty, omniscient, and omnipresent. ...There is no greater than He, Brahm;
his mind is self-existent. He, the Almighty, is present in every part of space.
...Thou alone art the true, Blessed (Bhagavan), ...Thou sustainest all things.
Sun, Ether, Brahma.

¹⁷³ Solomon, "A Beethoven Acquaintance" p. 14.

¹⁷⁴ Clive, *Beethoven and His World*, p. 148.

¹⁷⁵ Kalischer, ed., *Letters*, p. 393.

It is this *Tagebuch* that he kept in his forties that is perhaps the strongest evidence of his esoteric heritage that exists from his last twenty years. While it is commonplace to keep a diary, and though it is not specified by Beethoven as specifically esoteric in nature, there are at least three items that strongly suggest that it is indeed of that nature. First, the format (numbered—not always dated—entries not only of daily issues, but packed with philosophical/moral jottings and excerpts as well as notes of self-examination) is one that was required of the Novice grade of the Illuminati. This included reflections of reading lists required to enter higher grades. Second, Beethoven’s teacher, Neefe, was known to have kept a similar diary for that very purpose. Last, entry #71 reveals a plainly stated chronology that can only be from a secret society of Masonic nature. Writing in 1816, he writes: “Our world history has now lasted for 5,816 years.”¹⁷⁶

Beethoven’s behavior and verbal discourse reveal many entries in this *Tagebuch* to be more than mere reflection. The depth of conviction that he felt for many of these entries can be illustrated in many ways. Crabbe cites one example related by Johann Andreas Stumpff, a personal friend of Beethoven’s during the last years of the composer’s life, which shows the extent to which Beethoven’s *Tagebuch* entries could permeate his thoughts and conversation: “Beethoven sat on a mound and preached a small sermon to his friend, which Stumpff related later in a slightly decorative but still recognizably Beethoven language.”¹⁷⁷ Crabbe then quotes of Stumpff’s account:

...When in the evening I contemplate the sky in wonder and the host of luminous bodies continually beyond these constellations so many millions of miles away to the primeval source from which all creation flows and from which new creations

¹⁷⁶ Solomon, *Beethoven Essays*, p. 270. See also p. 98, fn. #160.

¹⁷⁷ Crabbe, *Empire of the Mind*, p. 104.

shall flow eternally... Yes, it must come from above, that which strikes the heart; otherwise it's nothing but notes, body without spirit, isn't that so?¹⁷⁸

Though this anecdote comes to us from Stumpff, its conceptual roots can be clearly seen in two consecutive *Tagebuch* entries from 1815. The first excerpt reflects the life-long sense of religious awe that Beethoven had with astronomy, particularly the “canopy of the stars”¹⁷⁹ (e.g., *Sternenzelt* figured so prominently in the text of the Ninth Symphony):

Before Heaven was, Thou art:
 Ere spheres beneath us roll'd or spheres above,
 Ere earth in firmamental ether hung,
 Thou sat'st alone; till through thy <mystick> Love,
 Things unexisting to existence sprung,
 And grateful descant sung.¹⁸⁰

The very next *Tagebuch* entry draws together Beethoven's understanding of divine creation: “All things flowed clear and pure from God.”¹⁸¹

Another major contributor to our understanding of Beethoven's sense of spirituality, though decidedly more mainstream than the *Tagebuch*, is his own personal, heavily notated, collection of essays, fully titled: *Betrachtungen über die Werke Gottes im Reiche der Natur und der Vorsehung auf alle Tage des Jahres* (*Reflections on the Works of God, in the Various*

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ Mention must here be made of the most famous biographical connection between Beethoven and the stars: “ ‘The moral law within us, and the starry heavens above’ Kant!!!” *Ludwig van Beethovens Koversationshefte*, vol. 1, p. 235.

¹⁸⁰ Solomon, *Beethoven Essays*, p. 266, entry number 62.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, entry number 63.

Kingdoms of Nature, and on the Ways of Providence, Displayed in the Government of the Universe), by Christopher Christian Sturm. Writing on Beethoven's personal annotations of this work, Whitcombe states:

These markings remain a little known and undervalued testament to Beethoven's views on God and religion.

The importance of the *Betrachtungen* cannot be doubted. In his copy Beethoven marked a total of 117 different passages. While some scholars have mentioned *Betrachtungen's* importance to Beethoven, most have ignored his marginalia.¹⁸²

This author was a Lutheran minister, titled "Minister of the Church of Saint Peter, and Director of the Public School in Hamburg,"¹⁸³ whose historical reputation rests on his attempts to fuse Christian theology and sentiment with Enlightenment ideals. Whitcombe continues:

Besides preaching tolerance, Christoph Sturm was passionate about nature.

...[His] scientific writings may give the impression that he harbored deistic tendencies.

...Frequently, Sturm's writings do not strictly adhere to traditional Christian doctrine... In fact, many of the essays encourage the reader to seek and find God in nature. Furthermore, they assert the pantheistic view that God provides and cares for mankind in nature."¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Whitcombe, "Beethoven's Markings", p. 10.

¹⁸³ From the title page of *Reflections on the Works of God*, Albion Press, 1808.

¹⁸⁴ Whitcombe, "Beethoven's Markings," p. 11.

Not only did Beethoven heavily annotate his own copy of this work, but completed his *Tagebuch* entries with a passage from Sturm's essays:

Therefore, calmly will I submit myself to all inconstancy and will place all my trust in Thy unchangeable goodness, oh God! My soul shall rejoice in Thee, immutable Being. Be my rock, <God be> my light, my trust forever!¹⁸⁵

Sturm's place in Beethoven's evolving spirituality is summarized:

Beethoven's deep attachment to Christian Sturm's *Reflections on the Works of God in Nature* may have represented his attempt to strike a compromise between nature worship, enlightened ideas, and Christianity. He probably knew this book from his Bonn days, perhaps through Neefe, but the heavily marked and annotated copy that has survived dates from an edition of 1811. Sturm's *Reflections* is a voluminous series of miniature essays on the wonders, great and small, or natural law and universal phenomena. These marvels are ascribed to the actions of God, to whom the author composes devout hymns of praise and thanksgiving. ...Beethoven was evidently much taken by Sturm's view of God as the supreme engineer of natural phenomena, by his conception of nature as "a school for the heart," and by his proposition of direct and unmediated contact between man and God which required no intervention of church or priest.¹⁸⁶

It may be added to Solomon's assessment of this work in Beethoven's life that it aided the composer in reconciling his own life perspective with that which was prescribed to him by the Catholic Church. In Chapter 1.1, we noted the difficulties facing Beethoven and Mozart, who desired to see themselves as pious, spiritually serious persons, while simultaneously seeing

¹⁸⁵ Solomon, *Beethoven Essays*, p. 295. This is Beethoven's last entry in this document, number 171.

¹⁸⁶ Solomon, *Beethoven Essays*, p. 220.

themselves as “enlightened” figures, capable of relying on their sense of rationality. And, while Beethoven often mocked the church, its ultimate aim of salvation seems to have impressed him. Beethoven’s attachment to Sturm’s writings may be explained in part by the function they served in bridging the ever-widening gap between Christianity and the forward-moving, rationalistic world of the late eighteenth century. Sturm’s manner of thought apparently provided Beethoven, and many others of his day, with a much-needed way to make sense of a rapidly-changing world.

Though he enjoyed substantial fame in his life, Sturm was not above occasional plagiarism; therefore when examining his essays, one must be open to the possibility of an earlier author emerging. A prime example that with musicological consequence that will be reviewed in relation to the construction of the string quartet in c-sharp minor, op. 131, (chapter 6.3) is the entry for September 1st. Titled “Gottes Allegegenwart,” this essay is taken from Johann Wilhelm Ludwig Gleim, though not credited.

Many other types of Masonic interaction occur at major events in Beethoven’s life. Other instances include his work in theater and opera with Masons and Masonically associated texts.¹⁸⁷ Most notable is *Fidelio*, with all of its implications and references to Masonic thought; his distress over Napoleon’s coronation; and his interest in the theology of many different cultures.

Yet another important class of examples can be found in Beethoven’s miscellaneous writings. In his essay, “The Masonic Thread,” Solomon cites many such writings that very much appear to be Masonic allusions. In spite of Solomon’s assertion that Beethoven was not formally a member of any Masonic Lodge, the evidence of Masonic references collected in this essay

¹⁸⁷ Beethoven had worked with Emmanuel Schikaneder on an incomplete opera, *Vestas Feuer*, in June-December 1803, for instance (Cooper, *Compendium*, 15).

clearly reveals awareness and a consistent disposition toward such allusion. Such examples include numerous instances of his addressing letters to the receiver as “Brother” and many classical and mythological references in those letters that were associated with concurrent Masonic interests.

One of the most pronounced themes recurring through these references is that of Isis and Osiris, the Egyptian Queen and King of fertility and the dead. This was a common topic for Freemasons to incorporate in their philosophy and rituals. Though Isis and Osiris references can be found in Beethoven’s letters, the three Saitic quotes he kept under the glass on his desk regarding Isis must be highlighted, since they seem to function as a daily reflection to the composer: “I am that which is./ I am everything that is, was, and that shall be. No mortal man has lifted my veil./ He is unique unto himself, and it is to this singularity that all things owe their existence.”¹⁸⁸ It must be remembered that these inscriptions clearly stem from Masonic sources.¹⁸⁹

Beethoven also made attempts to express Masonic thought in his work. Songs with specifically Masonic meaning exist, such as *Der Freie Mann*, WoO 117, by G. C. Pfeffel, and Friederich von Matthisson’s *Opferlied*, op. 121b. At least two other songs have specific Masonic themes—Goethe’s *Bundeslied*, and *Maurerfrage*, by his long-time friend and Mason, Wegeler. His opera, *Fidelio*, has Masonic overtones, if not outright references. Other large-scale examples of works with Masonic sensibilities must not be overlooked, such as the *Funeral Cantata for Joseph II*, WoO 87, the *Choral Fantasia*, op. 80, the Ninth Symphony, op. 125, and even his treatment of the mass in the *Missa Solemnis*, op. 123.

¹⁸⁸ This translation taken from Solomon, *Late Beethoven*, p. 147.

¹⁸⁹ See the Introduction.

These examples are of course largely textually based, but attempts to implement abstract Masonic thought in purely musical thought can be detected. The finale to his ballet, *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus*, op. 43, through its musical derivative, the *Eroica Variations* for piano solo, op. 35, and ultimately, the finale of the *Eroica* symphony, op. 55, all show a developmental line of musical thought. The common theme that unites these works appears to have found its first germination in a student production of a small Kontratanz, WoO 14, No. 7 (see Figure 3.1). From here, we see the theme in its simplest setting, a straight-forward and squarely rounded period of music consisting of sixteen bars:

Figure 3.1

Kontratanz, WoO 14, No. 7

The image displays a musical score for 'Kontratanz, WoO 14, No. 7' in G major and 2/4 time. The score is presented in three systems of piano notation. The first system, starting at measure 7, features a treble clef with a melodic line of quarter notes and a bass clef with a steady accompaniment of chords. A 'cresc.' marking is present above the final measure of this system. The second system, starting at measure 6, shows a more complex texture with sixteenth-note passages in the treble and a bass line with dynamic markings of 'p' and 'f'. The third system, starting at measure 11, continues the melodic and harmonic development, ending with a 'p' marking and a repeat sign.

In 1801-02, Beethoven would show his interest in this miniature as more than a trifle when he would use it as a key theme in his ballet, *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus*. While the

music is decidedly less dramatic than his symphonic style, a key element arises that connects this theme to a larger biographical context—the Prometheus motif in Beethoven’s life. Carl Kerényi’s twentieth century examination of Prometheus¹⁹⁰ as a powerful symbol in the human psyche is very applicable to Beethoven, whose own artistic pursuits he often framed in his mind as an act of self-sacrifice.¹⁹¹ In this Ballet, Prometheus “despairs of his mute creatures and plans to enlighten them by exposing them to the ‘higher arts and sciences.’”¹⁹² Clearly this relates to Beethoven’s own sense of mission as described in the introduction.

The elevation and perfectibility of mankind was a well-established Masonic and Illuminist ideal. The elevation of this little Kontratanz to symphonic proportions in a classically heroic context uncovers an attitude toward the subject matter that transforms the miniature into the *Prometheus* theme.

Certainly, a borrowed theme by itself would not be very significant, but Beethoven went on to include this same E-flat theme in two other major works: the *Eroica Variations*, for piano solo, op. 35, and the *Eroica Symphony*, op. 55. The thread of heroism is very important here as it seems to stem from the titan Prometheus, who by giving human beings fire (or, ‘higher arts and sciences’) acts as a model for benevolent despotism, an ideal frequently embraced in German Freemasonry. The theme, coming to fruition in the finale of the symphony, is developed into some of the composer’s finest work of his middle period.

¹⁹⁰ Kerényi, *Prometheus; Archetypal Image of Human Existence* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963.

¹⁹¹ The very opening of the *Tagebuch* reflects this: “You must not be *human being*, *not for yourself, but only for others*: for you there is no longer any happiness except within yourself, in your art.” Entry #1, Solomon, *Beethoven Essays*, p. 246. Also in support of this is Beethoven’s letter to the Archduke Rudolf stating: “There is no loftier mission than to approach the Godhead more nearly than other mortals, and by means of that contact to spread the rays of the Godhead through the human race” (Brandenburg, *Beethoven Briefwechsel Gesamtausgabe*, Band 4, p. 446, #1438). Also, recall the quotes cited in the introduction.

¹⁹² Lockwood, *Music and Life of Beethoven*, p. 150.

The figures associated with these works also lend credence to considering such Masonic strains in his work. The anecdote of Beethoven dedicating and then emphatically retracting the dedication of the symphony from Napoleon, a figure of Masonic importance, as a result of the ruler's self-coronation is well-known. The piano variations were dedicated to Prince Lichnowsky, whose Freemasonry and closeness to Beethoven has been well-established. The ballet was dedicated to Christiane Lichnowski, his wife.

Though these outward connections dwindled as he aged due to overall increasing isolation, the *Tagebuch* shows that such leanings became only more pronounced in his later years. Its entries ended in 1818, before Beethoven's long struggle with illnesses in his last decade, and therefore cannot be definitely said to be the final spiritual probings of his life. We must therefore remain open to possibilities of further personal studies not yet discovered. Clearly, such influence continued to exert itself throughout his life. Also, while many other works could show Masonic influence, these associations are built largely on biographical contexts, particularly up until his years of personal crisis, beginning in about 1812.. Still, it was not until his last major works that Beethoven conceived music manifesting the artistic ramifications of the esoteric studies accumulated throughout his life in a more purely abstract way.

Part II

The Musical Consequences

Chapter 4

Bagatelle, Opus 119, No. 7

The major musical examples that will be covered in Part II are the Bagatelle, Opus 119, No. 7; the second movement, the *Arietta*, of the op. 111 piano sonata; and the op. 131 string quartet. Each of these examples demonstrates either a marked break with or a dramatic expansion of the traditional and conventional compositional techniques of earlier and contemporary works of the same genre. A mature composer with a propensity to forge new paths in music, Beethoven, in his late period, began to draw from his renewed esoteric/spiritual sources with a refined artistic distillation. Being a technically developed composer, in a state of restless spiritual searching, and serious of mind, Beethoven was at this point in an excellent position to embark on this path of artistic exploration.

The novelty of the little Bagatelle in C major, op. 119, No. 7, can be viewed as a microcosm of Beethoven's late period style. Written simultaneously with the last three sonatas and the *Missa Solemnis* (1820-22), this small, yet provocative work seems to have strong parallels with his biography and readings at the time. In a collection of more normally structured works, this seventh entry stands out for its startling deviation from the prevailing concepts of classical proportion and balance, as well as that of motivic manipulation and unity. Indeed, as will become clearer with the discussion of the op. 131 string quartet, it may even be significant that this

particular bagatelle was numbered as the *seventh* entry of the set for numerological reasons.

This seventh entry happens to be the most idiosyncratic of the set, but there is another factor that implies its placement in the set's order as being purposeful and intended. Lewis Lockwood informs us that of the op. 119, a collection of eleven Bagatelles, only numbers 7-11 were recently composed pieces, though published in a didactic manual a year earlier¹⁹³. Numbers 1-5 come from the composer's early career, Lockwood citing them from 1791-1802. Number 6 was the *last* bagatelle to be composed, being inserted between the two sets. Beethoven seemed to require the extra bagatelles in order to make the set long enough to be acceptable to a publisher who initially rejected it for being too small. Why he chose specifically five of his earlier Bagatelles ad hoc, adding in the sixth place not the piece in chronological sequence, but the last to be written, may truly be a random decision. But the placement of this remarkable, even out-of-place, miniature fits within numerological principles of Freemasonry, as seven is considered “sacred” and “a venerable number, because it referred to the creation, and because it was made up of the two perfect figures, the triangle and the square.”¹⁹⁴

The tenets of proportion and motivic unity are central to the musical craft with which the composer identified. That he broke with tradition is certainly nothing new or remarkable at this point in his life, but there are certain noteworthy observations of the manner in which he does so that in turn lead to further insights into his creative development. Op. 119, No. 7 encapsulates an essential idea that appears throughout Beethoven's artistic life: that of awakening, or spiritual ascent. As exemplified in so many of his important works, he takes an apparently most average theme, elevates it by subtle yet powerful manipulations of its motivic potential and brings it to an

¹⁹³ Lockwood, *Beethoven*, pp. 396-397.

¹⁹⁴ Mackey, *Lexicon*, p. 437. For a more complete description of the sacred nature of the number seven from a Masonic perspective, see section 6.1, “Seven and Tonality,” for the complete entry, though without its own footnotes.

aesthetically brilliant conclusion.

4.1 Grounds for Examination

In Beethoven's readings, particularly the Bhagavad-Gita, one may find strong parallels with this thinking. For instance, the very opening entry in Beethoven's *Tagebuch*, marked "1812," seems to function as a mission statement—a formal declaration to himself of his personal code of self-sacrifice to music:

Submission, deepest submission to your fate, only this can give you the sacrifices—for this matter of service. O hard struggle! Do everything that still has to be done to arrange what is necessary for the long journey. You must find everything that your most cherished wish can grant, yet you must bend it to your will. Maintain an absolutely steady attitude.

You must not be a *human being, not for yourself, but only for others*: for you there is no longer any happiness except within yourself, in your art. O God! give me strength to conquer myself, nothing at all must fetter me to life. In this manner with A everything goes to ruin.¹⁹⁵

This first entry declares a "deepest submission to [one's] fate," and preparation for a "long journey." These references, as well as the meaning of this entry, seem to have its strongest parallels in the fundamental concept of Islam, and at least one passage of the Bhagavad-Gita, of the literature that Beethoven was known to own and study. The word itself, *Islam*, means "submission to the will of God." We need to contrast this attitude with that of the Western value of self-determination and individuality in order to appreciate the psychological distance of the aging Beethoven's perspective. Compare this to his earlier ego-centered self-concept as

¹⁹⁵ Solomon, *Beethoven Essays*, p. 246.

exemplified, though through the lens of Beethoven's humor, by a letter to Zmeskall:

Dearest scavenger of a Baron,

...for yesterday, through your Zmeskall-domanovezian chatter, I became quite sad. The devil take you; I don't want to know anything about your whole system of ethics. *Power* is the morality of men who stand out from the rest, and it is also mine. ...¹⁹⁶

In a more serious context, Beethoven wrote to Wegeler in 1801 when the state of encroaching deafness was becoming more and more apparent. The instinct to implement his will is very apparent, even when there is nothing to be done about his infirmity:

You will find me as happy as I am fated to be on this earth, not unhappy – no, that I could not bear – I will seize Fate by the throat; it shall certainly not bend and crush me completely...¹⁹⁷

Though Beethoven makes scant reference to Islam and its scripture,¹⁹⁸ the similarity of the *Tagebuch* entry deserves notice. The entry has strong echoes of Sufism, the mystical aspect of Islam. Closer to the composer's documented studies, the Bhagavad-Gita, dealing with steadfast devotion to divinity, exhibits

¹⁹⁶ Kalischer, *Letters*, p. 11. Also, Brandenburg, ed., *Beethoven: Briefwechsel Gesamtausgabe*, Band I, pp. 43-44, #35.

¹⁹⁷ Lang, *Creative World of Beethoven*, p. 84; Anderson, I, 68. Also, Brandenburg, ed., *Beethoven: Briefwechsel Gesamtausgabe*, Band 1, p. 80, #65.

¹⁹⁸ In spite of this, Habsburg interactions with the Ottoman Empire led to a significant amount of cultural exchange during Beethoven's lifetime, including periods of popular fascination with Turkish culture (1780s, e.g.) and later Egyptian culture, especially after Napoleon's campaign into Egypt, 1798-1801.

the strongest connection to this opening entry. It reads:

Know this! Through humble submission, through enquiry,
through service (on your own part), the knowing ones, the
perceivers of truth, will be led to teach you knowledge. (4:34)

But there are many other examples one may point to in this text that support Beethoven's expressed desire to tread on his ever more austere path of artistry. The entire second chapter, for instance, is a call to act without remorse or hesitation in the way one is intended or destined to act. This sense of a life mission that fulfils a discrete function in the grand mechanism of cosmic order in Hinduism is a view that can staunchly reinforce adherence to principles such as austere living and deep devotion to a sense of duty in life. This narrative framework finds its kindred spirit in the Bagatelle, op. 119, #7. In the Bhagavad-Gita, the avatar Krishna promises his mortal student Arjuna divinity as a result of unwavering focus and dedication to him. Arjuna is to achieve Krishna's promised spiritual state by transforming his familiar self—a normal human being susceptible to desires, anxiety, and doubt—into a higher consciousness by yogic means. In this case, this entails the strict renunciation of all that is not his duty and/or divine reflection. It is only through this psychological metamorphosis that Arjuna may break free of illusion and the shackles of the world, and finally unite with the deity. As a result, the protégé Arjuna, though in a sense still himself, will have utterly changed as he has united with the fiery radiance that the text identifies as the deity.¹⁹⁹

The highly unusual inner workings of this bagatelle are evocative of this transformative thinking. At the outset, a rather commonplace minuet-style motive is presented over a trill (see figure 4.1). Throughout the unfolding of the short piece, the trill takes on more than decorative

¹⁹⁹ The Bhagavad-Gita describes: "If hundreds of thousands of suns were to rise at once into the sky, their radiance might resemble the effulgence of the Supreme Person in that universal form." (11:12)

meaning: the apparent main motive of the piece gradually evolves through rhythmic diminutions until at the end the resultant figurations become so brilliant and rapid that the music now more resembles the trill rather than the head motive itself. Consequently, the original motive seems to have been engulfed, to have achieved a more inspired state because of its gradual transformation into a trill, an element confined to the background in the opening section of the Bagatelle. It is this quality of transformation tending toward illumination that allows comparison between Beethoven's music and the philosophical sources we have mentioned. To be sure, this is not the only possible interpretation of the piece;²⁰⁰ but this music seems to call out for symbolic explication. This kind of fusion—or at least correspondence—of music to inner psychological states will form the basis for the analytical remaining two works to be examined here.

²⁰⁰ For a much fuller discussion of the specific transformative properties of this and other works of Beethoven, see Kinderman's essay, "Metamorphosis and Transformation in Beethoven's Late Piano Works," which appears in "Verwandlungsmusik: Studien zur Wertungsforschung," ed. Andreas Dorschel, vol. 48.

Chapter 5

Sonata No. 32 in c minor, Opus 111, Mvt. II: *Arietta*

The analogy ventured above regarding trills and illuminative transformations becomes more exacting when one contemplates the *Arietta* with variations of Beethoven's last Piano Sonata, op. 111. This work has stimulated many of the most speculative writings on his music. Much has been said about its uncanny manipulation of the listener's temporal sense and about the psychological qualities of the transformative variations.

Distinguished thinkers in literature and musicology such as Thomas Mann and Philip Barford have offered a distinctly metaphysical exegesis when discussing the effect and/or meaning of this last of Beethoven's sonatas. To illustrate this trend, Solomon assembles characteristic quotes from the scholarly community's view of this work from Kerman, Matthews, Bekker, Kinderman, Uhde, and Adorno and several others. Each of these responses brings study of the op. 111 into a metaphysical realm. Also visible is a strong tendency toward poetic language in their efforts to accurately account for the total effect of this movement, which seems to defy a standard or traditional analytical reduction.²⁰¹

5.1 Time Expansion

From a technical standpoint, there exists a series of unusual time signature changes in the sequence of variations. The theme, in 9/16 time, consists primarily of eighth notes with occasional sixteenth notes forming an overall slow trochaic pattern. The first variation continues in a standard manner by supplying the theme with triplet sixteenth-note figurations in the bass to

²⁰¹ Solomon, *Late Beethoven*, pp. 210-211.

form a slightly more rhythmically active version of the theme itself.

Figure 5.1

Exponential diminutions of the variations from the *Arietta*, op. 111

Arietta
Adagio molto semplice e cantabile

THEME

VAR. I

VAR. II

VAR. III

UT 50 109

It is the second variation's treatment of time that begins to raise speculation. Notated in 6/16, it is marked to be performed *L' istesso tempo*, which is generally understood to mean that the 16th note remains the same, thus doubling the speed of the trochee. Tovey expresses his observation of a theoretical shortcoming of the notation, writing that "The true time signature is 18/32, and all the quavers should be dotted, besides all those semiquavers that are half-beats."²⁰² Nevertheless, the implication is widely understood as a *doppio movimento*. This same principle applies to the third variation as well, which Tovey asserts should be notated in 36/64.

Each variation strictly preserves the eight-bar structure of the *Arietta*, but according to the Baroque tradition of ornamentation, with successive division of the measure into ever smaller diminutions. This continues to the point where the third variation could be perceived on its own as a presto, were it not for the strict underpinning of the slow *Arietta* audibly forming the harmonic and melodic foundation for this set. We retain a sense of time's slow passage through the hypnotically consistent harmonic rhythm. Nevertheless, the trochees, whose speed doubles in the second variation and then again in the third, are always at the listener's foreground.

Though it is simple in its mathematics, this is a logarithmic process; one whose interest is not simply in being so, but one that is to be heard and experienced artistically. Beethoven consequently expands the entire structure, in the way a microscope expands the visible world by way of detailed focus. The world here at once becomes larger, smaller, and yet remains essentially the same. As time is the fabric of music, the musical outcome of these technical devices finds the listener sensing time *the same* by tracking the harmonic rhythm and its pitch cues common to each variation, as well as the *L' istesso tempo*, pulse for pulse. In the same instant the time units seem *smaller* in its more acute, "busier" diminutions. Time also appears *larger* when the skeleton of the arietta becomes saturated and thus juxtaposed with the trochaic

²⁰² Tovey, *Companion*, p. 277.

diminutions, and still larger as a result of the multiplied motivic and contrapuntal development. Paradoxically, these perception phenomena happen all at the same time.

This unique musical phenomenon is developed not only for its own aesthetic potential, but because of what *follows* this time-expansion process. The first three of the series of four variations temporally expand our tracking of time, coaxing the listeners' awareness to the point that we are sensitive to its passage at different incremental rates. This becomes significant in the fourth variation when, after having our temporal sense stimulated to be sensitive to several different-sized units of awareness, the music dramatically shifts from the loudest and most contrapuntally and rhythmically active point in the movement in Variation 3 to a state of vibrating stillness—where its “ground-state fluctuations” can be detected. Remarkably, this shift from activity to stillness happens *not* because of a dramatic contrast in texture from rapid notes to long notes, but conversely because the music at this point becomes saturated in its own vibrating rapidity.

Figure 5.2

Fourth variation from the *Arietta*, op. 111

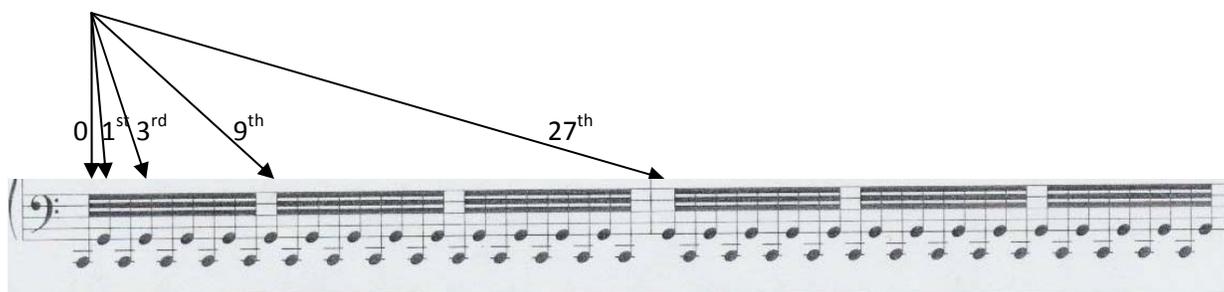
The image displays two systems of musical notation for the fourth variation of the Arietta, op. 111. Both systems are in 9/16 time and feature a piano accompaniment with a right hand playing chords and a left hand playing a continuous eighth-note pattern. The first system, starting at measure 65, is marked *pp* and shows a sequence of chords with a fermata over the final one. The second system, starting at measure 66, is marked *sempre pp* and includes a section with a 4-measure rest in the right hand, indicated by a bracket and the number 4, with fingerings 3, 2, 1. The notation is in black ink on a white background.

The right-hand part here marks the predominant pulse: that of a slow 16th note. The left hand, however, because of its two-note oscillation in a triplet context, yields many perceptible units of varying size. These triplet groupings are multiplied and further defined by the triple-time signature of 9/16, generating audible units of time beginning with the thirty-second note itself; groups of three thirty-second notes escalate to a grouping of three of those configurations, each comprising a third of a measure. Three of these groups then comprise a measure. A further rhythmic/textural richness is achieved because every rhythmic impulse here is triplet in concept utilizing two notes; each of those impulses alternate a higher note to a lower note, so that the perception of time passing can be marked more attentively. Thus each small unit in triplet-sixteenth notes alternates the pitches between which the music sways on each beat. “A bell-like resonance results,”²⁰³ as if the second configuration vibrates as part of itself. In this way, the *Arietta* has again provided another musical experience of the exponential/logarithmic concept, though now with a base of three rather than two.

Figure 5.3

TriPLICATE aural divisions:

Arrows point to notes which mark the various-sized pulses outlined in variation IV.



²⁰³ Kinderman, *Beethoven*, 2nd edition, p. 262.

(Figure 5.3 continued)

1 thirty-second note = smallest rhythmic unit
 3 thirty-second notes = 1 sixteenth note, or small pulse
 3 sixteenth notes = 1 eighth note, or large pulse
 3 eighth notes = 1 measure

Therefore,

3^0 thirty-second notes = 1 smallest rhythmic unit
 3^1 thirty-second notes = 3 = 1 small pulse,
 3^2 Thirty-second notes = 9 = 1 large pulse, and,
 3^3 Thirty-second notes = 27 = 1 measure

-In each of these pulse groupings outlined above, because two pitches alternate in groups of three, regardless of the size of the pulse, the first pitch of each group also alternates, in this instance, always from C to G.

5.2 Exponential Thinking as “Harmonic” Thought

Such an exponential treatment of so many groupings of the number three can be seen as a possible artistic distillation of Beethoven’s understanding of the Christian Holy Trinity. Exponents have a power of mass generation as well as a sense of pristine mathematical perfection about their products. They also define the nature of their product, whose essence can consist of nothing but the original source in total permeation, or plurality absorbed into an all-encompassing unity.

The time source that generates this section of the *Arietta* could be viewed as the dotted eighth value, the sixteenth note value, the thirty-second note value, or possibly even the measure. In this sense, the creation of this musical fabric comes from configurations of threes, generating themselves on ever larger and smaller scales. Staying in the general realm of Christian theology, this aspect of the construction of the *Arietta* is paralleled in the sonic Creation of the world *ex deo*, as discussed earlier in the sub-heading “Judeo-Christian Concept of Esoteric Sound” (Chapter 2.4).

Aside from any possible Christian inspiration, intrinsic meaning or symbolism in the use of exponents can be seen in the fundamental processes of Western music itself. Two prime examples stand out. Our Western system for rhythmic notation is exponential: we fundamentally think of time as a base unit (probably most often a quarter-note pulse) from which we either double or halve the duration in order to derive faster or slower notes. We are less likely to derive variations of speed as a result of varying the integer ratio to the pulse; eighth notes and sixteenth notes are much more common in classical music than quintuplets or septuplets, for instance. The other exponential precedent naturally occurring in music and well acknowledged by theoreticians is the ratio of harmonies to one another. A 440 Hz, for example, transposes to the next octave up or down by doubling or halving respectively. From A 440 Hz, infinitely higher octaves, each one higher, but still fundamentally an “A” after having ascended to itself again through the six other diatonic pitches, can be generated by this simple but powerful transformation:

A 440Hz → A 880Hz → A 1760Hz → A 3520Hz (highest A on a piano) → A 7040 Hz
→ etc.

The ratios here (A 440 Hz to its octave derivatives) are: 1:1, 1:2, 1:4, 1:8, and 1:16.

Another ratio, compounding the perfect fifth: 2:3, 1:3, 1:6, 1:12, etc.

Beginning at any given pitch then, the ratios resulting from a specific set of *compounded intervals relative to a fixed pitch* yield a progression that can be understood as *harmonic relationships*.

Whatever the motivation for this exponential construction, what is apparent about the rhythmic source of this section is that it is based on the notion of three, whether or not one looks inward or outward in the scope of time. This relates to Christian theology in that this understanding of the number three in the abstract sense (true to Plato’s concept of *idea*, as it was adopted by the early church via St. Augustine) places it beyond the limits of time and space as

well as permeating through these realms: it therefore exists in the eternal. This parallels the concept of time-manipulation—or transcendence of merely linear temporality—that is embodied in the *Arietta* movement.

This manipulation of time and generation of multiple temporal awarenesses has its strongest spiritual connection with theological studies in which Beethoven was then immersed. The above mentioned phenomena have strong parallels in some of the more mystic aspects of Saint Paul's letters in the Bible, the Bhagavad-Gita, and some more general contemporary reports of Hinduism. Throughout this entire study it becomes important to remember that Beethoven often viewed his life path with religious overtones and a spiritualized sense of meaning. The famous quote, from a letter written to his friend and patron the Archduke Rudolf, illustrates the composer's view of his art:

There is no loftier mission than to approach the Godhead more nearly than other mortals, and by means of that contact to spread the rays of the Godhead through the human race.²⁰⁴

It is significant that this letter, written in 1823, was written not only to a trusted friend of great political influence, but one who was also the dedicatee of this sonata.

The first part of this quote is mirrored in the last ten verses of chapter six of the Bhagavad-Gita, when Krishna expounds on the value of devotion to him via yoga, notably:

And when the yogi engages himself with sincere endeavor in making further progress, being washed of all contaminations, then ultimately, achieving perfection after many, many births of practice, he attains the supreme goal. (6:45)

²⁰⁴ Brandenburg, *Beethoven Briefwechsel Gesamtausgabe*, Band 4, p. 446, #1438.

The Bhagavad-Gita also provides us with a clear articulation of plurality in unity; the coexistence of the large and the small. This section comes at the climax, the revelatory moment, of Arjuna's inquiry into holy nature:

At that time Arjuna could see in the universal form of the Lord the unlimited expansions of the universe situated in one place although divided into many, many thousands. (11:13)

But this simultaneous viewing of the mystic relationship of the large and the small of time can be first observed in returning to Beethoven's own original religious background, Christianity:

But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. (2 Peter 3:8)

Though this view is familiar and perhaps even mundane to many Christians, it must be remembered that the Masonic tradition at this time delved with special curiosity into the mystic aspects of Christianity as well as those of exotic spiritual systems. A divine temporal sense may be deemed simply incomprehensible by many mainstream Christian theologians; nevertheless, such an issue would likely have been of interest to those of Masonic orientation striving for illumination. In fact, the discovery mentioned in Chapter 2 by Joseph Campbell related by Ernest McClain shows this very statement about divine time sense to have more literal implications than are usually understood. As is shown in his *Tagebuch*, Beethoven did display interest in these matters (e.g., entries nos. 71 and 94), and since Masonic circles explored Hebrew mysteries and their chronologies at this time, its examination therefore becomes pertinent here. McClain states:

Joseph Campbell has discovered a correlation between the 432,000 years from the creation to the flood in Babylonian mythology and the 1,656 years from the

creation of Adam to the flood in the Hebrew account.²⁰⁵

Taking the reader through his calculations (see Chapter 2.8, pp. 64-65) he asserts that the two chronologies are actually in some sense, the same, or in his own words: “Thus there is *no necessary contradiction* whatever in these different flood chronologies.”²⁰⁶ Taking a new approach to the same problem of reconciling the two time frames here has yielded a different but meaningful conclusion. The new calculations presented in Appendix D differ in that they not only show a relationship between the mathematics of the two cultures, but also reinforce the notion of the harmonic nature of the ratio of Babylonian to Hebrew antediluvian time.

When considered in terms of weeks, accounting for respective calendar systems, the resulting ratio between the two chronologies is 1 Hebrew week to 365.217 Babylonian weeks. The accuracy of this relationship cannot be accidental, as this is the number of days per year in the highly accurate Persian calendar (365.242...), the calculation accurate to just over two one-hundredths of a day, or 36 minutes, in the scope of thousands of years.

What is the possible relevance of this finding to the music of Beethoven? The ratio of 1 day: 1 year that results from this comparison seems to imply a view that time can be experienced in different ways—that one Babylonian year is somehow the same as one Hebrew day; a message very similar in meaning to the above quote from the second book of Peter. This notion bears comparison to the logarithmic generation of pitch intervals and rhythmic units. I agree with McClain’s assertion that this is a harmonic relationship in the sense described above, though my conclusion differs. This stance is fundamentally similar to that which is embodied purely in sound and time in op. 111. What is conveyed is that if properly stimulated, more than one experience of time is possible for one observer, perhaps even simultaneously.

²⁰⁵ McClain, *Myth of Invariance*, p. 150.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

Beethoven's variations on transformations of the *Arietta* from his op. 111 explore these dual and multiple senses of time. Tracking one pulse while being simultaneously engaged in others can evoke an aspect of an experience that points beyond the commonplace toward the extraordinary or even the mystical. Clearly, the aged composer was steeped in thought about time and pulse, and he was deeply interested in issues of non-linear temporality.

5.3 "Mythic Time" Markers

Another view of the temporal phenomena that Beethoven created in his *Arietta* movement suggests a different possible source of inspiration. Concurrent with the mystic aspect of this view is the association of the *Arietta* with the dual Hindu concepts of Nirvana (freedom from earthly suffering), standing in opposition to the Samsara (to be bound to earthly striving and difficulties) representation that early commentators perceived in the first movement. This view, which Wolfgang Jaedtke calls "Die Nirvana-Theorie" ("the Nirvana Theory"),²⁰⁷ was discussed in the sonata's early reception mainly by Richard Wagner and Hans von Bülow. The crucial subtlety of this observation is that Nirvana represents not only bliss but timelessness. In his essay on the op. 111, Phillip Barford cites Lenz's *Critical Catalogue of Beethoven's Works* to debate subtleties and fine points about the Samsara/Nirvana association of the twin movements, but he also aligns himself with this essential viewpoint.²⁰⁸

Many discussions in other formal academic settings have suggested that Beethoven had the ability to appear to "suspend" time or motion in his music. Notably, Charles Rosen—*The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven*; Stephen Husarik—*Suspended Motion in Beethoven's*

²⁰⁷ Jaedtke, Wolfgang. *Beethovens Letzte Klaviersonate*, p. 209. This section (3.3) of his book is dedicated to the discussion of the symbolic interpretation of this work in this Hindu context.

²⁰⁸ Barford, "Last sonata," p. 324.

Late Style: The Rhythmic Expression of Third Relations; and Nathaniel Greene—*Temporal Processes in Beethoven's Music* have written substantially on this concept. This view of “escaping time” or “suspending it” is supported in Beethoven’s *Tagebuch*, which directly references the relationship of God to time:

For God, time absolutely does not exist. (entry no. 94d)

This entry was connected by Solomon verbatim (allowing for translation) to the writing of William Jones in a volume of *Asiatick Researches*. This was a periodical brought to Vienna as a translation of a report on expeditions taking place on the Indian subcontinent. Beethoven owned a copy of this translation in his personal library. Again, such material would be most marginal to Beethoven’s life as a Viennese composer, and with the Imperial prohibition of Freemasonry and the Illuminati, it would be an unnecessary risk to retain a text that could easily be associated with these groups. That he had many such texts further supports the integral relationship between his work and these sources.

The same movement also has a harmonic aspect that has aesthetic and philosophical parallels with Eastern thought. Birgit Lodes has asserted several times that her example, the quartet opus 127, exhibits a fundamentally different aesthetic nature than either his earlier work, or even the tradition of tension/resolution principles present in the classical sonata tradition. She states:

Beethoven’s opus 127 expresses that kind of floating, tensionless, utopian state already in its first movement. I argue that in this quartet, Beethoven undercut the directional, dynamic qualities of a sonata-form Allegro, which is suitable for telling a unique, teleological story, and he instead sought to convey what we might deem “mythic time.” ... In this context, I suggest that

our understanding of Beethoven's late works in general may be enriched by taking into account the idea of myth and mythology.²⁰⁹

One may say, as Lodes suggests, the same of the *Arietta* of the opus 111 as well. Her concept of "mythic time" may just as easily or even more so apply to the above described process of manipulation of the temporal sense. Relating to harmony, this "undercut[ting of] the directional and dynamic qualities of a sonata-form" has similar significance in both the opus 127 and the *Arietta*. The example of op. 111, however, is yet more extreme in its broad and steady monochromatic tonal scheme for the majority of the movement's duration. Relevant too is Beethoven's practice of utilizing non-dominant key areas as "dominant substitutes."²¹⁰ He maintains that the mediant, submediant, and other key areas truly function as a dominant harmony, because they create "long-range dissonance" over the course of a movement, or section thereof.

Here, in the *Arietta*, the theme and its variations, as well as the entire movement with the exception of a single protruding period of E-flat, remains "after almost a quarter hour of the purest C major."²¹¹ The only tonicization is the second half of the theme with its second halves of each variation, beginning in a minor. With Rosen's observation, we can hear this key area creating the most subtle of long-range dissonance throughout the work. It is not truly "tensionless," as Lodes describes the op. 127, but nearly so; having enough tension to sustain long and relaxed engagement of the listeners' attention.

²⁰⁹ Kinderman, et al, *Beethoven Quartets*, p. 168.

²¹⁰ Rosen, *Classical Style*, pp. 382-385.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 446.

Figure 5.4

Tonicization of the *Arietta* from C major to a minor to C major

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "Arietta" with the tempo marking "Adagio molto semplice e cantabile". The score is in 9/16 time and begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The first system (measures 1-6) is in C major, indicated by a handwritten "C:" below the bass staff. The second system (measures 7-13) shows a modulation to a minor key, indicated by a handwritten "a:" below the bass staff. The third system (measures 14-16) returns to C major, indicated by a handwritten "C" below the bass staff. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, fingering numbers (e.g., 3, 2, 4, 5), and dynamic markings like *f* and *p*. The piece concludes with a *cresc.* marking.

Total tensionlessness could not sustain our interest in the same way, nor could it mark time, in the broad scope of this movement. The slow, hypnotic waxing and waning of the C major melding into a minor and back again over and over, even more so than the op. 127, reflects the cyclical thinking that commentators like Lodes have connected to the esoterica with which Beethoven was immersed during these years. Supporting this concept of the regularity of the gentlest tension/relaxation is Beethoven's own *Tagebuch* entry from several years earlier:

A drop of water hollows a genuine stone.²¹²

This slow oscillation of such closely related tonal areas can be connected to

²¹² Entry #125.

Beethoven's delving into ancient mystic thought in another way: the Hindu concept of breath. Its process of inhalation and its exhalation form a most fundamental concept in yogic thought as outlined in the Bhagavad-Gita (4:29 and 5:27, for instance) and is discussed in the accounts of the exploration of India. The *Arietta* relies on a scheme that is tonally at its most stable while in the C major portions, that is, the first half and last quarter of each variation, whose analogy is the nadir of exhalation. The cyclic tension occurs at the middle of each variation with its a minor section—the inhalation. In such a way works the slow and mild harmonic progression and its regularity and frequency upon the listener's awareness.

The one moment of great tonal deviation happens in measures 106-112 when a series of trills melodically lead to E-flat. The drama of this moment, which may be termed the “center-piece” of the *Arietta*'s structure, has been duly noted by commentators, above all, for two reasons: 1) Its tonal difference is quite shocking after the 13 minutes or so of the mildest and most uniform key vacillations, and 2) the final acceleration of speed of the measured diminutions of the earlier variations compels the ear to surrender all sense of tracking and calculation. In perception, though not in reality, this trill is infinitely fast. The exponential increase of the trochaic variations leaping to and culminating in the bubbling, vibrating trills progressing to triple trills, coinciding with the only major break in harmony from the C major, serves to stop all sense of time-marking as we have until then known it. The large time markers, the harmonic oscillation, have yielded to a temporally obscured, unfamiliar key area. The small time markers, the trochees and the ensuing 32nd note pulsing, have leapt into immeasurable trills. For long moments, our sense of time has stopped. The starkly luminous tonal shock of E-flat suspends us in utterly unfamiliar territory.

Figure 5.5

The “centerpiece” of the *Arietta*, containing the only modulation of the entire movement

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system, measures 104-105, is in the key of F# (one sharp) and features a treble clef and a bass clef. The music is marked with *sf* (sforzando) and includes trills and triplets. The second system, measures 106-107, shows a modulation to the key of Bb (two flats) and includes dynamic markings such as *f*, *p*, *dim.*, and *pp*. The score concludes with an *ossia* section and various trills.

(continued on next page)

(Figure 5.5 continued)

195

113

p cresc. *f* *p cresc.* *dim.*

espressivo

p *p* *dim.* *pp*

sempre pp

cresc.

120

124

128

131

*) Siehe Einzelmerkungen / See Detailed Notes / Voir Notes Détaillées

To be stripped of all familiar temporal markers and cues of consciousness, catapulting the listener into a new awareness, at once awkward and awesome in its newness, evokes the mystic experience. It is ineffable because of its unfamiliarity. It seems to lie outside of time by virtue of Beethoven's technical mastery of time manipulation.²¹³ In its quietude and gentleness of harmonic progressions and harmonic rhythm, it lies apart from the worldly experience. This moment is surely one of the clearest echoes of Beethoven's aforementioned entry #94d in his *Tagebuch*: "For God, time absolutely does not exist."

²¹³ That Beethoven intended such substance and effects in his music, and that these observations warrant attention can be supported by Rosen's insight into Beethoven's mastery of the element of time: "Beethoven was the greatest master of musical time. In no other composer is the relation between intensity and duration so keenly observed; no one else understood so well, not even Handel or Stravinsky, the effect of simple reiteration, the power that can arise from delay... [he] never miscalculates." (*Classical Style*, p. 445).

Chapter 6

Quartet in c-sharp minor, Opus 131

Our final discussion of esoteric integration in late Beethoven explores the c-sharp minor quartet. The last of his colossal works, it has received the highest critical praise. One of the most indicative, if not the most significant, comes from Beethoven himself, who regarded this quartet as his greatest at the end of his life. In his benchmark biography Thayer relates:

Holz says that when once he remarked to Beethoven that the one in B-flat was the greatest of his Quartets the composer replied: 'Each in its own way.' ... Afterward he declared the C-sharp minor Quartet to be his greatest.²¹⁴

Such estimation from the composer himself encourages close analysis and study of the piece. The main attributes of this quartet that arouse speculation about an esoteric connection are 1) its numerological emphasis and manifestations, 2) the unprecedented level of integrated thinking, and its parallels with Near-Eastern citations of his *Tagebuch*, and 3) the parallels between the compositional principles by which this quartet is constructed and the philosophies and instruction of the spiritual sources that Beethoven studied, particularly those myths relating to Creation. This includes Judeo-Christian, Hindu, Egyptian, Theurgical, Masonic/Illuminist, and contemporary writings.

Solomon has pointed out reasons to consider this quartet a highly dissociative one, but commentators more frequently are prone to emphasize the highly unified nature of the work.

²¹⁴ Thayer-Krehbiel, *Life of Beethoven*, p. 225, vol. III.

Joseph Kerman even titles his discussion of this work *Integration* in his exhaustive study of the quartets, and cites Tovey in support, using the latter's comments on *normality* (in the sense of healthy or optimal) in Beethoven's music resulting in that unification.²¹⁵ This integrative thought defines the work on many levels.

While its structural organization is largely discernable upon a hearing, it is nevertheless formally divided in ways that are not aurally apparent. For instance, the formal division of the quartet into seven labeled movements cannot be ascertained easily without a score. There are, for example, two movements (numbers 3 and 6) which could just as easily, or even more appropriately be viewed as introductions to the larger movements. For Beethoven, the presence of seven movements was surely significant. Beethoven developed his two preceding quartets—op. 132 and op. 130—as works in six movements, and then went beyond this threshold in shaping the quartet in c-sharp minor.

6.1 Seven and Tonality

The number seven lends meaning to the quartet. Just as Brahms composed music based on ciphers that had meaning in his personal life, Bach with numerological and religious meanings, and Mozart with Masonic implications, Beethoven was interested as well in extra-musical relations in his music. The discussion in this subchapter will show the work's esoteric connection to the number seven through its Masonic and Near-Eastern conceptual basis and its cosmological implications.

To assess the primacy that the number seven has in the context of the Western occult tradition, let us cite two crucial sources. Albert Mackey's definitive views on Freemasonry,

²¹⁵ Kerman, *Beethoven Quartets*, pp. 325-26.

though written in the mid-nineteenth century and hence after Beethoven's death, are reputed, more than any other author of that time, to scrupulously embody the Masonic tradition close to which Beethoven would have been familiar. He explains the numerological meaning of the number seven:

The number seven, among all nations, has been considered as a sacred number, and in every system of antiquity, we find a frequent reference to it. The Pythagoreans considered it a venerable number, because it referred to the creation, and because it was made up of the two perfect figures, the triangle and the square. Among the Hebrews, the etymology of the word shows its sacred import; for, from the word עֶבֶשׁ (shebang,) *seven*, is derived the verb עָבַשׁ (shabang,) *to swear*, because oaths were confirmed either by seven witnesses, or by seven victims offered in sacrifice, as we read in the covenant of Abraham and Abimelech. (Gen. xxi, 28.) Hence, there is a frequent recurrence to this number in the Scriptural history. The Sabbath was the *seventh* day; Noah received *seven* days notice of the commencement of the deluge, and was commanded to select clean beasts and fowls by *sevens*; *seven* persons accompanied him into the ark; the ark rested on Mount Ararat in the *seventh* month; the intervals between dispatching the dove, were, each time, *seven* days; the walls of Jericho were encompassed *seven* days, by *seven* priests, bearing *seven* rams' horns; Solomon was *seven* years building the temple, which was dedicated in the *seventh* month, and the festival lasted *seven* days; the candlestick in the tabernacle consisted of *seven* branches, and finally, the tower of Babel was said to have been elevated *seven* stories before the dispersion.

Among the heathens, this number was equally sacred. A few instances of their reference to it may be interesting. There were

seven ancient planets, *seven* Pleiades, and *seven* Hyades; *seven* alters burnt continually before the god Mithras; the Arabians had *seven* holy temples; the Hindoos supposed the world to be enclosed within the compass of *seven* peninsulas; the Goths had *seven* deities; viz.: the Sun, the Moon, Tuisco, Woden, Thor, Friga, and Seatur, from whose names are derived our days of the week; in the Persian mysteries were *seven* spacious caverns, through which the aspirant had to pass; in the Gothic mysteries, the candidate met with *seven*, obstructions, which were called the “road” of the seven stages; and finally, sacrifices were always considered as most efficacious when the victims were *seven* in number.

In Freemasonry, seven is an essential and important number, and throughout the whole system the septenary influence extends itself in a thousand different ways.²¹⁶

The other source is representative of the *music of the spheres* and most likely came through Freemasonry; it deals directly with music, string instruments and the number seven. Cicero, in his famed *Dream of Scipio*, writes of the music of the spheres:

That... [a pleasing harmony] is a concord of tones separated by unequal but nevertheless carefully proportioned intervals, caused by the rapid motion of the spheres themselves. ... Of course the earth, the ninth and stationary sphere, always clings to the same

²¹⁶ Mackey, *Lexicon of Freemasonry*, pp. 437-39, excluding the footnotes accompanying the entry. For further discussion of the esoteric meaning of the number seven, see Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*, chapter XXV, “The Mysteries of the Hebdomad.”

position in the middle of the universe. The other eight spheres, two of which move at the same speed, produce seven different tones, this number being, one might almost say, the key to the universe. Gifted men, imitating this harmony on stringed instruments and in singing, have gained for themselves a return to this region, as have those of exceptional abilities who have studied divine matters even in earthly life.²¹⁷

Viewing the intrinsic basis of *seven* in this quartet, the first point that we may acknowledge is the numbering of the movements. The most obvious parallel from a musical perspective is the set of seven notes of the scale and Beethoven's clear referencing of them in his strategy to comprehensively incorporate them in the seven movements. He does indeed assign one new key per movement, with one conspicuous exception.

The first and the last movement, as the classical aesthetic would demand, are both in the tonic key of c-sharp minor. The remainder key that does not formally make itself a tonic of a movement is the pitch letter *F*, or more specifically, *F-sharp* in the orbit of this c-sharp minor work. Though there is no movement in the subdominant key, this key nevertheless is represented in a more subtle, truly permeating way.

To begin with, f-sharp minor is represented so thoroughly in the first movement as the unlikely position of fugal answer, that it colors the entire exposition in the dark glow of the subdominant. The aesthetic of the position of tonal answer, usually reserved for the dominant key or possibly relative major, residing in the subdominant is yet more enhanced by the subdominant implication of the subject itself. The A natural is highlighted in the subject, consequently highlighting the Neapolitan D natural in its corresponding place in the subdominant

²¹⁷ Godwin, *Music, Mysticism and Magic*, p. 11.

answer. This D natural tonicizes b minor, the subdominant of the subdominant. The disposition toward the subdominant in the subject itself, further more deeply committed by Beethoven's choice to place the answer in the subdominant, results in the tonal "flattening" of the entire movement.

Figure 6.1

The opening of op. 131, utilizing subdominant fugal answers

Quartett N^o 14. Op.131.
N^o 1. Adagio ma non troppo e molto espressivo.

The image displays the musical score for the first movement of Beethoven's Quartet No. 14, Op. 131, No. 1. The score is arranged for four instruments: Violino I, Violino II, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is common time. The tempo and mood are marked "Adagio ma non troppo e molto espressivo." The score shows the beginning of the piece, with the first violin playing a melodic line that is answered by the second violin in the subdominant. The viola and cello provide harmonic support. Dynamics include *sf* (sforzando), *p* (piano), *cresc.* (crescendo), and *dim.* (diminuendo).

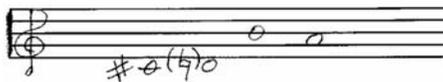
This bent toward the subdominant reflects Rosen's comments mentioned earlier in the discussion of the op. 111: that Beethoven became interested in the relaxation of harmonic tension in late works. The tonal plan of the first movement reflects the flattened aesthetic in three main ways: the exposition as discussed above, the prominence of the central A major section, and the baroque style coda section oscillating between c-sharp and f-sharp, finally ending with a Picardy third which more resembles a half cadence in f-sharp minor. The result of this movement's tonal

idiosyncrasy is the sense of a dual or bipolar tonic. Like the finale, or the entire quartet for that matter, it could be thought of as both in c-sharp and f-sharp minor. An alternate solution to the tonal ambiguity of this quartet can be to view c-sharp minor as a false tonic with the true tonic of f-sharp minor revealing itself upon analysis elucidated in the ensuing paragraphs. Either solution however, reveals a kinship to esoteric thought, especially as outlined in cosmological studies of the ancient world. It is in studies such as Pythagoreanism, the Bhagavad-Gita, and the *Corpus Hermeticum*, that we encounter parallel philosophical and spiritual ambiguities woven with such this type of numerology.

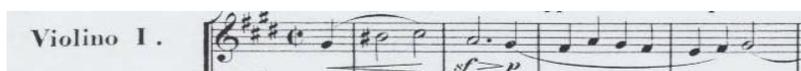
The ramifications of this tonal plan of the fugue are found to be the basis of the large scale tonal plan for the entire quartet. Keys of sections and episodes highlighted in the fugue are sequentially the order of the keys of the movements, which when outlined manifest their closer relation to f-sharp minor rather than c-sharp. Movements 1-7 are: c-sharp, D, b, A, E, g-sharp, and c-sharp. Not only does the presence of the D major movement strongly propel the work into the subdominant direction, but the tonics of the first four movements spelled in order also display the pitch cell that unifies so much of the late quartets, though within the key of f-sharp minor. The c-sharp–D–b–A sequence, when arranged as an ascent of a half-step, ascent of a sixth, and then descending down a step, is a tonal transposition of the opening of the a minor quartet, op. 132: g-sharp, a, f, and e. This pitch motive is most thoroughly integrated here in the op. 131, and by the same motive, connects it to the other late quartets and the *Grosse Fuge*, op. 133. Figure 6.2 displays these various manifestations, some clearly derived, and some permuted with key pitches outlining the motive.

Figure 6.2

Some significant manifestations of the motive unifying the late quartets, especially op. 131



- a. Opus 131, tonal structure of the first four movements



- b. Op. 131, opening



- c. Op. 131, last movement, opening



- d. Opus 132, opening



- e. Op. 133, *Der Grosse Fuge*, opening

This pitch outline is connected to the number seven in a more fundamental way—one which would have another level of meaning for Beethoven given his Masonic associations and background. The division of the op. 131 into two sections resulting from this motive relates to the late quartets as follows: the tonics of the first four movements form a unit that outlines the unifying motive of the late quartets, and the last three neatly spell the formal tonic—a c-sharp minor chord.

The division of seven into 4+3 has meaning in Freemasonry—that of the *square* and the *triangle*. These are two of the most fundamental symbols in the Masonic canon, the “two perfect figures.”²¹⁸ This organization permeates Freemasonry, down through its epistemic division of knowledge as formally studied in its legends since the medieval beginnings of Masonry, dividing the seven liberal arts into the *Trivium*, or basic fundamentals of reasoning and communicating, and the *Quadrivium*, which included the higher level studies that we now associate with several modern sciences. This division is also visible in the sacred Pythagorean symbol of the *Tetraktys*, presented below in Figure 6.3.

Figure 6.3

The Pythagorean *Tetraktys*



²¹⁸ Mackey, *Lexicon of Freemasonry*, p. 437.

The single point at the top represents the *Monad*, or representation of masculine divinity, the next tier with two points represents the *Dyad*, or female creative principle, and the last two tiers comprise the 3+4 division in the Pythagorean context, the *septenary*.²¹⁹

Beethoven's grouping of the movements of this quartet reflects this fundamental division:

c#-D-b-A and E-g#-c#

Mackey in his same *Lexicon* describes the triangle as the most perfect of all figures, like the number three itself, always including a beginning unit, a middle unit, and an ending unit. He also cites that this all-encompassing implication in the triangle has made it the symbol for the Deity in many spiritual systems. The last three movements of the quartet spell the work's tonic; movements 5-7 are E, g# and c#. The solidifying effect of spelling the tonic triad can be viewed as parallel to the fundamental nature of the *Trivium*. But whether or not Beethoven intended this meaning associated with the tonic triad, or something else significant in the last three movements themselves seems purely speculative. Also, Beethoven's choice of key selection for the last three movements seems to have been at least partially determined by a principle of tension in harmonic progress. Nevertheless, the parallelism with Mackey's view of the significance of the *square* seems to reflect Beethoven's organizational concept of the first four movements of the quartet. Of the square, Mackey says:

...It is one of the working tools of a Fellow Craft, and the distinctive jewel of the Master of a lodge. The square is an important implement to operative masons, for by it they are

²¹⁹ Godwin, *Music, Mysticism, and Magic*, p. 299.

enabled to correct the errors of the eye...²²⁰

This entry continues to draw the analogy: as the Mason with his square shapes stone, so the shaping of individual's developing morality and self-improvement is enacted by the influence of the leaders and the principles of Freemasonry. As Freemasonry educates largely by principle of metaphor and symbol, this will have meaning in musical thinking as well.

6.2 A Rosicrucian Connection

Beethoven has included the integrative germ of the series of late quartets (the pitch cell: c#, d, b, and a) in the large-scale structure of the work itself. This unifying concept has the integrative power to engage a listener in an inescapable artistic experience much more than a purely improvisatory or merely intuitive approach would allow. The phenomenon of this integration is so thorough that William Kinderman views this quartet as a narrative, based on the exceptional density of musical self-allusion and motivic juxtaposition.²²¹ This pitch cell is not just a cohesive device as in most music (even Beethoven's), but by structuring the keys of his work based on this, it becomes a *law* of the quartet—one that permeates throughout in large and small ways. It has in this sense become a *rule*, or as Mackey or a Mason might say, a *square* by which the quartet is constructed—guiding itself through its own self-creation.

Naturally, the question of the genesis of this pitch cell arises at this point. The pitch-motive that permeates this and the other last quartets, its four-note outline highlighting the augmented or diminished intervals prevalent in the harmonic minor mode, upon initial hearing do have an eastern flavor. That Beethoven was so involved in Indic thought might have attracted

²²⁰ Mackey, *Lexicon of Freemasonry*, p. 450.

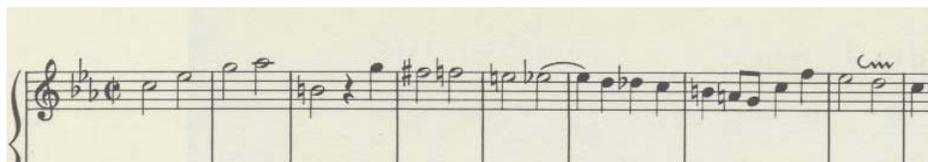
²²¹ Kinderman, *Beethoven*, pp. 314-315.

him, consciously or unconsciously to such a sound. Yet, there is an avenue that has hitherto been largely unexplored. The similarity this motive bears to a work penned by a man to whom Beethoven was psychologically connected should be examined.

Bach's *Musicaliches Opfer* treats a theme in the most exhaustive manner, exploiting it to the ends of his encyclopedic compositional ingenuity.²²² The theme highlights the same augmented and diminished intervals of the harmonic minor mode as does Beethoven's last quartets, and both works represent the apex of their respective composers' abilities in some ways. We know of Beethoven's early training on *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier*, and in Chapter 3, we traced Beethoven's pedagogical links to Bach via Neefe. His respect for the older composer is also well-documented.

Figure 6.4

Theme from J. S. Bach's *Musicalisches Opfer*, as employed in the *Ricercare*.



But it was not Bach's own theme on which he composed. The theme was composed and presented by the Masonic/Rosicrucian King Friederich the Great to Bach upon the latter's visit to Berlin in the last years of his life, curious to see what inventiveness Bach could conjure. The musical king was impressed deeply enough to remark for the rest of his life on Bach when the subject arose--this is the way that the Baron van Swieten learned of the elder Bach. Exactly why the king used this set of notes himself is unclear. That Beethoven chose this set of notes to

²²² Solomon, *Beethoven*, p. 322.

form the topic of his great quartets could well have roots in the reference of a work having special meaning to him.

This meaning was not only an aesthetic attraction that he had to this pitch set. It must be remembered that Friederich the Great came to symbolize much of the Enlightenment ideal in his time. Beethoven not only shared this optimism and progressive outlook, but also shared some of the mystical heritage that was so widespread in this time: Friederich was a Rosicrucian and a Mason. The intricacies of Beethoven's view of the house of Hohenzollern as outlined in chapter 3.5—the rumors of his illegitimate parentage from Friederich tacitly allowed by Beethoven along with his “Nobility Pretense”²²³—must be noted here. This convoluted personal connection combined with the shared set of ideals to the king brought Beethoven's identification with Friederich to a deeper and more intricate level than could otherwise be expected between a musician and an esteemed monarch.

The aging composer was at this point in his life extremely careful and selective of where and how he spent his creative energies. Perhaps this may explain why he warranted spending so much of his imagination on the obsessive integration of this motive throughout his last major works.

6.3 Creation Cosmology

In this world of itself and seemingly by its own creation, the elevated sense of structural integrity seems to parallel the conception of creation and divine cosmology of the Abrahamic religions, Greco-Egyptian Theurgists, and of Hinduism in the Bhagavad-Gita in particular. The Bible describes in many places that God's awareness and presence extends

²²³ Solomon discusses this topic in *Beethoven*, p. 5.

everywhere. This Hindu scripture however, the Bhagavad-Gita, that Beethoven kept in his own library articulates still a more ubiquitous divinity. The revelations that Krishna offers to his subject Arjuna describe a grand oneness of the universe, one where Krishna (here the avatar of Vishnu, the supreme god) is manifest in *everything*. The c-sharp minor quartet seems to be unified with permeating musical ideas with zeal inspired by that which the Bhagavad-Gita insists when placing Krishna in every conceivable aspect of the universe.

Chapter 9 of the Bhagavad-Gita, titled *The Yoga of Sovereign Knowledge*, is entirely devoted to the omnipresence and totality of existence of the avatar Krishna, and it is certainly not an isolated or parenthetical instance of this. This chapter describes a nature yet more ubiquitous than that of the Judeo-Christian god. This view can be attested to have been a part of Beethoven's outlook as exemplified in his *Tagebuch* and in the document associated with his interaction with Hammer-Purgstall. This document seems to embody the underlying compositional philosophy of the op. 131. Written in Beethoven's hand, this is a collection of excerpts regarding Hindu theology:

...There is no greater than He, Brahm; his mind is self-existent. He, the Almighty, is present in every part of space. His omniscience is self-inspired, and his conception includes every other. ...Thy [God's] wisdom apprehends thousands and still thousands of laws, and yet thou ever actest of thy free will...²²⁴

We know that this concept of oneness and unity among disparate elements had a specific connection to Beethoven's life. He kept three quotes under the glass of his desk in his home from Egyptian sources. Beethoven became acquainted with these writings through Schiller's essay *Die Sendung Moses*, which promoted a cultural and theological connection

²²⁴ Taken from Kalischer, *Letters*, pp. 393-394.

between ancient Egyptian and Judaic theology based on Moses' bi-cultural background. By virtue of being kept in a permanent position on his work desk, these quotes seem to have had the function of daily reminders for the composer. Again, these lines do not equate to Beethoven's formal Masonic involvement, though the Masonic topoi are pronounced. They are some of the clearest reflections of his esoteric pursuits, particularly those dealing with unity and integration. They are as follows:

I am, what is.

I am everything, what is, what was, and what will be. No mortal being has lifted my veil

He is of himself alone, and it is to this aloneness that all things owe their being.²²⁵

The study of new religious concepts early in the dawn of Europe's collective awakening to non-western culture at this point had an intellectual freshness. To see what mankind might intuit of divinity in different cultural systems would surely have been extremely provocative to those minds curious and daring enough to risk challenging Habsburg censors. Such people did include Beethoven and many in his circle, and the underground Freemasons and Illuminati who formed the composer's spiritual roots.

As this quartet in its principle of integration parallels the Hindu cosmology, so there exist several crucial parallels to Judeo-Christian creation/cosmology as well, one based on a book of great personal interest belonging to Beethoven, and another on a mathematical/numerological principle. This study is Beethoven's heavily annotated personal copy of Sturm's *Reflections on the Works of God*, discussed in Chapter 3. One of the examples in this collection marked in

²²⁵ See especially Friederike Grigat, ed., "Beethovens Glaubensbekenntnis: Drei Denksprüche aus Friedrich Schillers Aufsatz *Die Sendung Moses*", Bonn: Beethoven-Haus, 2008.

Beethoven's hand clearly reflects one of the major themes of his late years, of both a spiritual and artistic nature. Entered for the September 1st selection, Sturm inserted the poem "Gottes Allegegenwart," by Johann Wilhelm Ludwig Gleim.

But Sturm did not credit Gleim. Therefore, it is uncertain whether or not Beethoven had actually known the true author of this particular poem that he so admired. Beethoven was aware of certain basic facts of Sturm's biography, having sardonically recommended "to Catholic priests that they read Sturm's *Reflections*—the sermons of a Lutheran minister—from their pulpits."²²⁶ It is impossible to tell if Beethoven had any idea of this plagiarism, or how he would have reacted to knowing. It does seem apparent though that he found something special in the writings of both men; not only was he attracted to Sturm's *Reflections* in general (assuming most of those essays are indeed original) and Gleim's writing, but around the year 1792, Beethoven also set a text by Gleim to music—*Selbstgespräch*, WoO 114.²²⁷

The interest in this Prussian Anacreontic poet poses interesting questions concerning Beethoven's taste and textual selection process since Gleim's historical reception has been rather negative.²²⁸ Nevertheless, Beethoven seems to have been interested in the September 1st selection not only philosophically but musically as well. In the margin, Beethoven writes: "poetischer Stoff zu einer Musik," or "poetic stuff for music." The essay begins:

Du bist es; ja, du bist,	This you are: yes, you are
Allgegenwärtiger,	Omnipresent
Du bist es? Dort und hier,	This you are? There and here,

²²⁶ Solomon, *Beethoven Essays*, p. 221.

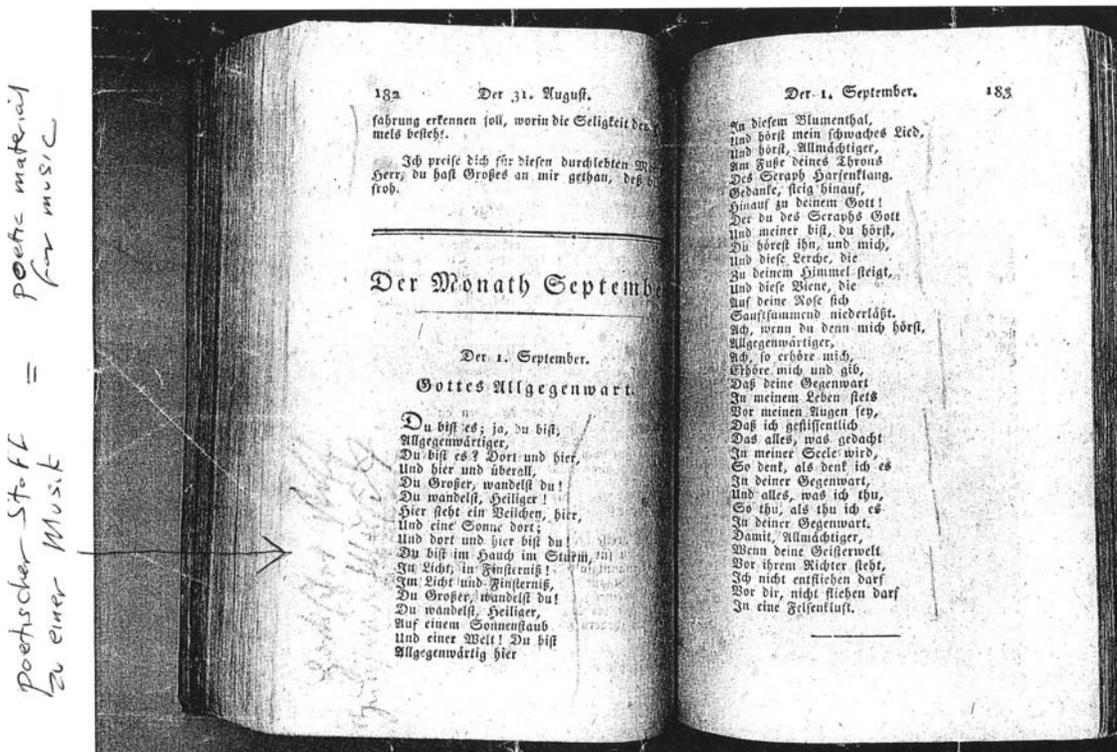
²²⁷ Cooper, *The Beethoven Compendium*, p. 264.

²²⁸ The 1911 edition of *Encyclopedia Britannica* states: "He wrote a large number of feeble imitations of Anacreon, Horace and the minnesingers, a dull didactic poem entitled *Halladat oder das rote Buck* ...Gleim's writings are for the most part tamely commonplace in thought and expression."

Und hier und überall,	And here and everywhere.
Du Großer, wandelst du!	You, Great One, you are strolling!
Du wandelst, Heiliger!	You are strolling, Holy One
Hier steht ein Beilschen, hier,	Here stands a violet, here,
Und eine Sonne dort;	And a sun there;
Und dort und hier bist du!	And there and here are You! ²²⁹

Figure 6.5

The September 1st entry in Beethoven's copy of Sturm's *Reflections* with his marginal note²³⁰



²²⁹ Translation taken from *The Beethoven Journal*, Winter 2003 (Volume 18, Number 2), p. 103

²³⁰ This reproduction courtesy of William Kinderman.

The German has been reproduced here because of several subtleties of word choice that do not translate adequately for purposes here. The most glaring of shortcomings is integral to the present argument: the phrase “du wandelst.” Out of context, this could translate into English as “you stroll,” but in the context of philosophy driven by concepts of unity, as well as the theme of ubiquity of this specific poem, it is clear that the verb “wandeln” should translate to its other meanings, such as “to transform” or “to metamorphose.”

Beethoven seems to have understood Gleim’s poem in this context as well. His marginal note labeling this poem as “poetic stuff for music” could be interpreted as the composer considering the text appropriate for it to be set to music of his own composition. It could also be viewed as the composer using this notion of divine ubiquity and integration as a natural principle that can be implemented as a compositional principle or tool. This would be consistent with his study of other proclamations of divine ubiquity such as the Hindu and Egyptian sources mentioned above. It is clear that Beethoven sought a “new path”²³¹ around the time of the Heiligenstadt Testament in his early thirties, and throughout the crisis of his middle forties, had resumed his search for new and more refined techniques and philosophies to enhance his music.²³²

The structure of the poem is also clearly designed to focus on the phenomenon of “omnipresence.” The short lines, numerous supporting examples, and repetitions of several key phrases, such as “you are,” “here and there,” and “metamorphose” all work to direct the reader’s mind toward contemplation of variation in unity. The philosophical thread of these two opposites as ontological poles runs through Beethoven’s personal and musical thoughts in these late years. Beethoven’s interest in this particular excerpt should be viewed in the larger context of his search

²³¹ Cooper, *Beethoven Compendium*, p. 159 – Cooper cites this letter as “about the year 1802 (the precise date is uncertain.”

²³² *Tagebuch* entries provide examples of this vigilance and search for new compositional insight. For example, number 2, dealing voice leading and harmony, and number 8, dealing with vocal writing.

for spiritual principles that can be found crossing divisions of dogma and denomination. And though this poem comes from a familiar Christian context, it nevertheless espouses ideas in line with esoteric currents of the decades surrounding the year 1800.

The other example from the Christian tradition regards arithmetic and numerological principles. Just as there exists a tangible relationship of the music to the numerological division of the number seven into four + three, there also exists another in the quartet's subtle display of seven as six + one. As mentioned above, this involves the phenomenon of having seven movements with only six of the seven diatonic pitch places formally represented. Outside music, the seven-and-six combination relates to two topics of numerological significance: Judeo-Christian creation and cosmological views held by generations of Platonists connecting the seven heavenly bodies to the seven planetary spheres through which different cosmic music is believed to have existed.

First, let us examine the Judeo-Christian connection. The Masonically venerable number seven is used to describe the time frame in days for creation, but the actual time spent in the act of creating in the Bible is only six days. It is clearly important to this story to include seven days, God blessing a day of rest as the seventh. Highlighting its importance in his *Lexicon*, Mackey makes special note of many other anthropological and religious examples from cultures far and wide of how the number seven is valued as sacred.²³³

This clearly demonstrates ways in which the number could have been significant for Beethoven, but noting a key arithmetic property of the number *six* may provide us with the necessary insight to sense Beethoven's use of the seven-to-six relationship as distilled through his musical intuition. This property also provides an insight into the numerological understanding of the seven-to-six relationship of the Christian creation myth, especially as it parallels Beethoven's

²³³ Mackey, *Lexicon of Freemasonry*, pp. 437-439.

use.

In the Masonic imagination, Mackey says of the number *six*:

SIX was also an emblem of health, and it was also the symbol of justice, because it was the first perfect number, that is, one whose aliquot parts being added together make itself, for the aliquot parts of six, which are three, two and one, are equal to six.²³⁴

Six, in addition to these religious and cultural references, has mathematical properties that distinguish it. Some of these characteristics also tie it to our comparison of Christian creation with Beethoven's opus 131. The several properties that support the Masonic view of this number and illuminate some of these anthropological concepts are that six is: a *composite number*, thus divided easily and with variety, a *perfect number*,²³⁵ (in the arithmetical sense) and a *unitary perfect number*.

While these properties most likely influenced the way many thinkers shaped their views on scriptural exegesis, the most meaningful property of six and its relation to seven in the context of this discussion is a geometrical distinction: six is a *kissing number*. In the abstract for his paper, "The Kissing Number Problem in Three Dimensions," Oleg Musin states:

The kissing number, $k(3)$ is the maximum number of equal size nonoverlapping spheres in three dimensions that can touch another sphere of the same size.

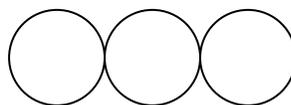
²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 327.

²³⁵ Censorinus describes *six* being a perfect number: "...it is a *telios*, as the Greeks say, or as we call it, a perfect number, whose three factors – the sixth, the third, and the half, i.e. 1, 2, and 3 – add up to the number itself" (Godwin *Music, Mysticism* 18).

Applying this definition to one dimension, the kissing number is two because in 1 dimension, a line, a sphere obviously can only have one sphere in front of it and one behind it, if it is to keep its one-dimensional limitation.

Figure 6.6

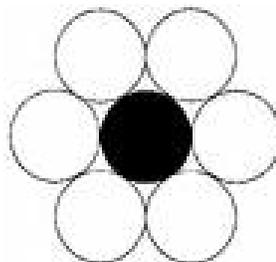
Kissing spheres in one dimension



In two dimensions, the central initial sphere can keep a maximum of six others attached to it. A unique distinction that the two-dimensional kissing number has, as opposed to its higher (and usually theoretical) dimensional counterparts, is that when arranged so that all six of the circles (in the 2-dimensional instance) are touching its center, they also perfectly fit to touch each other as well. This unusual tidy feature endows the kissing number in two dimensions with a further dimension of perceived “perfection.”

Figure 6.7

Kissing spheres in two dimensions



The kissing number mathematical representation fits neatly into the Creation myth and

even more firmly into the op. 131:

-In both settings, there is a *center*: The Creation myth centers around its Sabbath, the blessed day, and the op.131 centers on c-sharp minor, or f-sharp minor.

-There are six similar but different *satellite units* to their center: The Creation myth surrounds six days of the creative act around the Sabbath day, and the op. 131 surrounds six key centers around the central c-sharp minor, or from a different view, f-sharp minor.

-The satellite units are *adjacent* in both instances; Day joins to the next day, just as the entire quartet is conceived as *attacca*.

It should at this point be stressed that these similarities do not *prove* that the op. 131 is *about* the Creation in its traditional understanding/connotations or anything else for that matter. These similarities however do reveal that the common aspects that they share involve a closely related abstract intellectual concept from which the art is generated. That Beethoven was intellectually inspired by the concept of kissing numbers or the Creation is impossible to ascertain, but the tendency of Freemasonry to generalize its metaphors as didactic tools along with its reverence for arithmetic, divinity and geometry as the most central of its seven liberal arts suggests an inclination toward this perspective. That being said, there are several more connections that deserve examination.

Beethoven at the end of his life was planning several large-scale works, one of which was a *Requiem* in c-sharp minor. Given the example of the frequent allusions made to the *Missa Solemnis* in his other late works, combined with the dedication to only works of great personal significance that characterized his last years, it seems likely that there would be allusion and reference between that potential, probably large-scale work and this almost last of works in this

unlikely, *fantasy*-inspired key.²³⁶ Beethoven is well-known for referencing text-driven vocal sources in his abstract musical forms, such as the sonata, symphony, etc. For example, the first-inversion E-flat major chord with g3 in the soprano that tone-paints the starry vault in the Ninth Symphony and introduces the Credo of the *Missa Solemnis*, also appears at climactic points in the *Hammerklavier* sonata and elsewhere.²³⁷ On this precedent alone does the op. 131's relation to religious thinking via the unborn *Requiem* become plausible.

The geometric construct of the 2-dimensional representation of kissing number 6 naturally only has meaning when the units are circles. Circles have throughout history generally been connected with concepts of cycles, eternity and divinity, for obvious reasons: Travel along the defining characteristic of the circle, its circumference, inevitably leads to the starting point, thus evoking a union of motion and stasis, a duality in which the later Beethoven was so interested. This also ties more deeply to the meaning brought about by Lodes in her discussion of *cyclical* time.

This phenomenon of traveling forward yet returning emphasizes the observable cycles in which we live and so often are attributed to divinity and associated with spirituality. A circle also is perfectly symmetrical; its constituent arcs are exactly uniform. It also has the unique characteristic of having a center point which is exactly equidistant from any point on its border. These last two characteristics display a conceptual perfection that creates neat analogies to an intellectual connection with god/divinity.

Lest this seems too much a tangent, let us remember the circular elements in op. 131.

²³⁶ Both Kerman and Lockwood note the association of the two works of Beethoven's in c-sharp minor, the Opus 131 and the early Opus 27, with "purified" distillation of his famous c minor mood and the similar serious character of these pieces (Kerman *Quartets* 341; Lockwood 469). The italicization of the word "fantasy" refers to Beethoven's own designation of the op. 27: "Sonata quasi una fantasia." Also, though perhaps less reliable a source, Schindler outlines a highly provocative discourse on the issue of key choice, addressing the Sonata op. 27: *Beethoven as I Knew Him*, (Dover ed.) pp. 368-69.

²³⁷ Kinderman, *Beethoven*, pp. 280, 288.

The piece begins and ends in c-sharp minor, and the fugue is recalled in the finale. Through the course of the work, it traverses every key in the orbit of its subdominant, f-sharp minor (except of course itself) either formally or in reality, only to return to its tonic. Let us also note the analogy of the constituent arcs: the arcs of a circle are uniform but not necessarily in the same place on the circumference, just as the individual inner movements never travel far outside of their immediate tonic, thus keeping the sense of tonal *departure, distance, and return*.

In a certain sense, this could be viewed as a very sophisticated and thorough extended journey through the diatonic circle of fourths, with Rosen-styled subdominant and subdominant substitution progressions, reducing the harmonic energy level from movement to movement in most cases.²³⁸ These circular elements also find analogy in Theurgical theory, particularly in the *harmony of the spheres* model, addressed in the next subchapter. One may find a clear precedent of Beethoven's use of and awareness of this 3-part cyclic principle by the structure of and titling of the movements in his *Lebewohl* sonata, op. 81a, whose movements bear the titles: I. "Das Lebewohl," II. "Abwesenheit," and III. Das "Wiedersehen," (I. "The Good-bye," II, "Absence," and III. "The Return").

The analogy of the 2-dimensional kissing number takes on more meaning when it is realized that the diatonic keys of the movements of the c-sharp minor quartet revolve around its tonic in the circular cyclic fashion described above; similarly, the six circles of the *kissing number* construct enclose the central, the seventh, orb, thus outlining a larger circle, one whose radius is therefore 3 times that of any given one. The large circle (initial diameter x 3) becomes analogous to the whole quartet in the sense that it, by its own concept and guiding principle has created itself in the large and local details of its construction. As soon as the concept is apprehended, it is created in all its parts.

Precisely the same cannot be so simply said of an artistic creation such as the op. 131, but

²³⁸ Rosen, *Classical Style*, pp. 382-383.

it has a remarkable holistic nature that seems in some part to create itself out of its own inner laws and principles. Continuing this reasoning, as the central sphere is the source for the generation of the kissing number image, the fugue as the initial movement also generates the skeleton for the quartet by its predictions of keys and other harmonic principles, as well as the approximate relative dimensions of the entire quartet.

6.4 Music of the Spheres

While the illustration of Judeo-Christian creationist principles present in the op. 131 do demonstrate the potential for at least a partly esoteric inspiration for the quartet, this aspect becomes more visible when posed against some of the aforementioned occult teachings that permeated the ancient Western world. There are texts whose underlying concepts at least on one level clearly reflect those of the op. 131. These texts refer to the *music of the spheres*, a concept that in the eighteenth century was almost certainly preserved through Masonic channels and similar institutions.

This concept may be defined as a geocentric cosmological model consisting of a series of concentric spherical orbits through which various heavenly bodies revolve while producing sound, either literally or metaphorically. There are many variations on the system's characteristics, including debates of the order of the spheres, the constituent planets of a given sphere, the audibility of the phenomena, the nature of the mathematics involved, and the ultimate meaning of the system itself, to name but a few. It was believed to be an accurate representation of the structure of the universe, and this had major ramifications for spiritual interpretations of how human beings relate to divinity. Summarizing this spiritual dimension in the context of a representative text, Godwin cites a section of the *Corpus Hermeticum*:

The image of the soul ascending through the planetary spheres and hearing the planetary music on the way is one of the most powerful and recurrent in this

collection. The ascent may take place during life, in a trance or dream, or else after death, as here. The hermetic voyager transcends the planetary harmony – the realm where the Soul is made, to rise in his purified being to the harmony of the invisible world, whereupon another ladder of ascent leads eventually to his deification. Elsewhere in the treatise, Poimandres also describes the descent of the Soul, which takes on the psychological qualities of each planet... Each incarnate being therefore sounds, as it were, a different chord of the planetary or psychological harmonies, and it is this that causes *musica humana* (the music of the human being) to resemble *musica mundana* (the music of the worlds or spheres).²³⁹

Major texts on this topic include such influential writings as Plato's *Myth of Er*, from his *Republic*, Cicero's *Dream of Scipio*, the *Corpus Hermeticum*, which legend attributes to Hermes Trismegistus, and as Godwin outlines in his *Music, Mysticism, and Magic*, works by Plutarch, Censorinus, Plotinus, Boethius and Iamblichus, to name a few of the most impacting. While it is likely that Beethoven would have been taught at least some of these myths that were so close to his field in his Bonn years, we know because of Solomon's and Lodes' work that Beethoven had actually studied several such texts. There are even *Tagebuch* entries that reflect his serious interest in this topic.

At least one entry, number 87, shows Beethoven's familiarity with Plato's *Republic*:²⁴⁰ "Just as the state must have a constitution, so must the individual have one of his own!"²⁴¹ Even

²³⁹ Godwin, *Music, Mysticism, and Magic*, p. 14.

²⁴⁰ Kinderman, *Quartets*, p. 170.

²⁴¹ Solomon, *Beethoven Essays*, p. 274. Solomon cites the source of this entry as from Plato, *The Republic*, Book 8/544; cf. Book 9/ 576).

more relevantly, the idea of Beethoven implementing this text in his compositions has been discussed: “[*The Republic*] may well have influenced the choral finale [of the Ninth Symphony]...”²⁴² This application is largely textually based, but a more abstract implementation in Beethoven’s music will be explored in this section, drawing analogies between the journey of a pilgrim searching in the *music of the spheres* model and the psychological effects of the quartet. It should be noted here that *The Republic* also happens to conclude with the *Myth of Er*, the first traceable link in a chain of esoteric writings on this topic.

He had also read Plutarch and Pliny, both classical authors who wrote on the *music of the spheres*. His interest in the topic seems more apparent and tangible when he quotes Kant²⁴³ regarding extraterrestrial life in our solar system. The echoes of the *music of the spheres* concept here strongly suggest that it is an eighteenth-century descendent of the ancient cosmological model. Beethoven’s own selection of text reveals an interest clearly beyond the scientific context in which this work is often taken:

That, on the planets from Mercury to Uranus and even beyond (provided there are other planets), the perfection of the spiritual as well as material world grows and proceeds in a graduated sequence according to the proportions of their distances <from the sun>.²⁴⁴

Considering his growing interest in spiritual issues well past his *Tagebuch* period, he seems yet *more* likely, come the time of the op.131’s composition half a decade later, to scour his sources for reconciliation with heightened awareness of his mortality. The corpus of *music of the spheres* writings forms a central theme in the literature of the after-life up until and early in the Christian era. Though Beethoven lived in the age of Christianity and identified with it, he was

²⁴² Kinderman, *Beethoven*, 2nd ed., p. 299.

²⁴³ *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels*, pp. 133-34.

²⁴⁴ Entry #106 of the *Tagebuch*.

certainly not dogmatically bound.

Of particular occult background is the *Corpus Hermeticum*. Though not cited specifically in Beethoven's library by Crabbe or Solomon, these scholars have proven that he was immersed in a study of these types of works in his later years as well as having been exposed to these concepts early in life. Its concepts can be traced in Opus 131. The *Corpus*, while not well-traced or documented through its alleged pre-Renaissance existence, nevertheless formed a crucial place in the development of Western thinking when it (re-)surfaced in the early Italian Renaissance, particularly in the field of spiritual thinking.

It would not be overstated to say that its surfacing in the fifteenth century among the Italian and then European intellectual community was a significant impetus for the socio-political weakening of the of the Catholic church in Europe by way of having revived interest in pagan studies. Its authorship remains mysterious, crediting not a pseudonym Hermes Trismegistus, but the actual Greek god himself. Known as Thoth in his original Egyptian form (from which so much Greek esoterica derives), he is also credited with dispersing the insight of the *Emerald Tablet* (a short text of about 14 lines of cryptic though highly influential philosophy; another crux of the Western esoteric tradition) to the initiates of this system. The works attributed to him came to be regarded as a primary source of wisdom and cosmological knowledge, and then came to be distilled through the occult—in Beethoven's day, Freemasonry and Illuminism. Recapitulating Godwin's statements on the *Corpus Hermeticum*:

The ascent [of the soul] may take place during life, in a trance or dream, or else after death, as here. The hermetic voyager transcends the planetary harmony – the realm where the Soul is made, to rise in his purified being to the harmony of the invisible world, whereupon another ladder of ascent leads eventually to his

deification.²⁴⁵

At this point, the entry #63 from Beethoven's *Tagebuch* becomes most relevant. The system outlined above by Godwin finds summary expression in this excerpt:

All things flowed clear and pure from God. If afterwards I become darkened through passion for evil, I returned, after manifold repentance and purification, to the elevated and pure sources, to the God-head.—And to your art.

Solomon, annotating nearly every entry in his *Beethoven Essays*, does not cite a specific source for this particular entry. He writes: “Appears to be Beethoven’s formulation, perhaps inspired by phrases in Johann Friederich Kleuker *Das brahamische Religionssystem*...and/or the *Bhagavad-Gita*.”²⁴⁶ While these source suggestions do seem plausible, it must be noted that these very points of divine ubiquity, ultimate creative source, and union with God by way of purification are common to both Hinduism and the *music of the spheres* models.

In this system, the *music of the spheres* (*musica mundana*) itself is inaudible. This is in contrast to *musica instrumentalis*, which is the audible type we hear for entertainment or another experience of listening to actual physical sound. While much less cosmologically significant, this lower instrumental music can be an audible representation of the nature and shape of the above two types. Godwin continues:

...These sciences [e.g., from the Quadrivium] (which in modern terms include the arts) find their destined purpose in arousing wonder and reverence for the divine Creation. Whether the term “music” is used of this cosmic order simply as a pleasant Metaphor, as here, or whether music as we know it on earth is truly and specifically a gateway to knowledge of higher realities, is one of the

²⁴⁵ Godwin, *Music, Mysticism, and Magic*, p.14.

²⁴⁶ Solomon, *Beethoven Essays*, p. 268.

dilemmas that occupies many of our writers.²⁴⁷

The *Corpus Hermeticum* has had a major impact since its discovery (or rediscovery) by the Medici family. Though Godwin cites the *Myth of Er* as the “prototype of all soul-journeys,”²⁴⁸ the concept of the seven planetary spheres has a relation to and likely some origin in Egyptian mythology because of its association with and mythological root in Hermes/Thoth. This may account for a certain portion of Beethoven’s interest in Ancient Egypt.

In many of these texts, the music of the spheres comes to mean the traversing of the soul through all experiences of consciousness. The sectionalizing of conscious experience into the characteristics of the seven heavenly bodies parallels the uniformity of key and mood of each individual movement of this c-sharp minor quartet. Continuing this analogy, the enigmatic coda of the last movement of the quartet, so strangely unsatisfying to many commentators, can be reconciled through this perspective as an arrow pointing outward past the bounds of the quartet itself. From this point of view, the ending would no longer be as such; it would only be the last *audible* sounds of the quartet, bridging the gap that exists between *musica instrumentalis* and the loftier, inaudible *musica mundana*.

If Beethoven had indeed conceived this quartet in relation to the *music of the spheres*, he would only be able to imply both *musica universalis (mundana)* and its earthly counterpart, *musica humana*. His composition, however masterful, could only be of the lowest order in that hierarchy, *musica instrumentalis*, by virtue of its being generated by earthly musical instruments and having an audible nature.

Within this ancient system again, we can acknowledge that Beethoven, reverent of innate metaphysical principles of music, was interested in the creation of revelatory music of a higher

²⁴⁷ Godwin, *Music, Mysticism, and Magic*, p. 15.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

level than that of common *musica instrumentalis*. The other major document in the Hermetic tradition, the *Emerald Tablet*, expresses as a central thought the phrase: “as above, so below.” In this way, serious music, though technically still *musica instrumentalis*, may reflect these higher realities, just as *musica humana* reflects the grand cosmological nature of *musica universalis*.

In its strong similarities, the reconciliation of the unsettled coda mentioned above has a potential resolution in a hermeneutic viewing of the version of the *music of the spheres* myth as put forth in the *Corpus Hermeticum*. Here, the soul must ascend through the seven spheres which take away the various illusions caused by the desires and necessities of temporal and corporeal life. While it cannot be effectively argued that each movement of the quartet matches (aesthetically or analytically) the corresponding sphere in *Corpus*’ narrative, the overall effect of the whole quartet can match that of the *Corpus*’ explanation of the soul’s ascent. In the narrative, the soul ascends through the spheres, subtracting a specific portion of the will or personality for every sphere through which it passes, until in the seventh sphere, Saturn, removes “ensnaring falsehood.”²⁴⁹

Charles Rosen’s discussion of Beethoven’s subdominant path through this quartet becomes most relevant at this point. He notes the quality of reducing musical tension that results from subdominant progression by way of example of the shift from tonic to Neapolitan between the first and second movements.²⁵⁰ Based on his discussion of subdominant emphasis, one might say that most of the movements of this quartet proceed through the circle of fourths, rather than the circle of fifths.

Movements I–II clearly demonstrate a flattening of the key, as any Neapolitan relationship would. Movements II–III represent a submediant shift, which, as far as circle of fifths is concerned, remains static. Movements III–IV *appear* to heighten large-scale harmonic

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

²⁵⁰ Rosen, *Classical Style*, p. 441.

tension (b minor to A major), but noticing that the second half of movement III is in an E dominant 7th harmony changes that perspective to a series of falling fifths: b minor to E7 resolving yet a fifth lower to A major in the fourth movement. Thus the entire first four movements, the quartet's *Quadrivium*, have a falling effect through its course.

The remaining three movements, its *Trivium*, show two examples of harmonic ascent: Movements IV–V show a clear dominant ascent in the progress from A major to E major. Nevertheless, this dominant progression also coincides with the above mentioned division of the quartet into its 4 + 3 parts, which also happens to be the clearest break in the quartet. Once more, the harmonic progress of the quartet sharpens from E major to g-sharp minor between the fifth and the sixth movements, though once again only to resume its falling-fifth character with the strongest perfect authentic cadence of the entire quartet to its nominal tonic, c-sharp minor. Like so many other culminations reserved for the last movement, including striving character, the realization of sonata form, and substantial modulation, we have here the only pair of movements succeeding in a perfect authentic cadence. The last movement in itself points yet again through the circle of fourths, when its coda in its mantra-like repetition of I—iv harmonies directs the listener to the flat direction, as if to prepare a further movement in f-sharp minor.

Rosen's observation of the subdominant lessening musical tension yields an unusual perspective on this work. On a purely theoretical/analytical level, this represents a mere reversal of a standard practice, a mechanical manipulation. Nevertheless, the standard of generally only keeping to tonic–dominant–tonic progression reflects something deep within the collective musical minds of Europe. The tonic-dominant progression heightens harmonic tension by virtue of the sharpened fourth scale degree, and relieves that tension upon its return home to the tonic. It is a rounded tale, commonsensical and with a sense of completeness, reflective of a time and place that viewed the world with a teleological rationality.

Beethoven's inversion of this practice therefore becomes a noteworthy break with

tradition. Though the switch from circle of fifths to fourths inverts the technique, the aesthetic is not exactly opposite. The sense of departure and return is still present in the op. 131, but the pageant of keys and moods represented in individual movements that were predetermined by its own introductory fugue reveal an interest in cyclical process innate to itself. There is a shift in perspective, as Lodes has implied in her discussion of the op. 127, a fundamental change from self-determinism to observation—reflective understanding. While it is true that he broke with tradition so frequently, sometimes apparently for its own sake, the example in this context provides us with at least a hermeneutic explanation.

As stated above, the ascent through the spheres results in the de-energizing of the soul of its earthly will and drive. The progress through so much subdominant progression ensures the analogous de-energizing of musical tension. The last movement by far struggles against settling or de-energizing the most. It does however ultimately exhaust itself and relinquish its earthly striving in its coda after a great deal of intensity. The end of the coda of this great quartet leaves us with the sense of a dual tonic, c-sharp and f-sharp minor.

Figure 6.8

Coda to the last movement of op. 131

The image shows a musical score for the Coda to the last movement of op. 131. It consists of four staves: two treble clefs (Violin I and Violin II) and two bass clefs (Viola and Cello/Double Bass). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (f, p), articulation (accents), and a tempo marking 'Ritmo di due battute.' at the top right. The score is numbered 'B 50.' at the bottom center.

(continued on next page)

(Figure 6.8 continued)

40 (128)

The musical score consists of four systems of music, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The first system features a melodic line in the upper voice and a rhythmic accompaniment in the lower voice. The second system includes a *pp* dynamic marking. The third system is marked *Poco adagio.* and includes dynamics of *p*, *espress.*, and *sempl. espress.*. The fourth system is marked *Tempo I.* and includes *cresc.* and *ff* markings. The score concludes with the number *B. 50.*

The resultant harmonic duality leaves us with unfamiliar practice, just as the end of the fugue had predicted. This ambiguity finds a crucial parallel in Hermetic thought, since the Hermetic pilgrim seeks illumination from his/her ascent through the spheres. At the end of the journey, no earthly illusions may remain if the soul is to unite with the deity. Therefore, the unfamiliarity and ambiguity of Beethoven's musical enigma must not tempt one who seeks understanding and/or illumination with either oversimplification or dismissal of its presence. This would necessarily result in falsehood, as in truth, this coda remains aurally confusing and inconclusive. So with its presentation of an aural enigma it now exhibits its parallel with the role of Saturn in the *Corpus Hermeticum*: after removing the fault of "ensnaring falsehood," it thus completes the purification of the soul and preparation for entry into union with the deity.

Once the seventh zone removes this illusion, the soul then proceeds to an eighth sphere, where he is welcomed by those who, like the soul himself, are about to be reunited with the godhead. This eighth sphere is different than the previous seven in that it does not strip the soul of any of its energy, since it has no earthly energy left at that point. In the op.131, the seven movements each provide a unique musical, aesthetic, and spiritual experience for the listener. The last movement is in many ways—aesthetically, spiritually, intellectually and emotionally—exhausting. The coda of the last movement is not a fiery one, but one that has been stripped of its energy by way of exhaustion, for one last time oscillating between a tonic with a Picardy third and the subdominant, its energy waning steadily through the denouement.

One of the bizarre aspects of the ending is that it does not settle, either tonally or motivically. Many writers have commented on the phenomenon of the last chords, strong as they may be, being particularly unsatisfactory. Here is an ending in which the tonic remains ambiguous due to its "reverse color" scheme (I–iv vr. i–V), and at the same time rhythmically or motivically enigmatic in its last bar (three C-sharp major strikes) because of its apparent separation from the rest of an otherwise tightly integrated quartet.

Just as Kinderman suggests that these last quartets may be viewed as a portal to a fourth period of Beethoven's stylistic development,²⁵¹ this quartet shows the direction toward something beyond the realm of music experienced up until that point. In the *Corpus Hermeticum*, the eighth sphere is not to be considered as one of the previous seven, as it is not a purifying force nor having energy characteristics as the others do, but the link to god. After Saturn strips the soul of "ensnaring falsehood," the soul is propelled toward the realm of unblocked adoration of the deity. Beethoven's coda of his op. 131 points beyond itself. As the listener has traversed the seven movements, he or she has inevitably come to this coda, witnessing or experiencing this state of exhaustion. In the fog of musical ambiguity, it becomes obvious that, even after the great length of this work, it has not yet finished or settled. This begs the question: what then *is* next?

There is evidence that Beethoven himself thought of the coda as an arrow to point the way beyond. In his sketchbooks, there are traces of structural experiments linking the last movement to what became the slow movement of the op. 135.²⁵² The aesthetic of this movement is serenity and stillness, suggestive of otherworldly meaning to contrast with the striving of the seventh movement. That Beethoven ultimately decided against the inclusion of this movement in the op. 131 reflects his finding it less appropriate in this setting.

The end of the quartet becomes then an arrow pointing to something that would likely be similar to the slow movement of op. 135. But just as ascension through the planetary spheres—dramatic, revealing, and a spiritual odyssey in itself—is no more than a path to god, then so traversing the orbit of the seven movements of the quartet becomes a symbol of a pathway, or a pathway itself, to that which cannot be expressed: the singing silence—the ineffable. By definition, no audible music can be *musica universalis*, just as none of the seven spheres of purification can claim the same level or importance as the next sphere: that of a union with god.

²⁵¹ Kinderman, *Quartets*, pp. 279-317.

²⁵² Winter, *Compositional Origins*, p. 207.

If these seven movements, by keeping themselves straight by their own *square*, lead beyond themselves, as do the Hermetic seven spheres, then what follows must be beyond itself, in this hermetic tradition: *musica humana* and *musica universalis*.

Chapter 7

Conclusions

When the influences and sources of a given work of art, artist, or grouping of art are considered and connected, a significant amount of conjecture is necessarily involved. This is due not only to the fact that artists will rarely document or even admit every influence they consciously harbor, but also to the nature of the mind itself in creative mode, which is often random, contradictory, and acting largely on a subliminal level. Artistic meanings are fundamentally embedded in a work, and the comments of an artist, though highly valuable, can only reveal a portion of an artistic constitution.

Certainly, the scholarly goal is to be accurate, precise, and honest when examining inner creative wellsprings as they intersect with worldly trends and influence. The conundrum arises then as to how to reconcile this desire for accurate, precise, and honest understanding with the obscured and tenuous reality of the creative mind, which can only be viewed from a subjective vantage point. To only be satisfied with documented evidence would clearly lead to a too partial and inaccurate understanding, since no artist would or even could document all of his or her inner artistic workings. On the other hand, to recklessly speculate without any basis can reveal nothing of reliable value.

Attractive as they are, scientific methods are based on clear and tangible proof or empirical evidence, and they are not always feasible or appropriate vehicles toward gaining understanding and insight into the arts. We must therefore often strive for understanding in a less linear fashion. Nevertheless, meaningful and truly insightful study is certainly possible. This can involve learning and understanding from alternative perspectives, often ones utilized in the pre-scientific revolution era. Such earlier perspectives may also reveal a point of view nearer to

Beethoven's own and that of his world by virtue of its being chronologically and/or culturally closer. Examples of such methods of study and argument employed in this dissertation are analogy, contextualization, and syllogism. Naturally, in the absence of ample empirical data, the necessity arises for scholars in the humanities to at once be more receptive and open to new ideas while simultaneously utilizing a heightened sensitivity of argumentative analysis to discern true possibility from sheer speculation.

7.1 Resulting Viewpoints

Accepting these limitations of meaningful discourse of the arts in their application to Beethoven studies, the findings and suggestions put forth in this dissertation may take their appropriate place in the field. This research has used as a starting point largely the work of other scholars who have researched the relationship of eighteenth-century/early nineteenth-century classical music to Freemasonry and other similar societies, notably Maynard Solomon, Alfred Einstein, Peter Branscombe and Paul Nettl. From there, an attempt has been made here to further develop this view by way of examination of a broad historical context combined with an inspection of several important late works.

Several significant items have become apparent from these examinations. First, Beethoven throughout his life is more entrenched in esoterica via secret societies than is usually supposed. There is ample scholarship speculating on his involvement or membership in various organizations throughout his life, but rarely is his relationship to these movements considered as a biographical thread that exerted formative power on the composer. This involvement is at least partially a result of his belonging to the *Aufklärung*, an environment which was rich with such groups, various societies acting on behalf of Enlightenment tendencies (e.g. Freemasonry, Illuminati) and Counter-Enlightenment tendencies (Rosicrucians, Teutonic Knights). The content

and nature of his *Tagebuch* must be considered here as part of this esoteric thread in light of the parallel journal kept by his esteemed teacher, Neefe. Writing under his Illuminati name, Glaucon, Neefe kept this journal as a formal requirement of his membership in the Illuminati, suggesting a similar function for the *Tagebuch* for his old apprentice.

Secondly, Beethoven received a great deal of support from individuals such as Neefe, Franz Ries, Waldstein, the Lichnowsky, and many others. This support is widely acknowledged, but has not generally been tied to Freemasonry or other societies. It must be emphasized that without this assistance, Beethoven's life path would have been dramatically more difficult, perhaps blocking the great success that eventuated in his thirties and later.

Lastly, interpretations of Beethoven's works, and particularly his last works, can be viewed with the breadth of thought and imagination that their character seems to imply. It would be appropriate here to acknowledge Solomon's admonition against too liberal an interpretation of his writings:

...nor do I wish to use the evidence of his links to Freemasonry as a rationale for esoteric readings of his works.²⁵³

It seems clear that it would be a mistake to re-think Beethoven's whole musical corpus in terms of Masonic allegory, or even to assume that there is some kind of occult secret behind most of his work. Nevertheless, given the composer's esoteric background and its frequent manifestations, it would seem equally, if not more strange, to be so guarded as to deny that *any* of his works have esoteric underpinnings. Beethoven, aware of a significant amount of ancient classical writings on music, would have been sensitive to the lofty place held by music and music-related concepts. This view, already well-aligned with Beethoven's own, could have

²⁵³ Solomon, *Late Beethoven*, pp. 160-161.

fueled—possibly even ignited—his drive for developing his own music, in both the literal and abstract senses of “music”.

Discerning which works are appropriate for viewing through an esoteric lens presents the problem of vague parameters as well as the dangers of slippery slope. For example, in a certain sense, any act of creation, including art, contains an uncanny, even mystic aspect to it. In this sense, open parameters become meaningless, since creation of a multitude of sorts occurs regardless of the presence of or skill in esoteric thought. Perhaps a reliable starting-point would be to look toward those works described in the metaphysical/poetic language that seems inescapable when attempting to describe them accurately. A prime instance is op. 111, and largely for that reason this work was chosen as an example. The consensus of writers on this sonata (see the introduction to chapter 5) seemed to offer resounding support.

The choice of op. 131 for this dissertation was motivated by positive answers to several such questions. The late quartets hold a special place among Beethoven scholars. Beethoven himself remarked about the series of late quartets: “...thank God there *is less lack of fancy than ever before.*”²⁵⁴ Kinderman has even suggested that these quartets may be a portal to a *fourth* period of Beethoven’s stylistic development.²⁵⁵ In suggesting the presence of Indian cyclical thinking and the evocation of “mythic time,” Lodes has brought the op. 127 into a speculative realm by relating it to mythic thought. These allegations biographically tie most closely to Beethoven’s study of Indian religious thought, and in turn connect this work with the Masonic institutions that harbored such thinking. Even without the presence of Freemasonry, Lodes’ observations of the op. 127 inevitably points toward issues related to mysticism. Her arguments in many ways apply to op. 131, often even more so.

²⁵⁴ Thayer-Forbes, *Beethoven*, p. 536.

²⁵⁵ Kinderman, *Quartets*, chap. 11.

Following her example, and considering the common evaluation of this work as a profound study, the examination of the op. 131 has yielded strong parallels to ancient thought about cosmology and creation, whose most likely vehicle into Beethoven's world was Freemasonry. This examination also has the potential to help explain the strange coda of the work that has often provoked or puzzled commentators.

7.2 Ramifications

The findings of this dissertation could have ramifications in several dimensions. Within the realm of Beethoven biography, they may serve to elaborate and further elucidate the thread of studies that connect the composer to esoteric pursuits. This may help to explain his attitudes toward life, himself, his society, and his work. The dissertation may also provide a richer understanding of his ascent through Viennese society, thus dispelling the blinding myth that Beethoven's personality, though admittedly remarkable in many ways, projected an irresistible charisma against which even a headstrong monarchy was mesmerized.²⁵⁶

On the level of music theory and composition, this line of investigation would demonstrate that Beethoven's expansion and development of so many concepts in music was not *only* intrinsically motivated. His letter to the Archduke Rudolf about "spread[ing] the rays of the Godhead through the human race"²⁵⁷ reveals a decidedly spiritual motivation—if not a religious one—to composition as his sense of mission. At the same time, occasionally some of the tools with which he did push the limits of musical convention were occult techniques or symbols. The time-expansion process of op. 111 or the formal/harmonic workings of the op. 131 are key

²⁵⁶ Marek, *Beethoven*, p. 117 exemplifies this mentality, though Schindler's hagiographic tone in which Beethoven is most commonly referred to as "master" is chief among this trend.

²⁵⁷ Brandenburg, *Beethoven Briefwechsel Gesamtausgabe*, Band 4, p. 446, #1438.

examples. Not only do such techniques provide a richer variety of musical tools, but they also have distinctly interesting formal and temporal effects.

These temporal effects in combination with a host of other subtleties work to create a most elusive aspect of Beethoven's late work: the spiritual dimension. That such a dimension exists in this music is difficult to deny, but is at the same time hard to address. This aspect comes through in various forms. From the most superficial view, a sense of the spiritual can be sensed in a work's mood and timbre. This does not necessarily relate to esoteric study, evocative though it may be. On the other extreme, as may well be the case with the op. 111 and op. 131, abstract occult concepts manifest themselves in sound forms and connect with listeners on a psychologically potent level. Perhaps this connection is what is being verbally expressed in Thomas Mann's Adorno-influenced eighth chapter of his novel *Doctor Faustus* in which the character Wendell Kretschmar passionately struggles to expound his conception of op. 111, as "an end without any return." Any number of other examples could be cited, including whole books subjectively expressing primarily personal spiritual connection and impact such as Mellers' *Beethoven and the Voice of God*, Tame's *Beethoven and the Spiritual Path*, or James' *Beethoven and Human Destiny*.

If such a union of philosophical/esoteric thought with musical expression is possible, a further consequence may be drawn from this dissertation. Identifying such a union could encourage discussion of Plato's theory of forms in new avenues of art and music. We know that Beethoven was in some way interested in Kant; perhaps Kant's related concept of the *Ding an sich* or Plato's forms itself held enough meaning for Beethoven for him to attempt to apply these ideas to his own craft.

We do know that Beethoven studied *The Republic* and at least attended lectures on Kant. Although Beethoven's philosophical acumen is not generally highly regarded, he nevertheless

valued intellectual study, and may have retained meaningful concepts especially as they might potentially relate to music.

Were Beethoven able to establish this synthesis in the context of music, then we would have some form of tangible experience with occult theory. While so much of this theory is abstract, often apparently irrelevant and sometimes purely speculative, embodying these concepts in a temporal corpus such as music can give us some concrete experience of these ideas. Rosen has called Beethoven the “greatest master of musical time”²⁵⁸ and further stated that “he never miscalculated the intensity of his musical actions.”²⁵⁹ Perhaps proportions devised by Beethoven in these three works might be temporal translations carefully and expertly mirroring the numerology and philosophy described in their respective chapters.

Keeping in mind the esoteric studies in which he was immersed, along with the letter to the Archduke Rudolf regarding his sense of mission, and the spiritually enlarged scope of his late works, an important issue arises: Did Beethoven see his life, especially his later years, as having a large-scale spiritual impact as well as an artistic one? Did he hope for such significance? That letter to the Archduke tells us much in this regard: clearly, Beethoven’s mind pondered “spread[ing] the rays of the Godhead throughout the human race” whether he truly achieved this goal or not. But that sentiment seems posed as a hypothetical proverb, even perhaps viewed through the third-person point of view. Perhaps Beethoven identified with that role tacitly but did not wish to openly commit to it. It is also possible that he believed such commitment was implicit in his letter. Of course, the possibility must be acknowledged that such writings and sentiments are merely rhetorical or didactic.

²⁵⁸ Rosen, *Classical Style*, p. 445.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 446.

While Beethoven's innermost convictions cannot be concretely knowable, it is undeniable that such concepts were constantly surrounding the composer in the last fifteen years or so of his life. To best understand his work and biography, one must necessarily look toward those ideas in which he was immersed and by which he was inspired. The esoteric trend is most obvious at the end of Beethoven's life, but in light of its ubiquitous connection to him, it is clear that such considerations must be extended more broadly.

Appendix A

Beethoven's Mythological Readings and Personal Library²⁶⁰

WRITINGS ON INDIAN, BRAHMAN, AND EGYPTIAN MYTHS

Johann Friederich Kleuker and Johann Georg Fick,
*Abhandlungen über die Geshichte und Altherhümer, die
 Künste, Wissenschaften und Literatur Asiens*, 3 vols. (Riga,
 1795-97); trans. of Sir William Jones and others,
*Dissertations and Miscellaneous Pieces Relating to the
 History and Antiquities, the Arts, Sciences, and Literature of
 Asia* (London, 1792)
 Vol. 3, pp 412-415, for no. 62
 Vol. 3, pp 412-415, for no. 65
 Vol. 1, p. 355 for no. 94d; Translated of Sir William Jones,
 "On the Chronology of the Hindus," *Asiatick Researches*,
 2 (1790), p. 115

Johann Friederich Kleuker, *Das brahaminische
 Religionssystem im Zusammenhange dargestellt* (Riga,
 1797); Supplement to Kleuker/Fick
 Pp. 34-35 for no. 61a P. 37 for no. 61b
 Possibly pp. 35 and 174ff influenced Beethoven's
 formulations in no. 63a
 P.212 for no. 94c; transl. of Paulinus a Sancto
 Bartholomaeo, *Viaggio alle Indie Orientali* (Rome,
 1796); transl. by William Johnston as *A Voyage to the
 East Indies* (London, 1800), p. 265n
 P. 214 for no. 95

Georg Forster, *Robertson's historische Untersuchung über
 die Kentnisse der Alten von Indien* (Berlin, 1792); transl. of
 William Robertson, *An Historical Disquisition Concerning
 the Knowledge Which the Ancients Had of India* (Dublin,
 1791)
 P. 307 for no. 64a and b; conflation (with omission) from
 two passages from the *Bhagavad-Gita*
 P. 337 for no. 93b

Bhagavad-Gita

Chap. 3, line 7, for no. 64a, and chap. 2, lines 47-50 (part of
 l. 45 omitted), for no. 64b: probably copied from

²⁶⁰ The first section is reproduced from a table from the essay "So träumte mir, ich reiste ... nach Indien" by Birgit Lodes as printed in the collection *The String Quartets of Beethoven*, ed. Kinderman, p 170. The descriptive caption reads: "Beethoven's readings in mythology. Derived from Maynard Solomon, ed., *Beethovens Tagebuch* (cf. note 6). Numbers refer to this edition."

Forster/Robertson
Possible inspiration for no. 63a

ANCIENT GREEK AND ROMAN MYTHOLOGY AND LITERATURE

Greek

Johann Heinrich Voss (trans.), *Homers Odüssee*
(Hamburg, 1781); Beethoven's annotated copy today in DSB, autograph 40.3
P. 95 for no. 74 P. 387 for no. 169
P. 373 for no. 170

Johann Heinrich Voss (trans.), *Homers Ilias* (Hamburg
1793), Beethoven used the reprint Vienna, 1814.
Vol. 2, p. 424, for no. 26
Vol. 2, p. 357 (not p. 356, as he himself notates), for no.
49

Gottlob Benedict von Schirach (trans.), *Biographien des Plutarch*, 10 vols.
Vol. 3 (Berlin and Leipzig, 1777), *Philopoemen*, p. 484: par
11, lines 2-3, for no. 96
Vol. 5 (Berlin and Leipzig, 1778) *Sertorius*, p. 193: par 6,
line 3, for no. 150

Plato, *Republic*
Cf. no. 87

Roman

Ovid, *Epistulae ex Ponto*
Book 4, letter 10, line 5, for no. 125

Ovid, *Tristia*
Book 5, letter 1, line 59, for no. 136

Pliny, *Epistulae*
Book 3, letter 9, lines 3-4, for no. 113
Book 3, letter 21, line 6, for no. 114

GERMAN MYTHOPOETIC WRITINGS

Johann Gottfried Herder, *Blumen aus morgenländischen
Dichtern gesammelt; in Zerstreute Blätter*, vierte Sammlung
(Gotha, 1792)
P. 11 for no. 5 P. 27 for no. 6
Pp. 98-101 for no. 57 P. 102 for no. 58
P. 103 for no. 55 and no. 56

Johann Gottfried Herder, *Vermischte Stücke aus
verschiedenen Morgenländischen Dichtern, in Sämtliche
Werke: Zur schönen Literatur und Kunst*, vol. 9, ed. Johann
von Müller (Tübingen, 1807)
P. 196 for no. 59

REMARKS ON BEETHOVEN'S LIBRARY²⁶¹

„To judge by the titles of books noted down for purchase, his interests also encompassed cookery, medicine, botany, ornithology, and universal history, ...notes on an exhibition of Egyptian antiquities. His own collection of books contained volumes on natural science, travel and discovery, the latter including one on Antarctic exploration, and he followed reports on the north polar expeditions of Sir William Parry... Two seemingly innocent travel books were among the five taken from Beethoven's shelves by the police after his death: and autobiographical volume by the freedom-loving J.G. Seume about a journey on foot to Syracuse, and W.C. Müller's account of a tour through hospitals, battlefields and the city of Paris after Napoleon's final defeat in 1815 -- with the odd title *Paris at its Zenith*.

...Apart from the dictionaries and books on travel and discovery, the personal library of 200-300 volumes left at his death included a considerable number of religious and speculative texts (most, alas, not named for posterity) and had a general emphasis on poetical works and the classics. There was a well-thumbed trinity of Homer, Plato and Plutarch, ... while he had underlined, copied or otherwise specially marked over fifty passages in Homer's *Odyssey*,... He was acquainted with Horace, Pliny, Ovid, Cicero, Euripides, Aeschylus, Aristotle, Sophocles, Quintilian, Boethius, Tacitus, Lucian and Xenophon – and also Ossian in the writings misleadingly ascribed to that ancient Celt by the Scot James Macpherson. Some favored literary names among recent or contemporary Germans were Herder, Goethe, Schiller, Klopstock, Matthison, Wieland, Tiedge and Seume..”

²⁶¹ This excerpt is taken from John Crabbe's *Empire of the Mind*, pp. 78-79.

Appendix B

Prominent Masons/Illuminati in Beethoven's world

<u>Name</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Relationship to Beethoven</u>	<u>Source</u>
Apponyi, Anton Georg	Austro-Hungarian noble	Patron	Solomon, <i>Late</i> , p. 140
Artaria, Pasquale	Music publisher	One of Beethoven's music publishers	Solomon, <i>Late</i> , p. 142
Bonaparte, Jerome and Napoleon	French rulers	Potential patrons	Solomon, <i>Late</i> , p. 141
Bernadotte, Jean-Baptiste	General: Marshal of France under Napoleon	Admirer of Beethoven's; associated with genesis of 3 rd Sym.	Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon: http://www.freemasonry.bcy.ca/texts/revolution.html
Cherubini, Luigi	Composer	One of few contemporary composers to receive Beethoven's praise	Nettl, p. 41
Eichhoff, (brothers) Johann Peter and Johann Joseph		Friends	Solomon, <i>Late</i> , p.137
Esterhazy, Nikolaus I	Prince	Patron	Solomon, <i>Late</i> , p.139
Goethe, Wolfgang	Writer/ Artist	Mutual admirer/ Acquaintance	Solomon, <i>Late</i> , p. 142
Habsburg, Franz I	Holy Roman Emperor	Ruler of Austria immediately before Beethoven's birth, d. 1765	Einstein, <i>Mozart</i> , p. 82
Härtel, Gottfried Christoph	Music publisher	One of Beethoven's publishers	Solomon, <i>Late</i> , p. 142
Haydn, Franz Josef	Composer	Primary private composition instructor in Vienna	Einstein, <i>Mozart</i> , p. 82
Herder, Johann Gottfried	Professor	Works studied by Beethoven	Solomon, <i>Late</i> , p.142
Hoffmeister, Franz Anton	Music publisher/composer	Friend/ publisher	Solomon, <i>Beethoven Essays</i> , p. 194
Hohenzollern, Frederick "The Great"	Prussian Emperor, Mason and Rosicrucian	Patron/ promoter of classical arts	Solomon, <i>Late</i> , p.137/ McIntosh, p.44
Klopstock	Poet	Works studied by Beethoven	Solomon, <i>Late</i> , p.142
Kreutzer, Rodolphe	Violinist	Dedicatee of the Violin Sonata, op. 47	Solomon, <i>Late</i> , p.142
Lessing	Writer/Philosopher	Admired author of Beethoven's op. 52 songs	Solomon, <i>Late</i> , p.142
Lichnowsky, Karl	Viennese Noble	Patron; Friend and student of Mozart	Solomon, <i>Late</i> , p.140/ Thayer-Krehbiel, V I, 170

Mozart, Wolfgang	Composer	Role model/predecessor	Deutsch, <i>Mozart</i> p. 230
Neefe, Gottlob	Court organist in Bonn	Primary music instructor in Beethoven's Bonn years	Solomon, <i>Beethoven</i> , p. 35
Ries, Franz	Concertmaster of court orchestra in Bonn	Colleague, Mentor, possibly private violin instructor; also father of Ferdinand Ries, student and friend to Beethoven	Solomon, <i>Beethoven</i> , p. 35
Schikaneder, Emanuel	Impressario	Producer of 1805 presentation of <i>Fidelio</i> , planned collaborations with Beethoven on several other projected works	Solomon, <i>Late</i> , p.154
Schiller, Friederich	Philosopher/playwright	Works studied by Beethoven	Solomon, <i>Late</i> , p.142
Schneider, Eulogius	Poet	"Leading force" of the <i>Joseph Cantata</i> commission	Solomon, <i>Late</i> , p. 139
Simrock, Nikolaus	French horn player in the court orchestra in Bonn/ Publisher	Colleague, Mentor, possibly private horn instructor	Solomon, <i>Beethoven</i> , p. 35
Sonnenfels, Joseph von	Lawyer	Patron	Solomon, <i>Late</i> , p. 141
Swieten, Baron Gottfried van	Prefect of Imperial Library/ President of Studies Commission in Vienna. Illuminati member	Early patron	Landon, <i>Mozart</i> , p. 258
Waldstein, Ferdinand	Bonn Noble	Early patron/ friend	Solomon, <i>Beethoven</i> , p. 35
Wegeler, Franz Gerhard	Medical doctor	Life-long friend	Solomon, <i>Late</i> , p.138
Zmeskall, Nikolaus	Employed by Hungarian Court Chancellor	Friend	Solomon, <i>Late</i> , p.140-1/ Kinderman, <i>Beethoven</i> , p.29

Appendix C

Timeline of Beethoven's Masonic Interactions²⁶²

I. Bonn years: 1770-1792

1779—Beethoven begins study with Neefe

1783—Neefe publicly praises Beethoven in Cramer's *Magazin der Musik*

1787—Beethoven travels to study in Vienna. The attempt is withdrawn as a result of his mother's death after only several weeks.

1788 Jan 30—Count Waldstein moves to Bonn

1790 Mar 19—Beethoven commissioned to write Joseph cantata WoO87

1790 Dec 25-26—Haydn travels through Bonn

1791 Sep 18-Oct 20—Max Franz travels with court Musicians to Mergentheim to attend meeting of Teutonic order

1792 Jul—Haydn again stops at Bonn on return from London

1792 Oct 24—First entries of Beethoven's farewell album

1792 Nov 2—Beethoven departs for Vienna, traveling with Waldstein's introductory letters—gaining access to important salons, and aristocratic connection

II. Early years in Vienna: 1793-1800

Ca. 1793—Beethoven studies with Salieri until 1802; keeps association at least until 1809. (Thayer-Krehbiel, v. I, p. 161)

²⁶² This table documents interactions between Beethoven and known Freemasons, and events that have consequence of a Masonic nature in his life. It is largely based on Barry Cooper's *Calendar of Beethoven's Life*, found in his *The Beethoven Compendium*, pp. 12-33. Documentation from other sources is cited next to the entry.

1793 Jan 26—Fischenich's letter to Charlotte von Schiller cites earlier interaction of Beethoven with Haydn. (Thayer-Krehbiel, v. I, p. 143)

1793—Franz Ries, after the death of Johann van Beethoven, signs over his first-quarter salary, 25 Thalers, to Beethoven to help make up for his financial loss. (Thayer-Krehbiel, v. I, p. 148)

1793 Oct 24—dines with Van Swieten, possibly becoming acquainted with the *Associated Cavaliers*

1794 Jan 19—begins study with Albrechtsberger when Haydn is on leave to London

Mid-1790s—Beethoven meets Josef von Hammer-Purgstall while the latter is a student at the *Orientalischen Akademie*

1795 Jul—Beethoven concludes study with Albrechtsberger

1795 Sep–Oct—Beethoven dedicates his Op. 2 sonatas to Haydn

1796—Beethoven tours with Lichnowsky, including: Prague, Dresden, and Berlin

1796—Beethoven's journey to Berlin composing Cello Sonatas and variation sets for Frederick Wilhelm II, (son of Frederick II) with his cellist Duport.

1798—General Bernadotte arrives in Vienna

1799—Beethoven probably begins study with Salieri²⁶³

III. Middle years: 1800-1812

1800-1806—Prince Karl Lichnowsky pays 600florins/year annuity

ca. 1800—Lichnowsky buys Beethoven a quartet of fine string instruments (Thayer-Krehbiel p. 276)

1801—Beethoven confides his hearing problem to Wegeler and Amenda

1801 Jul 26—Elector Max Franz Dies

1801—Beethoven initially dedicates first symphony to Max Franz, but after the Elector's death, Beethoven rededicates it to the Baron Van Swieten

²⁶³ This date, which conflicts with Thayer-Krehbiel, is asserted by Cooper's timeline in *The Beethoven Compendium*.

1801 Oct—Beethoven takes Ferdinand Ries into his home, and provides him with lessons

1802 Oct 6—Heiligenstadt Testament

1803 Oct—Eroica Symphony completed

1803 summer—Beethoven and Schikeneder plan a new opera, *Vestas Feuer*

1803 Aug—Prometheus (Eroica) Piano Variations, op. 35 published

1803 Dec—plans made for the opera *Leonore*

1803 Dec—*Waldstein* Op. 53 piano Sonata completed, and is dedicated to its namesake, Count Ferdinand Waldstein.

1804 May 20—Napoleon is coronated as Emperor, Beethoven, disillusioned by this, furiously erases his name from the dedication on the title page of his Third Symphony.

1805 Jul—Beethoven meets Luigi Cherubini

1805 Sept 30—*Leonore* banned by Censor. Ban lifted on Oct. 5 as a result of Sonnleithner's petition

1805 Nov 13—Napoleon captures Schoenbrunn Palace

1805 Nov 20—Premier of *Leonore*

1807—Prince Nikolaus Esterhazy commissions a mass from Beethoven.

1808 Oct—Jerome Bonaparte offers Beethoven Kapellmeister position (Barry Cooper, p.95)

1809 Mar 1—large annuity paid by Kinsky, Archduke Rudolf, and Lobkowitz

III. Introspective years: 1812-1818

1812 Jul 19—Beethoven and Goethe meet.

1812 Nov—Tagebuch entries begin – Illuminati/Masonic tradition. Becker p. 40 about Neefe's Illuminati Diary.

1813—Beethoven commemorates the Duke of Wellington's victory over Napoleon with *Wellingtons Sieg*, and reaps commercial success and public approval

1814 May 23—Fidelio reopens

1815 Ash Wednesday—Hammer-Purgstall initiates a correspondence with Beethoven over setting several Orientalist works of his to music. (Solomon: “A Beethoven Acquaintance” pp. 14-15)

1818—Final entries of the *Tagebuch*

IV. Last years: 1818-127

1823—Opus 111 published

1825 Dec 15—work on Opus 131 begun

1826 spring—Opus 131 completed

1827 Mar 26—Death

Post mortem—Karl Holz’s and Schindler’s assertions of Beethoven as Freemason (Solomon, *Beethoven*, p. 207)

Appendix D

Alternative Calculations Showing the Relationship between the Hebrew and Babylonian Flood Chronologies

Objective: To approach the problem of the discrepancy between Flood Chronologies of Hebrew and Babylonian mythologies as outlined by Ernest McClain (*Myth of Invariance*, pp. 150-51) from my own point of view. This is intended to demonstrate a different conclusion than that arrived at by McClain and Campbell, and also to add richer harmonic/theological dimensions whose nature can be found in Beethoven's Opus 111.

Hebrew	Babylonian
1,656 years from Creation to the Flood	432,000 years from Creation to the Flood
Calendar system: 365.242 days per year; 52 weeks per year + one extra day; 7 days per week.	Calendar System: 365.242 days per year; 73 weeks per year; 5 days per week.
1,656 years x 365 days/year = 604,440 days	432,000 years x 365 days/year = 157,680,000 days
Adjustment for leap years (see below): 604,440 days + 402 leap year days = 604,842 days total	Adjustment for leap years: 157,680,000 days + 108,000 leap year days = 157,788,000 – 3130 (Adjustment) = 157,784,870 days total
604,842 days / 7 = 86,406 weeks of 7 days each	157,784,870 / 7 = 31,556,974 weeks of 5 days each

Leap year calculations for Hebrew Calendar:

$1,656 \text{ years} / 4 = 414 \text{ years}$ containing leap year days.

-Accounting for the rule that years divisible by 100 do not contain leap years unless they are also divisible by 400 lessens the amount of leap year days in this time by 12. The list is as follows:

Within the span of 1,656 years: 100, 200, 300, [not 400], 500, 600, 700, [not 800], 900, 1000, 1100, [not 1200], 1300, 1400, 1500, [not 1600]. Total leap year exceptions: 12.

Total leap year days including adjustments: $414 - 12 = 402$ leap year days within the span of 1,656 years.

Solution: Comparing the times of both flood chronologies in terms of their weeks reveals:

31,556,974 Babylonian weeks / 86,404 Hebrew weeks = 365.217

Conclusion: The two chronologies from Babylonian and Hebrew myths appear to differ as cultural variation. In many respects, they bear little relationship to each other beyond the subject matter of the flood myth that features prominently in many cultures. However, upon a precise calculation of exact days reconstructed into resulting weeks, a remarkable relationship becomes apparent. When considered in terms of weeks, accounting for respective calendar systems, the resulting ratio between the two chronologies is 1 Hebrew week to 365.217 Babylonian weeks. The accuracy of this relationship cannot be accidental, as this is the number of days per year in the highly accurate Persian calendar (365.242), the calculation accurate to just over two one-hundredths of a day, or 36 minutes, in the scope of thousands of years.

Though this calculation seems to beg for theological interpretation, any such satisfactory endeavor would fall beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, it seems clear that the ratio of 1 day : 1 year that results from this comparison seems to imply a view that time can be experienced in different ways—that one Babylonian year is somehow the same as one Hebrew day.

The relevancy of this finding to the music of Beethoven does seem to meet in the metaphysical or spiritual realm: Beethoven's *Arietta* from his op. 111 deals with these dual and multiple senses of time. Tracking one pulse while being simultaneously engaged in others can evoke an aspect of a mystic experience. Clearly, the aged composer was steeped in thought about time and pulse. I do not propose that he had any connection with this precise issue of flood chronology, but that his outlook on such issues of time perception could very well have been shaped by Masonic-styled organizations with which he was so closely tied, and which pondered such issues seriously.

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