



BRILL

Musical “Covers” and the Culture Industry

From Antiquity to the Age of Digital Reproducibility

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Abstract

This essay foregrounds “covers” of popular recorded songs as well as male and female desire, in addition to Nietzsche’s interest in composition, together with his rhythmic analysis of Ancient Greek as the basis of what he called the “spirit of music” with respect to tragedy. The language of “sonic branding” allows a discussion of what Günther Anders described as the self-creation of mass consumer but also the ghostly time-space of music in the broadcast world. A brief allusion to Rilke complements a similarly brief reference to Jankelevitch’s “ineffable.”

Keywords

Leonard Cohen’s Hallelujah – “covers” – recording consciousness – rhythm – radio

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Not infrequently, one encounters copies of important people; and, as with paintings, most people prefer the copy to the original.

NIETZSCHE, *Human, All Too Human*

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1 On Covers and Copies, Copyrights and “Likes”

“Covers,” songs first recorded by one artist and re-recorded by another, are part of our common culture. Pop singers “cover” other pop singer’s songs and classical orchestras “cover” jazz or pop or even punk standards. In *The Hallelujah Effect*,¹ I explore the phenomenon of the cover, including a reflection on what Adorno calls the “current” of music, meaning popular music of all genres as broadcast on radio but also by way of recorded music and its technological, digital reproduction, beginning with an exploration of Leonard Cohen’s *Hallelujah*, foregrounding a YouTube music video performance by k.d. lang. Along the way, I pay attention to the generic resistance to naming her version as a favorite. Some part, but not all, of this resistance derives from the explicitly male subtext/erotic tenor of Cohen’s song, and some part from our gender-biased tendency to judge pop stars, particularly female stars, by their appearance. Looks matter, especially in pop culture and the concept of a “cover” turns out to have a good deal to do with the graphic design of album covers² and, ultimately, record company labels. Thus the visual dimension is associated with the acoustic as “cover” versions were originally released featuring a new record or album jacket or “cover.” The association is obvious enough in the language of “cover art,” complete with legal determinations—defined by way of obtaining “rights,” i.e., administrative permission to record a composition, which is in turn tied to a percentage of copies sold and set fees for radio play and so on.³

The culture of the cover thus characterizes most of the music that reaches us in the age of mechanical, technological, electronic, digital reproduction. Indeed, classical musicians, from most recently, 2 Cellos—covering the *Game of Thrones* theme song—to Matt Haimovitz covering Jimi Hendrix and his own iconic cover of the *Star Spangled Banner*, this last a song with its own

1 Babette Babich, *The Hallelujah Effect: Music, Performance Practice, and Technology* (London: Routledge, 2016 [2013]).

2 Colin Symes includes a chapter on album cover design in his “Creating the Right Impression: An Iconography of Record Covers” in *Setting the Record Straight: A Material History of Classical Recording* (Wesleyan University Press, 2004), pp. 88–124, a focus quite distinct from liner notes from the record sleeve or CD insert.

3 See Al Kohn and Bob Kohn, *On Music Licensing* (Engelwood Heights: Aspen Law and Business, 1996) as well as M. William Krasilovsky and Sidney Shemel, *This Business of Music* (New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 2007) and, literally in the age of digital reproducibility, William W. Fisher, III, *Promises to Keep: Technology, Law, and the Future of Entertainment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

multifarious and debatedly racist history.⁴ Classical music covers of popular music are commonly promoted by the music industry in an attempt to capture the pop market, with examples from Gary Oldfield's 1975 *In dulce júbilo* covers of pop Christmas songs to the London Punkharmonic Orchestra's 1998 album, *Symphony of Destruction: Punk Goes Classical*.

An artist who records their own version or even another re-recording of another artist's work “covers” the original version, which itself may be a cover of a still more original version, thus re-releasing the same song. Usually this will be a matter of a more up to date appropriation by a younger voice in a more contemporary style, but not always. A well-known counter example would thus be Johnny Cash's 2002 cover of Nine Inch Nails 1994 *Hurt*, described by the original artist, Trent Reznor, when he recalled first listening to Cash, as transgressive: “like someone kissing your girlfriend.”⁵

If a cover of a song is related to the market aspect of the recording industry, it has been argued that there are other factors at work, citing issues that run deeper than music licensing fees, referring to “covers” of music—and this is the cliché backstory to Elvis's success as many say, whereby white artists would “cover” black artists thus making black sound acceptable to white audiences. Invoking this definition, Don McLean, who wrote a celebrated ballad to pop music with his 1971 *American Pie*, argued that Madonna's 2000 cover of his original hit⁶ was *not* in fact a “cover.” Race issues thus intersect with some of the problems the industry can seem to have with female singers, significant when it comes to recording *Hallelujah* or indeed Cohen's 1967 *Suzanne*—originally released in 1966, featured on Judy Collins album *My Life*, by Judy Collins. Bill Moyers, in an interview with Collins, tells her he can remember exactly where he was when he first heard her sing *Suzanne*— although, unlike Jeff Buckley's cover of *Hallelujah*, this did not make the song hers. For many reasons, doubtless having to do with all aspects of the holy (and the broken), Cohen's *Hallelujah* inspires the more universally preferred *male* artists associated with *Hallelujah*, like Bob Dylan's July 1988 version, originally a kind

4 Marc Ferris, *Star-Spangled Banner: The Unlikely Story of America's National Anthem* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014). The song recently inspired national debate for its racist associations owing to the refusal of the San Francisco 49er's quarterback Colin Kaepernick to stand during the national anthem. See for a retrospective account, including links to further discussion, Jennifer Schuessler, “Is the National Anthem Racist? Beyond the Debate Over Colin Kaepernick,” *New York Times*, 2 September 2016.

5 In addition to Cash's inimitable voice, it was arguably the music video that allowed Cash to sing the song—given the backdrop of imagery and of intimate setting—into his own life and his own faith. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtiPwfnh5pc>.

6 Don McLean, “On the Incorrect Use of the Term ‘Cover’” <https://don-mclean.com/2004/08/26/cover-versions/>. Accessed 21 January 2018.

of “ghost” cover, until recently difficult to hear as an audio recording,⁷ or the cover of covers: Jeff Buckley.

Thus in addition to an overwhelming preference for the male troubadour in the case of Cohen or Buckley, the market rules and despite the “first editions” favored by aficionados, most of us, to recall Nietzsche, are likely to *prefer* the copy. There is an echo of this preference (and not less the imperative of defending against it) in David Hume’s *The Standard of Taste*. In the case of music, although repetition/recognition make all the difference, versions are as important as they are because some “take” and some do not. I will come back to this.

At the same time, the term “cover” does not apply to all kinds of music patterned on other exemplars. Thus if there are rock and pop and jazz covers of classical music compositions,⁸ one does not conventionally describe a classical performance of a classical work as a “cover.” If stand-ins for opera singers are referred to as “covers,”⁹ this borrows from conventional, contractual usage. Alfred Brendel does not “cover,” he ‘performs’ or interprets Beethoven’s Piano Sonatas. Were Brendel to play Leonard Cohen’s *Hallelujah*, he would be covering Cohen. To this extent, the term cover is not applied to “classical music practice”¹⁰ as such and one can listen to a variety of philharmonic versions of the same Beethoven symphony, all of these different and none of them “covering” other versions, even where it can be observed that some performances/interpretations are clearly influenced by or even direct echoes of others. This is especially true in the age of musical mechanical, technological reproducibility and its effects on acoustic consciousness.

What is at stake is a metonymic extension: the “cover” corresponds to different commercial versions of the same song, complete with different record

7 Reference to these performances are on Bob Dylan’s own blog, https://bobdylan.com/setlists/?id_song=27222, and for an account, see Allan Showalter’s blog post from 2010 and subsequently updated: “Videos: Bob Dylan Covers Leonard Cohen’s Hallelujah Twice—Montreal & Los Angeles 1988”: <https://cohencentric.com/2016/10/13/bob-dylan-covers-leonard-cohens-hallelujah/>. Accessed 25 January 2018. See on the question of valuing some performances as ‘best,’ Simon Frith, *Performing Rites: Evaluating Popular Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

8 See for example, Tom Service, “10 of the Best: Metal Meets Classical,” *The Guardian*, 20 October 2014. And see, Michael Broyles’ “Beethoven in Popular Music” in *Beethoven in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 292–322.

9 Anne Midgette, “Waiting in the Wings, Singing to Themselves,” *New York Times*, 4 December 2005.

10 I refer here to the lovely analysis of the very notion of the musical work, indeed qua musical work of art, in Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay on the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

labels and associated “cover art” in each case.¹¹ Back as far as 1952, Will Leonard defined the meaning of a “cover” as a matter of music industry jargon: “meaning to record a tune that looks like a potential hit on someone else’s label.”¹² In this way, the same artist can even have different “covers” of his own song, issued with different album cover art if, more commonly, “covers” are recorded by different artists. The financial dimension is key and thus the notion of the “cover” includes legal specificities as noted above—a matter of administrative permission to record a composition, tied to a percentage of copies sold and, fees for radio play and so on.¹³ As the music artist Prince (1958–2016) explained the point in an interview in 2011, invoking a principle that some suggest would ultimately cost him his life:

I don’t mind fans singing the songs, my problem is when the industry covers the music. You see covering the music means your version doesn’t exist anymore.¹⁴

Note that Prince’s emphasis highlights *monetary* value as the new cover’s eclipse of his original version does not concern a fan’s aesthetic judgment regarding “diminishing value.” From the consumer’s point of view, Ray Pladgett explains that the term “cover” derives from the recording industry’s competitive habit of releasing “sound-alike” versions of popular songs driven, as one 1949 *Billboard* article explained, to steal a share of the market at any sign of public enthusiasm for a song. *Billboard’s* example was a “viral” hit by the Dellmore Brothers, concluding the article in commercially breathless style: “and the other companies have just begun to cover the tune.”¹⁵ According to Pladgett:

11 Thus Geoffrey P. Hull defines cover in the standard way as a recording of another artist’s own song (which by this definition might also apply to the same artist, though there one would likely speak of different ‘versions’) in his glossary to *The Music Business and Recording Industry* (New York: Psychology Press, 2004), 292.

12 Will Leonard, “Tower Ticker,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 16 April 1952: A4.

13 See, again, Kohn and Kohn, *On Music Licensing* as well as Krasilovsky and Shemel, *This Business of Music* and Fisher, 111, *Promises to Keep*. See too Lee Marshall and Simon Frith eds., *Music and Copyright* (London: Routledge, 2004).

14 Prince, interview with George Lopez as quoted in the lead paragraph in Ray Padgett, *Cover Me: The Stories Behind the Greatest Cover Songs of All Time* (New York: Sterling, 2017), 1. Padgett compiled this book from his blog of the same name.

15 Cited in Padgett, *Cover Me*, 2.

These [other] labels tried to hoodwink a listener who heard a hit song into mistakenly buying a copycat version of their own artist. A “cover” back then was a trick, a con on the listener.¹⁶

Today, listeners can be as easily tricked with an internet search (this is the technical meaning of an internet bubble, as Google specifies search parameters and limits results) for a certain artist’s recording, finding other covers instead or even the putative original but not the particular version we seek. If we sometimes discover new favorites thereby, Prince’s economic judgment concerns licensing and artist’s rights usually commandeered by the record company, not the artist, an issue only further compounded by YouTube regulations.¹⁷

Metonymy goes far enough that we have noted the role of “cover art” in pop music. Hence, Andy Warhol famously created, literally as a commercial graphic designer and as a financial hit, the album cover for the first 1967 album of *The Velvet Underground and Nico*, namely, a peel-able banana, the visual ‘covering’ the acoustic in the case of Donovan’s electrical banana in his 1966 hit, *Mellow Yellow*. The point of the musical “cover” is to recast another artist’s hit, taking it over, but the role of the cover also and always functions to sell, in this case: an album.¹⁸

2 Recording Consciousness

The condition for the possibility of what I am here calling the culture of “the cover” corresponds to what the phenomenological sociologist, H. Stith Bennett has analyzed as “recording consciousness.”¹⁹ The same consciousness grows out of and depends on the phenomenon of programming standards as Theodor Adorno explains that these in turn make recognition decisive just when it comes to the kinds of music that dominate popular consciousness. “Liking” something, Adorno tells us in advance of cognitive science and well

16 Ibid.

17 Kurt Trowbridge, in his internet post, “The Right to Copy: Cover Songs and Copyright on YouTube” also cites Will Leonard’s insider take on trade terminology. <http://kurttrowbridge.com/web-development/the-right-to-copy-cover-songs-and-copyright-on-youtube/>. Accessed 21 January 2018.

18 As a then-contemporary rock reviewer could write:

“The Velvets are an important group, and this album has some major work behind that erect banana on the cover.” Richard Goldstein, “Pop Eye,” *Village Voice*, 13 April 1967, 19.

19 See H. Stith Bennett, *How to Become a Rock Musician* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980). I discuss this in Babich, *The Hallelujah Effect*, 134ff.

before social media made this phenomenon still more obvious, reduces to a matter of recognition. As Nietzsche reminds us, we take ourselves to “know” what we merely find familiar.

In this sense, a phenomenological sociology of music performance practice, Bennett’s 1980 book *Becoming a Rock Musician* (newly re-issued, May 2017),²⁰ may itself be counted as a cover as the republication of a book is literally a “cover,” even if by the same author—just where the publisher matters, displacing the original imprint: University of Massachusetts Press with Columbia University Press. The corporate publisher offers a direct analogue to corporate labels. Also phenomenologically significant for the book, is the move from hardcover to a graphic softcover. And the same phenomenon applies in the case of *The Hallelujah Effect*. The reissue of the book from Ashgate’s hardcover dustjacket to Routledge’s softcover works to make the book physically approachable, owing to flexibility and reduced size, transforming apparent accessibility. Yet authors have to push for softcovers as academic publishers (although they rarely pay academic authors) do everything to reduce sales.

Like Anders and Adorno, Bennett argues that the medium, the radio, phenomenologically that is to say, the loudspeaker, small and locally focused sound, enables a new phenomenon in the performative ambit of technologically mediated reproduction whereby, as Bennett emphasizes, the performer can learn by ear, even if he or she cannot read (or write) music. In the age of mechanical, electronic, digital reproduction, “getting the music,” as this is done acoustically, involves an option for listening to it over and over again, given records, given YouTube, *ad libitum*.

Thus, Anna Kendrick, the actress who performed her version of the (thus named) Cup Song in the film *Pitch Perfect*, explaining her “geekiness” to David Letterman who, out of the linguistic youth loop, vainly sought to reassure her, supposing as he did that she was mocking herself (not so, geekiness being a “good thing” these days)—cites the practice Bennett describes, in her case listening to YouTube over and over, thus “getting” the *Cup Song* (a cover of the Carter cover: *You’re Gonna Miss Me When I’m Gone*), on her own and prior to the film, such solo-acquisition corresponding to the intentional recording consciousness that is key to “getting the music” in the age of YouTube.

Here part of recording consciousness is that what is learned is less the song itself or as such: “the music” as Bennett says, refers to a specific recording: thus one gets not the song per se, but a song qua cover. If the *Cup Song* is an earworm with rhythm, compare Elvis Presley’s recording of *I Can’t Help Falling in*

20 H. Stith Bennett, *How to Become a Rock Musician* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017).

Love With You. In this case, the melody had already been recorded in a 1949 film *The Heiress*, sung in French by Montgomery Clift in the musical film score by Aaron Copland, incorporating as Copland did the 18th Century ballad by Jean-Paul-Égide Martini, *Plaisir d'amour*. If a singer covers the song today, it will not be a cover of Copland's variation upon Martini's melody but Elvis's song (itself also part of a movie soundtrack as featured in the 1961, *Blue Hawaii*).

Bennett's recording consciousness means that one can retrace Elvis's recording (and he has more than one) even in memory: repeating (or singing) Elvis's trademark intonation, *Wise men say*, note that the rhythm introduces a stop, *only fools rush in*, but just there, this is the effect of "recording consciousness," if one has heard Elvis's recording (or if one has heard more than one of his versions), one will also remember in addition to the words themselves, the singer's intonation.

If "becoming" Elvis Presley is not the same as "becoming" Alfred Brendel, Brendel is the name artist he is because of his performance excellence but not less because of his recordings, and thus because of consumer recording consciousness and, arguably, so too Glenn Gould and so too, because the recondite is no exception to recording dependency, a sometimes overlooked composer and performer, the Basel-born musicologist, composer and pianist Ernst Levy (1895–1981)—friend of the musicologists, Siegmund Levarie and Ernest McClain. One can vary the argument for cellists (Casals, Ma) and quartets (Guarneri) and ensembles (Hilliard), as well as opera singers (Caruso and Callas), etc.

3 You're Gonna Miss Me When I'm Gone

In corresponding with me about the Hallelujah effect, the mathematically-minded musicologist, Ernest McClain made the provocative point that there was a calculated formula behind the composition of hits like *Summertime* (his example) and Cohen's *Hallelujah*. To illustrate, let us return to Anna Kendrick's "getting" of the *Cup Song*, a perfect cover of a cover, not to mention the film prop that is the plastic cup-pencil holder used for the song in the film *Pitch Perfect*.

The song was originally a venerable Carter family song, *When I am Gone* which was in turn, still more venerably, originally something else. In the case of Kendrick's getting of the same song, one can trace the difference made by Walter Benjamin's "technological reproducibility." For the song, as the Carter family sung it, was a hobo song, *When I am Gone*, based on a gospel song. Like another hobo song, varying *Hallelujah* in the refrain of the hobo (and worker

song), *Hallelujah, I'm a bum, Hallelujah, bum again*, we can hear the repetition of the rails. Those not inclined to follow the history of American music or hobo or labor songs, probably recognize some aspect of this rhythm in the song *500 Miles* or else in Arlo Guthrie's cover of the late Steve Goodman's protest song: *City of New Orleans*.

The rail rhythm is repeated with, reprised by, channeled with, we could say, the cups. What gets lost is the hobo affect of mortality, if Kendrick's music video adds a touch of Huck Finn's mourning sensibility. The (originally interrogative) title of what we take to be the original (originally recorded and so set via a recording session as a record and thus as something that could be played again and again—this is 'technological reproducibility'—and reprised or imitated or “covered”) itself became, like *Hallelujah*, the title of a book on the Carter Family: *Will You Miss me When I'm Gone? The Carter Family & their Legacy in American Music*.²¹ Kendrick herself, true to H. Stith Bennett's account of “getting the music,” listened to this song over and over on YouTube not by listening to the Carter Family but the 2009 version by Luisa Gerstein and Heloise Tunstall-Behrens of *Lulu and The Lampshades* as *You're Gonna Miss Me*.²²

4 Performance Practice

We know Friedrich Nietzsche as the author of *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*, and a philosopher for whom music was central—he once claimed that his Zarathustra ought to be reckoned as music, by which he meant to say that it was a composition—and declared that “without music, life would be a mistake.” Nietzsche was not merely an enthusiast but also a gifted improviser—Wagner famously said that no professor had a right to play so well—and Nietzsche had ambitions as a composer. Thus Nietzsche sought the opinion of Hans von Bülow leading the conductor to assess him incompetent. Von Bülow did not offer this judgment without asking Nietzsche's

21 Mark Zwonitzer and Charles Hirshberg, *Will You Miss me When I'm Gone? The Carter Family & their Legacy in American Music* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004).

22 Thus the phenomenon engendered by the force of a preferred cover has inspired its own song. Not always ideal, as Rickie Martin's 1972 *Garden Party* (this is the Rickie of Ozzie and Harriet Nelson American television fame), a country rock song about covers, including covering one's own songs, and the need for even the originator of a particular song to stick, as it were, to 'the program'—and in this case, to “look the same.” So when Rickie, a kind of prototypical teen idol at 17 in 1957, dared at the age of 31 to veer from his signature “look” at a Madison Avenue Rock revival concert in 1971, looking like every other popular rock music star of the time, people were horrified enough to boo him off the stage.

indulgence for his frankness, noting that Nietzsche had asked for an honest judgment, describing his own composition in a letter of 20 July 1872 as “dubious” and “laughable” but for which Nietzsche said that he wished to solicit a Pythagorean secret trick or “cure”²³ for what he otherwise said was analogous to the sound of tomcats on the roof [*wie die Kater auf den Dächern*]. And von Bülow obliged:

your *Manfred-Meditation* is the most extreme case of fantastic extravagance, the most unedifying and anti-musical instance of notes placed on music paper that I have come across in a long time.... Did you consciously flout all the rules of musical language, from the higher syntax to simple matters of correct notation? ... If you really have a passionate urge to express yourself in musical language, it is indispensable that you acquire the rudiments of this language.

von Bülow to Nietzsche, 24 July 1872

Where it took von Bülow a day or so to draft a response to Nietzsche’s July letter, Nietzsche took several draft versions to sketch out a reply which he only sent months later, circa 29 October 1872. The spirit of von Bülow’s critique was challenging: not only does one lack the genius of genius—in Kant’s sense—when one’s artistry is “natured” as in Nietzsche’s case, as opposed to “as if” by nature. Rather, von Bülow notes, one cannot but fail more basically unless one learns, *qua* composer, the particular grammar in which one intends to express oneself. *Sine qua non*. How compose music unless one knows the rules of composition? The question, it should be noted, is repeated throughout Adorno’s reflections on New Music.

Today’s readers are inclined to rise in Nietzsche’s defense, be it on behalf of his (failed) approaches to Lou von Salomé or indeed von Bülow. Thus one commonly encounters the question of whether von Bülow’s critique was justified. The older conductor seems harsh: should he not much rather have been *supportive*? Thus, today’s commentators are scathing in their own judgment of von Bülow: how could he be so unfeeling, he, the discarded husband of Cosima Wagner, in his response to Nietzsche’s trusting overtures in sending him his youthful scores!

We don’t tend to take von Bülow’s point, but Nietzsche did, replying in the fashion proper to an acolyte, that he was indeed familiar with the rules of

23 “so wissen Sie das pythagoreische Kunstgeheimniß, ihn durch ‘gute’ Musik zu kuriere.“ An Hans von Bülow in Münche, *Sämtliche Briefe. Kritische Studienausgabe Mai 1872–Dezember 1874* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1986), Vol. 4, 26–27.

composition, having studied these rules since childhood, including a study of Albrechtsberger—as among the works Nietzsche would have known was what he would have taken to have been Beethoven’s (aka Albrechtsberger’s) theory of composition.²⁴

All well and good for the nineteenth century but are we not, as the theme of Adorno’s “culture industry” would attest, in an age in which music as such, digital as it is, “streaming” as it can be on a range of different platforms completely transformed? If any art has undergone transformation in the Benjaminian sense, and Anders likewise writes about this along with the phenomenologico-psychological theorist of perception, Rudolf Arnheim, music seems definitively transformed in the age of technological reproducibility.

Thus the “Hallelujah Effect” is a complex phenomenon that works in reverse, backwards-acting: this is the imaginary causality (and for Nietzsche as for David Hume, all perceived causality is imaginary) that Nietzsche in *Götzen-Dämmerung*, in two sections of *Die vier grossen Irrthümer* (looking at the subject’s capacity to will his own thoughts, the very transcendental unity of apperception, but not less the same subject’s apprehension of the causality of external events) attributed to a certain *Nachträglichkeit*, the backwards-working effect of our awareness of causality thus revealed as an *anscheinenden Umkehrung der Zeit*, a seemingly reverse temporality.

5 Priming Prime-Time Consciousness

What we do in dream time we do, so Nietzsche argues, in our waking hours. Modern marketing psychologists thus deploy “sonic branding” or “priming,” a phenomenon invented, “crystallized,” the term includes a reference to the radio, for mass utilization by Freud’s nephew, Edward Bernays, where it remains in commercials and not less in politics on the world stage where it always was: for Adorno, all this is “programming.” The effect in question works with “triggers” (the same term is used in ASMR, an internet YouTube phenomenon). This is also the reason the 2018 Winter Olympic Chinese pairs skaters, Sui Wenjing and Han Cong, won gold with k.d. lang’s version of *Hallelujah* (k.d. herself sings

24 The reference is to Ignaz Ritter von Seyfried and Henry Hugh Pierson’s *Ludwig van Beethoven’s Studien im Generalbass und in der Compositionslehre*. Nietzsche’s draft to von Bülow contains this more defensive assertion, see his *Sämtliche Briefe*, Vol. 4, 77. The version Nietzsche actually sent is more polished, invoking a scale of ironies (*ibid.*, pp. 78–80). However and this may account for readerly reception, only the (more self-defensive) draft is included in Christopher Middleton’s *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1996), 106–107.

in the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, singing her own lyrics as opposed to the more typical synchronization most singers opt for, making her Hallelujah a two-time Winter Olympics event) or else as played by Tori Kelly for the *In Memoriam* montage of the 2016 *Emmys* broadcast.

As the *In Memoriam* segment of the 2016 *Emmys* illustrates, the only thing one needs for a “trigger” to work is the song itself, “calculated” as McClain suggests, *it goes like this*, as we recall: *the fourth, the fifth, the major fall, the minor lift*, sadness and depth, *Hallelujah* together with the videography behind the scenes, completely coordinated, visuals and vocals: k.d. lang, Tori Kelly, the Olympic Champion skating pair, taking the listener/viewer into Cohen’s song in their minds, *I heard there was a secret chord, that David had, and it pleased the Lord*. Our own associations drive priming.

The *Emmys* memorial segment, included the late Alan Rickman and, such is the rhythmic force of the video montage, the clip the video directors chose was not *Die Hard* or *Harry Potter*, but Rickman’s portrayal of a Southern heart surgeon, Dr. Alfred Blalock, in the 2004 *Something The Lord Made*. The excerpt, in all its brevity, included one of Rickman’s trademark silences, offering in that space an acoustic window to the refrain, as Tori Kelly sings “Hallelujah,”—*“I think we should remember not what we lost ... but what we’ve done.”*

We recognize this because remembered on more than one level, reinforced beyond the visual with the acoustic: this reinforcement is *The Hallelujah Effect*. The same effect helps win presidential elections as our current political powers in popular US culture inform us as the Facebook “ad effect,” a point Jean Baudrillard made in a related fashion,²⁵ not to the extreme and cliché force of blaming Russia but for his own purposes in *The Gulf War Never Took Place*²⁶ and *The Intelligence of Evil*,²⁷ and which was, before Baudrillard, also the subject of a thematic study of *Propaganda: The Formation of Men’s Attitudes* by the French sociologist of technology and culture, Jacques Ellul²⁸ and the key to *De-Schooling Society*, a book by the still too-little read theorist of counter-education, Ivan Illich.²⁹ If the most uncannily precise account is

25 See Jean Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (New York: Telos Press Publishing, 1981).

26 Baudrillard, *The Gulf War Never Took Place*, Paul Patton trans. (Sydney: Power Publications, 2012). Cf. “La guerre du Golfe n’aura pas lieu,” *Libération*, 4 January 1991; “La guerre du Golfe a-t-elle vraiment lieu ?,” *Libération*, 6 February 1991; “La Guerre du Golfe n’a pas eu lieu,” *Libération*, 29 March 1991.

27 Baudrillard, *The Intelligence of Evil or the Lucidity Pact* (Oxford: Berg, 2005).

28 Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men’s Attitudes* (New York: Knopf, 1965).

29 See for further references and broader discussion in the context of the philosophy education which contemporary scholars prefer to omit in their focus on Rancière and Foucault, Babich, “Getting to Hogwarts: Michael Oakeshott, Ivan Illich, and J.K. Rowling on ‘School’”

given in Anders' 1956 *Die Antiquirtheit des Menschen* [*The Antiquatedness of Humanity*],³⁰ as we ourselves, programmed as consumers of radio—call it Spotify or whatever streaming app you are pleased to pay for on demand—or television, or cable or whatever streaming video you subscribe to—or paid via internet access, WiFi/WLAN, which we also, as consumers—arrange to consume.

Anders points out that the irony of the highly personalised arrangement of mass programming is that we no longer need a Hitler or mass party rallies with giant loudspeakers to reach every ear. Instead, we ourselves arrange to pay for this to come to us in the most intimate settings, setting up loudspeakers for perfect sound in our living rooms, or and this is the most effective of all, inserting earphones, for *still more perfect* sound, directly into our ears. Priming is individually targeted and universal: *Baby, I've been here before*. And it works not against our will but just as we would have it. As Anders observes:

this conditioning is disguised as “fun”; the victim is not told that he is asked to sacrifice a thing; and since the procedure leaves him with the delusion of his privacy or at least of his private home, it remains perfectly discreet.³¹

Thus, and this is still more accurate as an account of today's social media, for which we pay via the data charges of cellphone and internet providers, we fashion ourselves as mass consumers, paying for and thus valuing the privilege of accessing the medium that programs us for yet further consumption. It is common even for critics of digital media to underscore the desirability or “importance” of ads in our social media feed. Would we really, they ask, wish to ban or eliminate ads? I would, of course, say ‘Yes,’ but it is for this reason that I argue that what I call our Facebook “autism” in *The Hallelujah Effect* (Facebook is not the point: any social media platform effects this)³² is attuned by design (algorithm) to the same passivity—those would be our “likes” or our “retweets,” that Anders already emphasizes as socially isolating in 1956.³³

in: David Bakhurst and Paul Fairfield, eds., *Education and Conversation: Exploring Oakeshott's Legacy* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 199–218.

30 Anders, *Die Antiquirtheit des Menschen*, (Munich: Beck, 1956).

31 Anders, “The World as Phantom and as Matrix,” *Dissent* 3/1 (1956): 14–24, 16.

32 See: Babich, *The Hallelujah Effect*.

33 Letting the sender (and Facebook) know that we've received the message. Thus one can even share the post on one's own page—a kind of a super “like” (similar to a retweet).

If Baudrillard insists that one-way directionality, speech-without-response as he speaks of it, is emblematic of social media,³⁴ we are not persuaded that he is right even if, however many hundreds or tens of thousands of “followers” one supposes oneself to have on Twitter say, or Facebook, the duplexing phenomenon that matters is that one cannot have, even in a complex thread, which may go some way to account for trolling, a discussion with too many more than one interlocutor at a time, just as in (this is the source of the duplex metaphor) a party line telephone call.

6 Male and Female Desire

By framing the question of the artist (as opposed to aesthetics, as opposed to the spectator) one stumbles into Nietzsche’s gender issue, which is not for him and to be sure: a question. Nietzsche distinguishes aesthetics as such as an art for spectators as an art before witnesses, dedicated to performance, the art of the *Hallelujah Effect* where the subjectivity of the aesthetic subject, qua spectator, plays with and as the effect in effect: all taste, good or bad, because all judgment, *qua* judgment (this is another spin on *ressentiment*) is *feminine*, receptive, reactive. By contrast, Nietzsche’s “art for artists only” is not merely monological, as he says—only Agamben could track a connection with Baudelaire—but unconcerned with spectators or effects, because expressly, explicitly *masculine*.

For this reason, and this goes beyond Cohen’s problematization of desire, foregrounding the male, it is important to consider male and female desire, as the one remaining prohibition, which may, so I am inclined to suppose, always endure, even after de Beauvoir and not less Irigaray and certainly even after Kate Manne, a permanently aesthetic *Bilderverbot*. This is the ban on representations of the male as object of desire for a female subject of desire. Here is the prohibition, and thus, on Judy Collins’s 2015 album *Strangers Again*, Collins herself did not undertake to sing the line, *Her beauty and the moonlight overthrew ya*, but gave the verse to Bhi Bhiman to sing: *she tied you to a kitchen chair, she broke your throne and she cut your hair, and from your lips she drew the Hallelujah*. The ban on the representation of the male as the object of female desire has everything to do with the problematics of the female subject qua subject and as such and especially as subject of desire, desiring, this is the taboo, this is what is not done, the male object. And this is precisely why, and

34 I discuss this in a recent lecture published in the 2018 Heidegger Circle proceedings, “Being on Television: Wisser, Heidegger, and Adorno,” Goucher College, MD, 5 May 2018.

not only because this is the song of a king, and a priest, sung to *his* god: every word breathed in *Hallelujah*, is a word of prayer—and this yields the recondite reference to desire, *her beauty in the moonlight*, still more: *remember when I moved in you, but only for the male*. I analyze Madonna's *Like a Prayer* to explore this, but that is again the desire of desire, female desire for male desire, that is not desire for the male object of female desire.

The female is excluded as subject from the start: *you don't really care for music do ya?* Anything that might look like female desire, and this can be very much in evidence is excluded. After all, it is not that women lack desire, quite to the contrary, and they may even exceed males in this—*I've seen your flag on the marble arch*. The point is only the working, expression, articulation, realization of that desire which is qua desire of its own, for its own part, dismissed out of hand: *our love is not a victory march, It's a cold and it's a broken Hallelujah*.

7 Nietzsche, Wagner, and Beethoven

Music is key to this point, as Nietzsche foregrounds the difference between masculine and feminine aesthetics, and following a reading of Adorno on musical currency and the culture industry as it produces this effect qua standards, i.e., the "hits" invoked above. Thus, writing on tragedy, Nietzsche is not solely concerned with Wagner as theorists have insisted that he is,³⁵ all the more, like von Bülow, to dress him down. Rather, Nietzsche, just as we noted his reply to von Bülow, is preoccupied with no one less than Beethoven. And what can be striking once one notices the relevance of Nietzsche's reference to Beethoven is the relative absence of Wagner in his first book. Thus, although *The Birth of Tragedy* is indeed dedicated to Wagner, naming him as an advance warrior [*Vorkämpfer*] in the cultural undertaking Nietzsche means to propose, Nietzsche does not foreground Wagner but begins instead by detailing Beethoven's Schiller chorus,³⁶ as he likewise ends with an elaboration of this spirit of reconciliation, i.e., Beethoven's *Ninth*, as invoking a transfigured time-space, "a region in whose joyous chords dissonance as well as the terrible

35 Wagner thought so, the original review said so, and in translation, Walter Kaufmann repeats the claim and scholars march in lockstep.

36 Only to conclude in his penultimate section, before referring to opera, given "the extremely close relationship between music and myth, one must suppose that a degeneration and depravation of the one will involve a deterioration of the other." Here Nietzsche adds as revelations "the opera, just as in the abstract character of our mythless existence, in an art degenerated to mere entertainment as well as in a life guided by concepts" (BT §24).

image of the world fade away charmingly; both play with the sting [*Stachel*] of displeasure" (BT 25).

Imagining, this would be Nietzsche's culminating motif, "dissonance become human" (BT 25), the book is not about Wagner—and "aboutness" is always problematic, think of Carly Simon's *You're so Vain*. Wagner, so I would argue, recognized this, and the disappointment would not have advanced their friendship, which came to a falling out.

Not Wagner, and quite apart from his illustrative references to Beethoven, Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* was focused less on the music and the musicians of his day than dedicated to its topic: as the programmatic articulation *Out of the Spirit of Music*, nothing less than an exposition of the author's philological, quantifying, rhythmic discovery.³⁷

Nietzsche, whose rhythmic discovery "decodes" and provides, to this extent, the basis for our current pronunciation of ancient Greek, seeks to make the counter-intuitive claim, counter-intuitive for us as speakers of Western European languages, that the tonal or pitch *ictus* of the ancient Greeks excluded our manner of emphasis or the stress *ictus* characteristic of Latin and all modern European languages. By contrast, the Greek tone *ictus* (Nietzsche specifically cites on this behalf Schiller's line in Beethoven's setting or framework: *O freunde, nicht dieser Töne*) was on Nietzsche's theoretical account of it to be understood in terms of quantity and time but specifically in terms of tone, higher and lower, that is: musical tonality.³⁸

In addition, the culture of the cover has a very biographical, bibliographical, philosophical expression. Such covers are self-covers, re-issues, re-articulations, new envisionings. Thus we may think of Kant's *Prolegomenon* (to his first critique) as of Nietzsche's *Gay Science*, *Ecce Homo* (with respect to *The Birth of Tragedy*) as philosophical quasi-covers. Nietzsche, on his own account of it, found himself compelled to write his own prolegomenon to his first work: appending this *Attempt at a Self-Critique* as a new preface for a second edition of his first book, retitled as one might re-package an album, with a new disjunctive subtitle, or *Hellenism and Pessimism*. Nietzsche's *Auto-Critique*, qua attempt, is routinely misread by scholars as if Nietzsche thereby intended to withdraw or deny his first book (an odd assumption given that he uses it

37 See for a discussion of the context of this discovery and Nietzsche's artistic reference, Babich, "Nietzsche's Archilochus," *New Nietzsche Studies*, Vol 10, Nos. 1/2 (2018): 133–170.

38 Looking at Nietzsche's notes *Zur Quantierenden Rhythmik*, one might suppose a link to Aristoxenus and I refer anyone keen to follow this out, especially those without German to C.F. Abdy Williams, *The Aristoxenian Theory of Musical Rhythm* (1911), a text summarizing the 19th century philological tradition especially Rudolph Westphal (but not Nietzsche).

to preface a republication changing no part of the original text), but where Nietzsche is read as denouncing his own book's voice for its errors, as if to match his junior colleague's critique of his first book, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff's *Zukunfts-Philologie*—an anti-accolade in the field of *Altphilologie*, arguably inspiring Nietzsche's reflections on then-contemporary styles of doing *Altphilologie*, namely his meditations on the then-popular attention to the historical Jesus,³⁹ and concerning the philological science of history⁴⁰ in his *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen (Untimely Meditations)*. Misreading Nietzsche's new preface as a *retractio* to his newly-reissued *The Birth of Tragedy or Hellenism and Pessimism* is easy to understand (misreadings have the enduring appeal of being more rather than less obvious and more rather than less simple) and scholars suppose Nietzsche to say that his text might have done better had he, and it is assumed to have been a metaphor, 'sung and not spoken.' Thus we can be inclined to overlook Nietzsche's reflections on "Music and Word" to quote the lecture Carl Dahlhaus includes in his *Music and Romanticism*,⁴¹ along with the challenging claims Nietzsche makes in his first Basel lecture reminding us (and this too is a word contra Wagner, uttered before any falling out between them), that ancient Greek tragedy had exactly nothing in common with the way we moderns encounter tragedy, beginning with the way we actually encounter it: on stage, in a darkened theater, an experience that as Friedrich Kittler reminds us is itself a legacy not of antiquity but of the total or immersion experience of Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk*, especially when it comes to film.

But repeating his texts did not do for Nietzsche what he had hoped (I don't think repetition ever works, which may be why it is a pathology) and reflecting in *Ecce Homo* on the futures (here we need the plural s) of his "Dionysian music," he muses that if anyone profited from his first venture with his first book, it would be none other than Wagner:

In order to be fair to the *Birth of Tragedy* (1872) it is necessary to forget a few things. It created a sensation and even fascination as a consequence of its flaws—its application to Wagnerism as if the latter were the sign of a beginning. On that account alone this treatise was an event in Wagner's life: from this point forwards great hopes surrounded the name of Wagner.

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39 The reference is to the theologian David Strauss as author.

40 I.e., Nietzsche, "The Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life."

41 Carl Dahlhaus, *Music and Romanticism: A History of Musical Style in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984), 103–120.

8 Aristotle and Tragedy or Nietzsche on Socrates and Euripides (*You Don't Really Care for Music, Do Ya?*)

If Cohen, who characterized k.d. lang's 2005 Juno performance as "definitive" would also urge a moratorium on singing *Hallelujah*, it remains valuable to return to the question of the very question of repeat performances. Nietzsche, who was fond of issuing his works in several modifications and expanded versions, was engaged before his collapse in attempting to re-release his own works, yet once again. And *Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is* can be read in this musical spirit, *da capo*: an author's cover of his own works. Like the later added autocritique to *The Birth of Tragedy*, added when he reissued his first book, the book, *Ecce Homo* is an auto-bibliography. Nietzsche wrote it (as Sarah Kofman has detailed at some length) at a publisher's behest,⁴² as a *catalogue raisonné* of his own works.

Thus Nietzsche expresses the ambition of his first book not as a claim for Wagner, one way or the other but as dedicated to expressing

The affirmation of life even in its strangest and most difficult problems: the will to life rejoicing at its own infinite vitality through the sacrifice of the highest types—that is what I called Dionysian, that is what I meant as the bridge to the psychology of the tragic poet. Not so as to be free of terror and pity; nor to purge one's self of a dangerous emotion by discharging it with passion—this was Aristotle's misunderstanding of it—but to be far beyond terror and pity, to be the eternal joy of Becoming itself—that lust which also involves the joy of destruction.

Just as Heidegger was persuaded that his own contemporaries had not understood *Being and Time*—this complaint takes up a good portion of the first volumes of the *Black Notebooks*, including focused reflections on the deficiencies of his readers, a point he would still be repeating in the last decades of his life—Nietzsche was persuaded that his readers had not understood his first book. Thus this convinced non-reception had more to do with the subversive quality of Nietzsche's claims which as we see from his late written epitomization cited above, questions what we *think we know* about tragedy from Sophocles to Shakespeare), which would then be less dedicated to Wagner.

42 See Sarah Kofman's *Explosion I. De l'« Ecce Homo » de Nietzsche* (Paris: Galilée, 1992), esp. 45ff. See, for a version in Duncan Large's English translation, "Explosion. I: Of Nietzsche's *Ecce homo*," *Diacritics*, 24 (4) (1994): 51–70.

Ultimately, Nietzsche opposed Aristotle's account of tragedy. For Nietzsche, in order to raise the question of the "birth of tragedy out of the spirit of music," it is essential to raise the *question of the subject*, a question he raises in order to claim that there is *no subject*. For this reason, Nietzsche's opposition to Aristotle is central and it is the reason Nietzsche focuses on the subversive (and offensive) lyric poet-genius, Archilochus.⁴³ Contra Aristotle, Nietzsche reminds us that Ancient Greek tragedy is not about the recounting of a particular *plot*, or *mythos*: *everyone knows* the story told by different poets, often repeatedly so, in variant after variant, cover after cover, authors covering covers of other tragedian's works. More significantly however what Nietzsche denies is that the ancient poets sought or, indeed, could have managed to evoke *pity and fear* even if that had been their goal. Again: everyone knows the story and a story that is well known loses considerable ability to inspire anything—especially emotions like *pity or fear*: the phenomenon is that of psychological, empathic accommodation, thus the first beggar we pass can move us, but as we proceed past beggar after beggar, the later candidates do not tend to evoke still more pity or any other emotional responsiveness but less. A good deal of Nietzsche's reflections on pity and the effort to inspire it, turn on the consequences of accommodation.

To this extent, Nietzsche's poetics refuses (and he defies his readers to find an illustration of it) *catharsis* as effect. Thus Nietzsche argues that Aristotle misunderstands both Socrates *and* music, when he suggests that one might "purge one's self of a dangerous emotion by discharging it with passion." Here, Nietzsche's point is that Socrates's epistemological excellence entailed less an insight into the music that he learned to play only at the end of his life,⁴⁴ and only as a caution, but much rather that *he knew that he did not understand* music, much less tragedy. Along with Socrates, Nietzsche condemns Euripides, last of the tragedians, the tragedian ancient wisdom counsels against and the tragedian many find best for understanding tragedy, indeed even for understanding Nietzsche *on tragedy* and on the nature of the Dionysian, as author of the *Bacchae*. Nietzsche can thus surprise when we read that Euripides "forces" tragedy to bloom one last time, effectively killing the genre, compelling it to gasp its last gout of blood, whereby the last ranked of the tragedians, as Euripides is classically ranked, orchestrates the death of tragedy, which death is thus, by definition, at its own hand.

43 See for further discussion, Babich, "Nietzsche's Archilochus."

44 See further, Babich, "The Science of Words or Philology: Music in *The Birth of Tragedy* and the Alchemy of Love in *The Gay Science*" in Tiziana Andina, ed., *Revista di estetica*, 28, XLV (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 2005), 47–78.

Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* raises the question of the subject as subject by questioning what we think we know about the lyric. We know that lyric poems tell us what it is to say "I," and to this end Nietzsche raises the question of the subject, the "I" to tell us that "the subjectivity of the lyricist is a deception." This is a complicated point and beyond the current theme,⁴⁵ but it illuminates Cohen's *Hallelujah* as this song is a lyric poem: the singer's song about a lyric song. "I heard there was a secret chord."

This is irresistible: we are more than interested in the secret of the secret. And to better the best, we can add that this is the secret of the secret, the challenge that it is to have a successful cover is the challenge of taking an old song, as the Beatles wrote one, as the Hallel psalm surely counts as such, a sad song to make it better. This is what covers are all about. Think of Katy Perry's cover of *Hey, Jude*, or even Paul McCartney's composition of the same as a comfort for Julian Lennon in the wake of his parents' divorce.

Yet that account is complicated once again for there is no best of the best version, no original, ultimately, and to this extent, the best version cannot be heard less because of taste, though that matters but because when it comes to covers, what matters is future success. As we noted at the beginning: either the song takes or it doesn't. In the same way, despite Cohen's moratorium, a decisive, final version cannot be stipulated: covers fade into oblivion, even where, think of the Cup Song, some pop group finds and resuscitates them.

9 The Ineffable and the Ghost of Radio

It is hard to get past the ineffability of music. And I am more than committed to that in its full significance. *The Hallelujah Effect* is a book on that same ineffability as a phenomenon: a charge, a task. Jankélévitch's *Music and the Ineffable*, intending as he means to talk about the "ethics" and "metaphysics" of music, begins with an allusion to the sheer phenomenality of musical presence as a quasi-alien irruption. Certainly this is behind some of the difficulty music presented for Kant, there it is, whatever judgment we would or would not make of it. For Jankélévitch, on the very first page of his book: "music takes up residence in our intimate self and seemingly elects to make its home there."⁴⁶

45 See for further references, especially on rhythm, Babich, "Spirit and Grace, Letters and Voice." *Journal of the Philosophy of Education*, 111 (2018): 1–27.

46 Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Music and the Ineffable*, trans. Carolyn Abbate (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 1.

And this we may also read in Rilke's *Duino Elegies*, beginning with the first elegy, assuming we have gotten past the angel hierarchies—certainly Wim Wender's *Himmel über Berlin* is a testament to this poem—who might/might not hear us, were one of these to press us, like Talos the bronze defender, toward his heart, or assuming we have found ourselves able to survive the thought that "beauty is nothing but the beginning of terror ..." Note that it hardly matters how that line continues—and it continues beautifully, this is Rilke after all, master of beauty and of keeping the song until the end of line.

If we have gotten to the remonstrance, *Don't you know yet?* past the injunction to *Fling the emptiness out of your arms / into the spaces we breathe*, we find ourselves with a blank line and what might be said to need us: *die Frühlinge*. Or, and this is the assignment: *da du vorüberkamst am geöffneten Fenster / gab eine Geige sich hin. Das alles war Auftrag*.

In 1930, in his brief "Spuk und Radio," published in same music journal where Adorno has an essay on Wagner's *Tristan*, Anders includes a brief but importantly timely phenomenological reflection that would, willy nilly, stay with Adorno at least through the composition of the *Current of Music*.⁴⁷ Anders raises the question of the present contemporaneity, the presence of music, specifically in space where music can be a presence, near or far, a presence in space (this was for Anders being-in music), as opposed to Rilke's passing reflection of waves rolling toward us, or a violin unseen while passing by an open window. The sound Anders describes moves itself, passes, as a street organ might be heard rolling by, heard "now here, now there in the room." Anders' concern is with the phenomenon of broadcast music, "on the radio," at the time relatively new, which he analyses, precisely given the already ubiquitous character of radio. Listening to music on the radio, one steps out of one's apartment and thus away from one's still playing radio (notice the phenomenological dynamic, where in the first instance, the external street organ rolls past one so that one hears it as it goes), one varies the phenomenon, oneself as one moves away from the sound, all the while recognizing that music is not locally located but in its own space, filling spatiality with dimension and richness beyond spatiality. Hearing the radio from place to place as one moves from apartment to apartment, as if the same violin might yield itself, the same from every window, continuing just where the passing notes diminish, the song still continuing in its own wake.

Like Nicholas of Cusa describing the relativity of motion, Anders describes the time-space relativity of music on the radio as a relativity of spatiality

47 Anders, "Spuk und Radio," *Anbruch, Monatschrift für Moderne Musik*, XI/2 (Februar 1930): 65–66.

beyond location: the replication doubles the same sound, as with radio one can hear the sound from the last apartment diminish behind one, but the neighbour who is playing the same station offers one the same music, continuing the same in space, contrary to one's past locative sense, picking up the same musical progression where it is "going" even as one can still hear the dying echoes of the same music playing the same, behind one, doubling it as a ghost of itself in space, and if the next neighbor's radio happens to be turned again to same radio station, one can encounter the tripling effect of the same music again, doubled now by two echoes of a sound that is itself the same and yet, localized, broadcast, not the same. The result as Anders reflects is that through and by technology itself nothing less than the 'spooky,' the ghostly emerges, the same ghosts burnt into the screen of some televisions as the broadcast moves on. Kittler writes about this phenomenon (well after Anders who is also writing in Heidegger's wake) but Anders is concerned to explore what will become the primary effect of priming and that is what I have called the "Hallelujah Effect" because in order to deal with these reduplicative echoes the mind adapts and as it adapts the human itself is transformed: one learns to listen away from a musical echo towards the musical place of what has as such, as music, no place. And one succeeds. One gets used to what would otherwise be uncanny, quite apart from any realms of angels, measures oneself against immoderation, responds to the unheard of, elements of the phenomenon of psychological musical accommodation which leaves one, should the project succeed, as succeed it will, renders one in accord with the disproportionate spookiness of music and radio, and thus oneself rather less than human.⁴⁸

We are thereby mesmerized, this effect which is also in the online video ASMR phenomenon, is the "Hallelujah Effect" again.

10 Coda: Cohen's *You Want it Darker*

If Cohen's *Hallelujah* is a lyric, that is: an "I" poem, like *Bird on a Wire*, perfectly pluralizable, like *First We Take Manhattan*, at the end of his life, if we may read this as punctuated in between with the "who" of *Who by Fire*—I talk about this song along with *Suzanne*, in reflecting on Cohen in a collection dedicated to Cohen and philosophy—the pronoun changes.⁴⁹ At the end of his life Cohen, whose *Hallelujah* already intimates the depth of his relationship

48 Anders, "Spuk und Radio," 66.

49 See for a discussion, Babich, "Hallelujah and Atonement" in Jason Holt, ed., *Leonard Cohen and Philosophy* (Chicago: Open Court, 2014), 123–134.

with deity—Cohen will say that he doesn’t “believe” in God, that he “knows God,” writes a prayer not for his own death so much as his last Adam Kadmon style, I am thinking of Alan Strongin, my ex-father-in-law, suit of and against the divine. This is the gentle resignation, the leaving song, *You Want It Darker*. Here the poet speaks, *we kill the flame*: and then, in Hebrew, like the Hallelujah a word of praise, here a word of readiness and response: *hineni, hineni* (here I am, here I stand) *I’m ready, my Lord*. There is that to repeat but the song continues as one of affirmation only colored by the puzzle of thinking the divine:

If thine is the glory, mine must be the same: You want it darker.

One review written in German and released before his death puts it well: “Leonard Cohen has put out an album full of leave-takings [*voller Abschiede*] with *You Want it Darker*. It ranks among the best of everything he ever published.”⁵⁰

That’s right enough, and I am told by my administrative colleague and friend, the late Stephen Freedman, that Cohen’s old Montreal congregation has taken the song as significant in its own right for services and reflection, which is something to think about in just the direction I sought to explore by tracing the reflections of Cohen’s own earlier *Who By Fire*, as he sings an old song about all the ways of love and loss, passing and judgment.⁵¹

50 “Leonard Cohen hat mit ‘You Want It Darker’ ein Album voller Abschiede aufgenommen. Es zählt zum Besten, was er je veröffentlicht hat.” Wolfgang Luef, “Leonard Cohen singt sein letztes Liebeslied,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 25. Oktober 2016.

51 This text grew out of the first of two lectures originally presented at the gracious invitation of Paulo de Assis at the Orpheus Institute, 11–12 May 2017, Ghent, Belgium.

