

# Beethoven at 250: A Literary Miscellany

LAWRENCE KRAMER

Sadly, 2020 will surely be remembered as the year of the coronavirus rather than as the occasion of Beethoven's 250th birthday. Nonetheless, the birthday is there to be observed, and it did not feel right for this journal to fail in observing it. The form of our observance is the following collection of passages from distinguished non-musicians: novelists, poets, and a pair of philosophers whose literary style is as important to their thought as any thesis they might propose. The passages appear in loose chronological order and span the "long century" of the journal's coverage period. They do not include the most famous or infamous of literary references to Beethoven; there is nothing here from Tolstoy's "The Kreutzer Sonata," or Forster's *Howard's End*, or Mann's *Doctor Faustus*. Some of the passages may still be relatively familiar; others, perhaps the majority, are little known. Collectively, these extracts show how quickly and how fully Beethoven, or at least the name Beethoven, came to stand as a synonym for music, or, if you will, for Music, understood as

the "highest" art—and not Western classical music, either, as we say today, but just music, period.

Of course we have come to regard this mode of thinking as problematic, to say the least, and have worked hard to understand the histories of music(s) in different, more inclusive, and more material ways. This miscellany may accordingly, beyond its curiosity value, offer an opportunity to reassess what was at stake in the broad cultural use of "Beethoven" as a magic word for so many years, to observe how the usage changed, and, in the passages from literary narratives, to reckon with how complex or ironic it could become. The passages also suggest what particular pieces came to exemplify the exemplary Beethoven; several recur here, and they are not necessarily the symphonies.

For the most part I have left the material to speak for itself. In a few cases I have added brief observations or explanatory remarks.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

From *Table Talk*.<sup>1</sup>

July 6, 1833: Some music is above me; most music is beneath me. I like Beethoven and Mozart.

October 5, 1830: An ear for music is a very different thing from a taste for music. I have no ear; I could not sing an air to save my life; but I have the intensest delight in music, and can detect good from bad. Naldi, a good fellow, remarked to me once at a concert, that I did not seem much interested in a piece of Rossini's which had just been performed. I said, it sounded like nonsense verses. But I could not contain myself when a thing of Beethoven's followed.

[Coleridge's nephew Henry Nelson Coleridge, who edited the volume of *Table Talk* containing these remarks, adds in a footnote: "His appetite for what he thought good, like Beethoven and Mozart . . . was literally inexhaustible. He told me he could listen to fine music for twelve hours together, and go away *refreshed*. But he required in music either thought or feeling; mere addresses to the sensual ear he could not away with; hence his utter distaste for Rossini, and his reverence for Beethoven and Mozart."]

Honoré de Balzac

From a letter to Mme. Hanska, 7 November 1837.<sup>2</sup>

Yesterday I went to hear Beethoven's symphony in C minor. Beethoven is the only man who makes me know jealousy. I would rather be Beethoven than Rossini or Mozart. There is a divine power in that man. In that *finale*, it seems as though some enchanter raised you into a land of marvels, amid the noblest palaces filled with the treasures of all arts; and there, at his command, gates, like those of the Baptistry, turn on their hinges, letting you see beauties of an

unknown kind—the fairy land of fantasy. There, flutter beings with the beauties of woman and the rainbow-tinted wings of the angel; you are bathed in an upper air, that air which, according to Swedenborg, sings and sheds fragrance, has colour and feeling, which flows to you, and beautifies you!

No, the mind of the writer can never give such joys, because what we paint is finite, fixed, and what Beethoven flings to you is infinite! You understand that I only know the symphony in C minor, and that fragment of the Pastoral symphony which we heard rattled off at Geneva on a second floor—of which I heard little, because two steps away from you stood a young man, who asked me, with straining eyes and a petrified air, if I knew who that beautiful lady was; the which was you, and I was proud as though I were a woman, young, beautiful, and vain.

[Ewelina Hanska was a Polish noblewoman whom Balzac married in 1850 after a long romance, but only five months before his death.]

Ralph Waldo Emerson

From Emerson's Journals (1838).<sup>3</sup>

Swedenborg taught ab intra; and in Music, Beethoven, and whosoever like him grandly renounces all forms, societies, & laws as impediments & lives in, on, & for his genius & guiding Idea. How great the influence of such! How it rebukes, how it invites & raises me!

Herman Melville

[In the extract below, the title character of the novel written immediately after *Moby-Dick* responds to the experience of being haunted by the apparition of a mysterious female face.]

<sup>3</sup>*The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, vol. VII, 1838–1842, ed. A. W. Plumstead and Harrison Hayford (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 158. When Emerson's friend the writer Margaret Fuller was lost in a shipwreck in 1850, Emerson wrote in his journal that "there should be a gathering of her friends & some Beethoven should play the dirge"; Fuller was an ardent Beethoven enthusiast. See Catherine Jones, "The Transatlantic Beethoven Hero," *Symbiosis: A Journal of Anglo-American Literary Relations* 14 (2010), 103–122; <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/8794/cd073bfac45bd77d43ba15e6f6cf11a2467d.pdf>.

<sup>1</sup>*The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, vol. 14: *Table Talk*, Part II, ed. Henry Nelson Coleridge (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), extracts from 244 and 125, respectively.

<sup>2</sup>Honoré de Balzac, *Letters to Mme. Hanska*, trans. Katharine P. Wormeley (Cambridge, MA: Hardy, Pratt & Company, 1900), 459. Via Google Books.

From *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities* (1852).<sup>4</sup>

When once this feeling had him fully, then was the perilous time for Pierre. For supernatural as the feeling was, and appealing to all things ultramontane to his soul; yet was it a delicious sadness to him. Some hazy fairy swam above him in the heavenly ether, and showered down upon him the sweetest pearls of pensiveness. Then he would be seized with a singular impulse to reveal the secret to some one other individual in the world. Only one, not more; he could not hold all this strange fullness in himself. It must be shared. In such an hour it was, that chancing to encounter Lucy (her, whom above all others, he did confidingly adore), she heard the story of the face; nor slept at all that night; nor for a long time freed her pillow completely from wild, Beethoven sounds of distant, waltzing melodies, as of ambiguous fairies dancing on the heath.

Leo Tolstoy

[Long before Tolstoy decided that the “Kreutzer” Sonata is revolting, he showed an apparent fondness for the “Moonlight.”]

From “Family Happiness” (1859).<sup>5</sup>

I had given up my music altogether since the time of our first visit to Petersburg; but now the old piano and the old music tempted me to begin again.

One day I was not well and stayed indoors alone. My husband had taken Katya and Sonya to see the new buildings at Nikolskoye. Tea was laid; I went downstairs and while waiting for them sat down at the piano. I opened the “Moonlight sonata” and began to play. There was no one within sight or sound, the windows were open over the garden, and the familiar sounds floated through the room with a solemn sadness. At the end of the first movement I looked round instinctively to the corner where he used once to sit and listen to my playing. He was not there; his chair, long unmoved, was still in its place; through the window I

could see a lilac bush against the light of the setting sun; the freshness of evening streamed in through the open windows. I rested my elbows on the piano and covered my face with both hands; and so I sat for a long time, thinking. I recalled with pain the irrevocable past, and timidly imagined the future. But for me there seemed to be no future, no desires at all and no hopes. “Can life be over for me?” I thought with horror; then I looked up, and, trying to forget and not to think, I began playing the same movement over again. “Oh, God!” I prayed, “Forgive me if I have sinned, or restore to me all that once blossomed in my heart, or teach me what to do and how to live now.” There was a sound of wheels on the grass and before the steps of the house; then I heard cautious and familiar footsteps pass along the veranda and cease; but my heart no longer replied to the sound. When I stopped playing the footsteps were behind me and a hand was laid on my shoulder.

“How clever of you to think of playing that!” he said.

I said nothing.

“Have you had tea?” he asked.

I shook my head without looking at him—I was unwilling to let him see the signs of emotion on my face.

“They’ll be here immediately,” he said; “the horse gave trouble, and they got out on the high road to walk home.”

“Let us wait for them,” I said, and went out to the veranda, hoping that he would follow; but he asked about the children and went upstairs to see them. Once more his presence and simple kindly voice made me doubt if I had really lost anything. What more could I wish? “He is kind and gentle, a good husband, a good father; I don’t know myself what more I want.” I sat down under the veranda awning on the very bench on which I had sat when we became engaged. The sun had set, it was growing dark. . . . From time to time the nightingales called to one another, and I could hear them flitting restlessly from bush to bush. Again this spring a nightingale had tried to build in a bush under the window, and I heard her fly off across the avenue when I went into the veranda. From there she whistled once and then stopped; she, too, was expecting the rain.

LAWRENCE  
KRAMER  
Beethoven  
at 250

<sup>4</sup>From Book 3, section 2, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/34970/34970-h/34970-h.htm>.

<sup>5</sup>Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, <http://www.magister.msk.ru/library/tolstoy/english/tols119e.htm>.

George Eliot/Willa Cather

George Eliot, from a letter of 7 October 1859, to Charles Lewes, son of Eliot's partner George Henry Lewes.<sup>6</sup>

I wish you could have seen to-day, as I did, the delicate spinal cord of a dragon-fly—like a tiny thread with tiny beads on it—which your father had just dissected! He is so wonderfully clever now at the dissection of these delicate things, and has attained this cleverness entirely by devoted practice during the last three years. I hope *you* have some of his resolution and persistent regularity in work. I think you have, if I may judge from your application to music, which I am always glad to read of in your letters. I was a very idle practiser, and I often regret now that when I had abundant time and opportunity for hours of piano playing, I used them so little. I have about eighteen Sonatas and Symphonies of Beethoven, I think, but I shall be delighted to find that you can play them better than I can. I am very sensitive to blunders and wrong notes, and instruments out of tune; but I have never played much from ear, though I used to play from memory a great deal. The other evening Mr. Pigott, whom you remember, Mr. Redford, another friend of your father's, and Mr. Wilkie Collins, dined with us, and we had a charming musical evening: Mr. Pigott has a delicious tenor voice, and Mr. Redford a fine baritone. The latter sings "Adelaide," that exquisite song of Beethoven's, which I should like you to learn.

[Eliot elsewhere calls "Adelaide" "that ne plus ultra of passionate song." Willa Cather picks up the same thread in *The Song of the Lark* [1915]: The aptly named A. Wunsch [A Wish] inscribes a score of Gluck's *Orpheus* to his young pupil, the novel's protagonist, Thea Kronborg, who goes on to become a Wagnerian soprano. Cather said that Thea was based on Lillian Nordica]:

Sitting in the arbor one morning, under the ripe grapes and the brown, curling leaves, with a pen and ink on the bench beside him and the

Gluck score on his knee, Wunsch pondered for a long while. . . . He frowned for a moment and looked at the book on his knee. He had thought of a great many appropriate things to write in it, but suddenly he rejected all of them, opened the book, and at the top of the much-engraved title-page he wrote rapidly in purple ink:—

*Einst, O Wunder!*—

A. Wunsch. Moonstone, Colo.  
September 30, 18—

Nobody in Moonstone ever found what Wunsch's first name was. That "A" may have stood for Adam, or August, or even Amadeus; he got very angry if any one asked him. He remained A. Wunsch to the end of his chapter there. When he presented this score to Thea, he told her that in ten years she would either know what the inscription meant, or she would not have the least idea, in which case it would not matter.

[Much later, Thea is asked about the inscribed score, which she has carried with her for years]:

Fred bent over her trunk and picked up something which proved to be a score, clumsily bound. "What's this? Did you ever try to sing this?" He opened it and on the engraved title-page read Wunsch's inscription, "Einst, O Wunder!" He looked up sharply at Thea.

"Wunsch gave me that when he went away. I've told you about him, my old teacher in Moonstone. He loved that opera."

Fred went toward the fireplace, the book under his arm, singing softly:—

*Einst, O Wunder, entbluht auf meinem Grabe,  
Eine Blume der Asche meines Herzens.*

"You have no idea at all where he is, Thea?" He leaned against the mantel and looked down at her.

"No, I wish I had. He may be dead by this time. That was five years ago, and he used himself hard. . . ."

[Fred] dropped the score into the trunk. "You are taking that with you?"

"Surely I am. I haven't so many keepsakes that I can afford to leave that. I haven't got many that I value so highly."

<sup>6</sup>*Life of George Eliot: As Related in Her Letters and Journals*, ed. John Walter Cross (New York: T. Y. Crowell, 1884), 315 and 396, respectively. Via Google Books.

[Cather does not bother to identify the piece that Wunsch has cited; she simply trusts her readers to recognize it as “that ne plus ultra of passionate song,” Beethoven’s “Adelaide.” “Adelaide” was also a favorite of Sir Charles Hallé, who figures in the next extract.]

John Ruskin

[Ruskin once said that Beethoven “always sounds to me like the upsetting of bags of nails, with here and there an also dropped hammer.” The almost-polite letter below is perhaps more revealing if less colorful. It concerns an arrangement of “Home, Sweet Home,” with variations, by Sigismund Thalberg, which Sir Charles Hallé had played, reluctantly, as an encore to a program specifically meant for Ruskin to sample “what was most great and beautiful.” Ruskin preferred the arrangement—by far—to an unidentified piano piece by Beethoven.]

From a letter to Sir Charles Hallé, 3 December 1864.<sup>7</sup>

Dear Mr. Hallé, My “children” tell me you were sorry because I liked that “Home S. H.” better than Beethoven, having expected better sympathy from me. But how could you with all your knowledge of your art, and of men’s minds? Believe me, you cannot have sympathy from any untaught person, respecting the higher noblenesses of composition. If I were with you a year, you could make me feel then I am quite capable of doing so, were I taught but the utmost you ought ever to hope from a musically-illiterate person is honesty and modesty. I do not should not expect you to sympathize with me about a bit of Titian, but I know that you would, if I had a year’s teaching of you, and I know that you would never tell me you liked it, or fancy you liked it, to please me.

But I want to tell you, nevertheless, why I liked that H. S. H. I do not care about the air of it, I have no doubt it is what you say it is sickly and shallow. But I did care about hearing a million of low notes in perfect cadence and succession

of sweetness. I never recognised before so many notes in a given brevity of moment, all sweet and helpful. I have often heard glorious harmonies and inventive and noble succession of harmonies, but I never in my life heard a variation like that.

Also, I had not before been close enough to see your hands, and the invisible velocity was wonderful to me, quite unspeakably, merely as a human power.

You must not therefore think I only cared for the bad music but it is quite true that I don’t understand Beethoven, and I fear I never shall have time to learn to do so.

Matthew Arnold

From “Epilogue to Lessing’s *Laocoon*” (1867).<sup>8</sup>

Profound yet touching, sweet yet strong,  
Hath risen Goethe’s, Wordsworth’s song;  
Yet even I (and none will bow  
Deeper to these) must needs allow,  
They yield us not, to soothe our pains,  
Such multitude of heavenly strains  
As from the kings of sound are blown,—  
Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn.  
.....  
“*Miserere, Domine!*”  
The words are uttered, and they flee.  
Deep is their penitential moan,  
Mighty their pathos, but ’tis gone.  
They have declared the spirit’s sore,  
Sore load, and words can do no more.  
Beethoven takes them then,—those two  
Poor, bounded words,—and makes them new;  
Infinite makes them, makes them young;  
Transplants them to another tongue,  
Where they can now, without constraint,  
Pour all the soul of their complaint,  
And roll adown a channel large  
The wealth divine they have in charge.  
Page after page of music turn,  
And still they live, and still they burn,  
Eternal, passion-fraught, and free,—  
*Miserere, Domine!*

[This extract is particularly intriguing because the music it refers to may not exist. Arnold could have heard the *Missa solemnis* in

<sup>7</sup>*Life and Letters of Sir Charles Hallé; Being an Autobiography (1819–1860) with Correspondence and Diaries*, ed. C. E. Hallé and Marie Hallé (London: May and May, 1896), [https://archive.org/stream/lifelettersofsir00halluoft/lifelettersofsir00halluoft\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/lifelettersofsir00halluoft/lifelettersofsir00halluoft_djvu.txt).

<sup>8</sup><https://www.bartleby.com/254/123.html>.

London, and his "*Miserere, Domine!*" could be a paraphrase of "*Miserere nobis*"; that would fit with Beethoven's treatment of the latter phrase in the Agnus Dei of the mass. Or Arnold could be Latinizing "*Kyrie eleison.*" Or he could just be making the whole thing up.]

Henry James

From the uncollected story "Guest's Confession" (1872).<sup>9</sup>

She confessed to a painful impression that something was wrong [with her father]. He had been out of spirits for many days before his return to town; nothing indeed but mental distress could have affected his health, for he had a perfect constitution. "If it comes to that," she went on, after a long silence, and looking at me with an almost intimate confidence, "I wish he would give up business altogether. All the business in the world, for a man of his open, joyous temper, doesn't pay for an hour's depression. I can't bear to sit by and see him embittered and spoiled by this muddle of stocks and shares. Nature made him a happy man; I insist on keeping him so. We are quite rich enough, and we need nothing more. He tries to persuade me that I have expensive tastes, but I've never spent money but to please him. I have a lovely little dream which I mean to lay before him when he comes back; it's very cheap, like all dreams, and more practicable than most. He's to give up business and take me abroad. We're to settle down quietly somewhere in Germany, in Italy, I don't care where, and I'm to study music seriously. I'm never to marry; but as he grows to be an old man, he's to sit by a window, with his cigar, looking out on the Arno or the Rhine, while I play Beethoven and Rossini."

From *Portrait of a Lady* (Houghton Mifflin, 1881).

Original version.<sup>10</sup>

The lady at the piano played remarkably well. She was playing something of Beethoven's—Isabel knew not what, but she recognized

Beethoven—and she touched the piano softly and discreetly, but with evident skill. Her touch was that of an artist; Isabel sat down noiselessly on the nearest chair and waited till the end of the piece. When it was finished she felt a strong desire to thank the player, and rose from her seat to do so, while at the same time the lady at the piano turned quickly round, as if she had become aware of her presence.

"That is very beautiful, and your playing makes it more beautiful still," said Isabel, with all the young radiance with which she usually uttered a truthful rapture. "You don't think I disturbed Mr. Touchett, then?" the musician answered, as sweetly as this compliment deserved. "The house is so large, and his room so far away, that I thought I might venture—especially as I played just—just *du bout des doigts.*"

"She is a Frenchwoman," Isabel said to herself; "she says that as if she were French." And this supposition made the stranger more interesting to our speculative heroine. "I hope my uncle is doing well," Isabel added. "I should think that to hear such lovely music as that would really make him feel better."

The lady gave a discriminating smile. "I am afraid there are moments in life when even Beethoven has nothing to say to us. We must admit, however, that they are our worst moments."

"I am not in that state now," said Isabel. "On the contrary, I should be so glad if you would play something more."

Revised version (New York edition, 1908).

The lady at the piano played remarkably well. She was playing something of Schubert's—Isabel knew not what, but recognized Schubert—and she touched the piano with a discretion of her own. It showed skill, it showed feeling; Isabel sat down noiselessly on the nearest chair and waited till the end of the piece. When it was finished she felt a strong desire to thank the player, and rose from her seat to do so, while at the same time the stranger turned quickly round, as if but just aware of her presence.

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<sup>9</sup>*Atlantic Monthly*, October-November 1872.

<sup>10</sup>Both texts via Google Books; the passage appears in chapter 18.

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"I'm not in that state now then," said Isabel. "On the contrary I should be so glad if you would play something more."

Robert Browning

From "Of Pacchiarotto, and How He Worked in Distemper" (1876).

So, dance away, boys, dust my jacket,  
Bang drum and blow fife—ay, and rattle  
Your brushes, for that's half the battle!  
Don't trample the grass,—hocus-pocus  
With grime my Spring snowdrop and crocus,—  
And, what with your rattling and tinkling,  
Who knows but you give me an inkling  
How music sounds, thanks to the jangle  
Of regular drum and triangle?  
Whereby, tap-tap, chink-chink, 'tis proven  
I break rule as bad as Beethoven.  
"That chord now—a groan or a grunt is 't?"  
Schumann's self was no worse contrapuntist.  
No ear! or if ear, so tough-gristled—  
He thought that he sung while he whistled!

William James

From "The Sentiment of Rationality" (1879).<sup>11</sup>

A Beethoven string quartet is truly, as someone has said, a scraping of horses' tails on cats'

bowels, and may be exhaustively described in such terms; but the application of this description in no way precludes the simultaneous applicability of an entirely different description.

From *Principles of Psychology* (1890).

"*The auditory type*," says M. A. Binet, "*appears to be rarer than the visual*." Persons of this type imagine what they think of in the language of sound. In order to remember a lesson they impress upon their mind, not the look of the page, but the sound of the words. They reason, as well as remember, by ear. In performing a mental addition they repeat verbally the names of the figures, and add, as it were, the sounds, without any thought of the graphic signs. Imagination also takes the auditory form. "When I write a scene," said Legouvé to Scribe, "I *hear*; but you see. In each phrase which I write, the voice of the personage who speaks strikes my ear. *Vous, qui êtes le théâtre même*, your actors walk, gesticulate before your eyes; I am a *listener*, you a *spectator*."—"Nothing more true," said Scribe; "do you know where I am when I write a piece? In the middle of the parterre." It is clear that the *pure audile*, seeking to develop only a single one of his faculties, may, like the pure visualizer, perform astounding feats of memory—Mozart, for example, noting from memory the *Miserere* of the Sistine Chapel after two hearings; the deaf Beethoven, composing and inwardly repeating his enormous symphonies. On the other hand, the man of auditory type, like the visual, is exposed to serious dangers; for if he lose his auditory images, he is without resource and breaks down completely.

Friedrich Nietzsche

From *The Wanderer and His Shadow* (1879).<sup>12</sup>

From *The Older Art and the Soul of the Present*: Are we to deny those that come after the right to animate . . . older works with their soul? No, for these works can only survive through our giving them our soul and our blood

<sup>11</sup>William James, *The Sentiment of Rationality* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1905), 76. Via Google Books.

<sup>12</sup>Translated by Paul V. Cohn, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/37841/37841-h/37841-h.html>.

alone enables them to speak to *us*. The real "historic" discourse would talk ghostly speech to ghosts. We honor the great artists less by that barren timidity that allows every word, every note to remain intact than by energetic endeavors to aid them continually to a new life.—True, if Beethoven were suddenly to come to life and hear one of his works performed with that modern animation and nervous refinement that bring glory to our masters of execution, he would probably be silent for a long while, uncertain whether he should raise his hand to curse or to bless, but perhaps say at last: "Well, well! That is neither I nor not-I, but a third thing—it seems to me, too, something right, if not just *the* right thing. But you must know yourselves what to do, as in any case it is you who have to listen. As our Schiller says, 'the living man is right.' So have it your own way, and let me go down again."

*Music as a Latecomer in Every Culture.*—Among all the arts that are accustomed to grow on a definite culture-soil and under definite social and political conditions, music is the last plant to come up, arising in the autumn and fading-season of the culture to which it belongs. At the same time, the first signs and harbingers of a new spring are usually already noticeable, and sometimes music, like the language of a forgotten age, rings out into a new, astonished world, and comes too late. In the art of the Dutch and Flemish musicians the soul of the Christian middle ages at last found its fullest tone: their sound-architecture is the posthumous but legitimate and equal sister of Gothic. Not until Handel's music was heard the note of the best in the soul of Luther and his kin, the great Judeo-heroic impulse that created the whole Reformation movement. Mozart first expressed in golden melody the age of Louis XIV and the art of Racine and Claude Lorrain. The eighteenth century—that century of rhapsody, of broken ideals and transitory happiness—only sang itself out in the music of Beethoven and Rossini. A lover of sentimental similes might say that all really important music was a swan-song.—Music is, in fact, not a universal language for all time, as is so often said in its praise, but responds exactly to a particular period and

warmth of emotion which involves a quite definite, individual culture, determined by time and place, as its inner law.

*Beethoven and Mozart.*—Beethoven's music often appears like a deeply emotional meditation on unexpectedly hearing once more a piece long thought to be forgotten, "Tonal Innocence": it is music about music. In the song of the beggar and child in the street, in the monotonous airs of vagrant Italians, in the dance of the village inn or in carnival nights he discovers his melodies. He stores them together like a bee, snatching here and there some notes or a short phrase. To him these are hallowed memories of "the better world," like the ideas of Plato.—Mozart stands in quite a different relation to his melodies. He finds his inspiration not in hearing music but in gazing at life, at the most stirring life of southern lands. He was always dreaming of Italy, when he was not there.

From *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), Book 6, "Peoples and Fatherlands."<sup>13</sup>

The "good old" time is past, it sang itself out in Mozart—how happy are *we* that his *rococo* still speaks to us, that his "good company," his tender enthusiasm, his childish delight in the Chinese and in flourishes, his courtesy of heart, his longing for the elegant, the amorous, the tripping, the tearful, and his belief in the South, can still appeal to *something left* in us! Ah, sometime or other it will be over with it!—but who can doubt that it will be over still sooner with the intelligence and taste for Beethoven! For he was only the last echo of a break and transition in style, and *not*, like Mozart, the last echo of a great European taste which had existed for centuries. Beethoven is the intermediate event between an old mellow soul that is constantly breaking down, and a future over-young soul that is always *coming*; there is spread over his music the twilight of eternal loss and eternal extravagant hope,—the same light in which Europe was bathed when it dreamed with Rousseau, when it danced round the Tree of

<sup>13</sup>Translated by Helen Zimmern (New York: Macmillan 1907), 200–01, 218, respectively. Zimmern translates "Vaterländer" in the section's title as "Countries."

Liberty of the Revolution, and finally almost fell down in adoration before Napoleon. But how rapidly does *this* very sentiment now pale, how difficult nowadays is even the *apprehension* of this sentiment, how strangely does the language of Rousseau, Schiller, Shelley, and Byron sound to our ear, in whom *collectively* the same fate of Europe was able to *speak*, which knew how to *sing* in Beethoven!—

Owing to the morbid estrangement which the nationality-craze has induced and still induces among the nations of Europe, owing also to the short-sighted and hasty-handed politicians, who with the help of this craze, are at present in power, and do not suspect to what extent the disintegrating policy they pursue must necessarily be only an interlude policy—owing to all this, and much else that is altogether unmentionable at present, the most unmistakable signs that *Europe wishes to be one*, are now overlooked, or arbitrarily and falsely misinterpreted. With all the more profound and large-minded men of this century, the real general tendency of the mysterious labour of their souls was to prepare the way for that new *synthesis*, and tentatively to anticipate the European of the future; only in their simulations, or in their weaker moments, in old age perhaps, did they belong to the “fatherlands”—they only rested from themselves when they became “patriots.” I think of such men as Napoleon, Goethe, Beethoven, Stendhal, Heinrich Heine, Schopenhauer: it must not be taken amiss if I also count Richard Wagner among them, about whom one must not let oneself be deceived by his own misunderstandings (geniuses like him have seldom the right to understand themselves).

Émile Zola

From *His Masterpiece* (1886).<sup>14</sup>

Without knowing how, Claude found himself seated at their old table, opposite Gagniere, who was silent. The cafe had not changed. . . . At that hour of night, however, the establishment was getting empty. Three young painters, whom Claude did not know, came to shake hands with

him as they went off; and then there merely remained a petty retired tradesman of the neighborhood, asleep in front of a saucer.

Gagniere, quite at his ease, as if he had been at home, absolutely indifferent to the yawns of the solitary waiter, who was stretching his arms, glanced towards Claude, but without seeing him, for his eyes were dim.

“By the way,” said the latter, “what were you explaining to Mahoudeau this evening? Yes, about the red of a flag turning yellowish amid the blue of the sky. That was it, eh? You are studying the theory of complementary colors.”

But the other did not answer. He took up his glass of beer, set it down again without tasting its contents, and with an ecstatic smile ended by muttering: “Haydn has all the gracefulness of a rhetorician—his is a gentle music, quivering like the voice of a great-grandmother in powdered hair. Mozart, he’s the precursory genius—the first who endowed an orchestra with an individual voice; and those two will live mostly because they created Beethoven. Ah, Beethoven! power and strength amidst serene suffering, Michael Angelo at the tomb of the Medici! A heroic logician, a kneader of human brains; for the symphony, with choral accompaniments, was the starting-point of all the great ones of to-day!”

The waiter, tired of waiting, began to turn off the gas, wearily dragging his feet along as he did so. Mournfulness pervaded the deserted room, dirty with saliva and cigar ends, and reeking of spilt drink; while from the hushed boulevard the only sound that came was the distant blubbing of some drunkard.

Walt Whitman

“Beethoven’s Septette” (*Specimen Days*, 1892).<sup>15</sup>

*Feb. 11, '80.*—At a good concert to-night in the foyer of the opera house, Philadelphia—the band a small but first-rate one. Never did music more sink into and soothe and fill me—never so prove its soul-rousing power, its impossibility of statement. Especially in the rendering of one of Beethoven’s master septettes by the well-chosen and perfectly-combined instruments

<sup>14</sup>Translated by Ernest Alfred Vizetelly, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/15900/15900-h/15900-h.htm>.

<sup>15</sup><https://www.bartleby.com/229/1206.html>.

(violins, viola, clarinet, horn, 'cello and contra-bass,) was I carried away, seeing, absorbing many wonders. Dainty abandon, sometimes as if Nature laughing on a hillside in the sunshine; serious and firm monotonies, as of winds; a horn sounding through the tangle of the forest, and the dying echoes; soothing floating of waves, but presently rising in surges, angrily lashing, muttering, heavy; piercing peals of laughter, for interstices; now and then weird, as Nature herself is in certain moods—but mainly spontaneous, easy, careless—often the sentiment of the postures of naked children playing or sleeping. It did me good even to watch the violinists drawing their bows so masterly—every motion a study. I allow'd myself, as I sometimes do, to wander out of myself. The conceit came to me of a copious grove of singing birds, and in their midst a simple harmonic duo, two human souls, steadily asserting their own pensiveness, joyousness.

[Recalling this passage, E. M. Forster remarks rather snippily: "There is only one Beethoven septet, but this the old boy did not know." But Whitman may have known more than Forster supposed, as the next extract suggests.]

From "Walt Whitman and Music (Personal Reminiscences)," by Aubertine Woodward Moore.<sup>16</sup>

Now the old bard, with heart youthful from unflagging, delighted wonder at life, was ready for me. His first words afforded a surprise.

"Colonel Johnston tells me you are a musician." The vibrant tones of his sonorous tenor-baritone thrilled me. "Do you know Beethoven?"

At my eager assent, he said: "Beethoven had the vision of the new need. He was the forerunner of the American musician of the modern."

He expressed a wish to hear me play something of Beethoven, saying he enjoyed the master even on the piano, which he frankly admitted was not to his liking. My invitation to come to my father's home in Philadelphia, where I commanded a concert grand, was accepted. At parting he handed me a copy of his "Democratic Vistas," which I still possess, with passages he had marked. The

first sentence I saw upon opening the volume was,—

Then music, the combiner, nothing more spiritual, nothing more sensuous, a god, yet completely human, advances, prevails, holds highest place; supplying in certain wants and quarters what nothing else could supply.

The words prepared me for an hour with Walt Whitman and music. He called at my home before many days. I can see him now as he sat in the large red plush easy-chair near the piano, in the attitude of a respectful listener, the high arch of his eyebrows heightening his rapt expression of childlike wonder. His eyes, with their fathomless depths, beneath heavy, drooping lids, wore the look of the seer who sees visions destined to be realized. I felt the presence of a personality, an intellectual Colossus.

At his request I played for him the Beethoven Sonata, *Appassionata*, Op. 57, and it is rather the impression of unspoken thought reflected in his face, which I could not help watching even while I played, than his speech alone that is indelibly imprinted upon my memory. In the fierce warfare of that mighty composition, he told me, he found the conflict between the old and the new in the human soul, as well as in the outer world, a conflict in which the new gains magnificent ascendancy. I was obliged to play the Sonata twice for him during that first visit, and when the glorious Presto was reached the second time he exclaimed:—

Hark! Was ever victory more exultant! The Past is overcome, the Present is triumphant, the Future assured. Were Beethoven with us to-day, what a bard of the new need he would be. Ah, well! If all signs be fulfilled, a greater than he will yet arise.

The same Sonata, Op. 57, was always called for when he came to hear me play. There was one other by the same master for which he often asked, Sonata, Op. 26, with Theme and Variations, Scherzo, Funeral March, and Allegro Finale, a work which I had the privilege of introducing to him. When he asked me what this Sonata said to me, I told him I felt in it the story of a simple, honest life, whose very failures served as stepping-stones to higher things, and the death of whose hopes led to fuller, freer, purer life. The suggestion

<sup>16</sup>*The Christian Register*, 9 September 1915, p. 852.

pleased him, and he discovered something new in Op. 26 each time he heard it.

E. M. Forster

From *A Room with a View* (1908), chapter 3: Music, Violets, and the letter "S."<sup>17</sup>

It so happened that Lucy, who found daily life rather chaotic, entered a more solid world when she opened the piano. She was then no longer either deferential or patronizing; no longer either a rebel or a slave. The kingdom of music is not the kingdom of this world; it will accept those whom breeding and intellect and culture have alike rejected. . . .

She was no dazzling executante; her runs were not at all like strings of pearls, and she struck no more right notes than was suitable for one of her age and situation. Nor was she the passionate young lady, who performs so tragically on a summer's evening with the window open. Passion was there, but it could not be easily labelled; it slipped between love and hatred and jealousy, and all the furniture of the pictorial style. And she was tragical only in the sense that she was great, for she loved to play on the side of Victory. Victory of what and over what—that is more than the words of daily life can tell us. But that some sonatas of Beethoven are written tragic no one can gainsay; yet they can triumph or despair as the player decides, and Lucy had decided that they should triumph.

A very wet afternoon at the Bertolini permitted her to do the thing she really liked, and after lunch she opened the little draped piano. . . . Like every true performer, she was intoxicated by the mere feel of the notes: they were fingers caressing her own; and by touch, not by sound alone, did she come to her desire.

Mr. Beebe, sitting unnoticed in the window, pondered this illogical element in Miss Honeychurch. . . . Among the promised items was "Miss Honeychurch. Piano. Beethoven," and Mr. Beebe was wondering whether it would be Adelaida, or the march of The Ruins of Athens, when his composure was disturbed by

the opening bars of Opus 111. He was in suspense all through the introduction, for not until the pace quickens does one know what the performer intends. With the roar of the opening theme he knew that things were going extraordinarily; in the chords that herald the conclusion he heard the hammer strokes of victory. He was glad that she only played the first movement, for he could have paid no attention to the winding intricacies of the measures of nine-sixteen.

[Forster elsewhere called the beginning of op. 111 a "dive into the abyss." Interestingly enough the celebrated 1985 film version of the novel substitutes the transitional second movement of the "Waldstein" Sonata.]

From "The C Minor of that Life"<sup>18</sup> (1941; the essay's title is an allusion to Robert Browning's poem "Abt Vogler," which imagines Vogler's meditations as he improvises at the organ and concludes:

I feel for the common chord again,  
Sliding by semitones till I sink to the minor,—  
yes,  
And I blunt it into a ninth, and I stand on alien  
ground,  
Surveying awhile the heights I rolled from into  
the deep;  
Which, hark, I have dared and done, for my  
resting-place is found,  
The C Major of this life: so, now I will try to  
sleep.)

Of C minor, the key he has made his own, Beethoven says nothing, so far as I know. He has invested in it deeply. If we lost everything he wrote except what is in this key, we should still have the essential Beethoven, the Beethoven tragic, the Beethoven so excited at the approach of something enormous that he can only just interpret and subdue it. It would be a pity to lose a Beethoven unbuttoned, a Beethoven yodeling, but this musician excited by immensities is unique in the annals of any art. No one has ever been so thrilled by things

<sup>17</sup><https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2641/2641-h/2641-h.htm>.

<sup>18</sup>E. M. Forster, *Two Cheers for Democracy* (London: Edward Arnold, 1951), 119.

so huge, for the vast masses of doom crush the rest of us before we can hope to measure them. Fate knocks at our door; but before the final tap can sound, the flimsy door flies into pieces, and we never learn the sublime rhythm of destruction.

The catalogue of the C minor items is a familiar one. . . . It would be absurd to press for similarities in items so different in intention and in date, but one has in all of them the conviction that Beethoven has found himself, that he is where he most wanted to be, that he is engaged in the pursuit of something outside sound—something which has fused the sinister and the triumphant.

Vladimir Lenin

From a conversation with Maxim Gorky (1918).<sup>19</sup>

“I know the *Appassionata* inside out and yet I am willing to listen to it every day. It is wonderful, superhuman music. On hearing it I proudly, maybe somewhat naively, think: See! people are able to produce such marvels!” He then winked, laughed and added sadly: “I’m often unable to listen to music, it gets on my nerves, I would like to stroke my fellow beings and whisper sweet nothings in their ears for being able to produce such beautiful things in spite of the abominable hell they are living in. However, today one shouldn’t caress anybody—for people will only bite off your hand; strike, without pity, although theoretically we are against any kind of violence. Umph, it is, in fact, an infernally difficult task!”

Virginia Woolf

From *The Voyage Out* (1915), chapter 2.<sup>20</sup>

To feel anything strongly was to create an abyss between oneself and others who feel strongly perhaps but differently. It was far better

to play the piano and forget all the rest. The conclusion was very welcome. Let these odd men and women—her aunts, the Hunts, Ridley, Helen, Mr. Pepper, and the rest—be symbols,—featureless but dignified, symbols of age, of youth, of motherhood, of learning, and beautiful often as people upon the stage are beautiful. It appeared that nobody ever said a thing they meant, or ever talked of a feeling they felt, but that was what music was for. Reality dwelling in what one saw and felt, but did not talk about, one could accept a system in which things went round and round quite satisfactorily to other people, without often troubling to think about it, except as something superficially strange. Absorbed by her music she accepted her lot very complacently, blazing into indignation perhaps once a fortnight, and subsiding as she subsided now. Inextricably mixed in dreamy confusion, her mind seemed to enter into communion, to be delightfully expanded and combined with the spirit of the whitish boards on deck, with the spirit of the sea, with the spirit of Beethoven Op. 112, even with the spirit of poor William Cowper there at Olney. Like a ball of thistledown it kissed the sea, rose, kissed it again, and thus rising and kissing passed finally out of sight. The rising and falling of the ball of thistledown was represented by the sudden droop forward of her own head, and when it passed out of sight she was asleep.

[William Cowper, 1731–1800, is linked to Beethoven’s brief cantata “Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage” by a narrative of suffering and release. Cowper wrote the lyrics of some of the best-known hymns in English while he was in residence at Olney, where, however, he was also “becalmed” by a bout of insanity from which he took more than a year to recover.]

From chapter 22.

While Rachel played the piano, Terence sat near her, engaged, as far as the occasional writing of a word in pencil testified, in shaping the world as it appeared to him now that he and Rachel were going to be married. . . . There she was, swaying enthusiastically over her music, quite forgetful of him,—but he liked that quality in her. He liked the impersonality which it

<sup>19</sup>Quoted in Georg Lukács, *Lenin: A Study on the Unity of His Thought*, trans. Nicholas Jacobs (Vienna: Verlag der Arbeiterbuchhandlung, 1924; London: New Left Books, 1970), <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lukacs/works/xxxx/lenin.htm>. After consulting several other translations, I have replaced the word “ethereal” in the quotation with “superhuman.”

<sup>20</sup><https://www.gutenberg.org/files/144/144-h/144-h.htm>.

produced in her. At last, having written down a series of little sentences, with notes of interrogation attached to them, he observed aloud, "Women'—under the heading Women I've written:

"Not really vainer than men. Lack of self-confidence at the base of most serious faults. Dislike of own sex traditional, or founded on fact? Every woman not so much a rake at heart, as an optimist, because they don't think.' What do you say, Rachel?" He paused with his pencil in his hand and a sheet of paper on his knee.

Rachel said nothing. Up and up the steep spiral of a very late Beethoven sonata she climbed, like a person ascending a ruined staircase, energetically at first, then more laboriously advancing her feet with effort until she could go no higher and returned with a run to begin at the very bottom again.

"Again, it's the fashion now to say that women are more practical and less idealistic than men, also that they have considerable organising ability but no sense of honour'—query, what is meant by masculine term, honour?—what corresponds to it in your sex? Eh?"

Attacking her staircase once more, Rachel again neglected this opportunity of revealing the secrets of her sex. She had, indeed, advanced so far in the pursuit of wisdom that she allowed these secrets to rest undisturbed; it seemed to be reserved for a later generation to discuss them philosophically.

Crashing down a final chord with her left hand, she exclaimed at last, swinging round upon him:

"No, Terence, it's no good; here am I, the best musician in South America, not to speak of Europe and Asia, and I can't play a note because of you in the room interrupting me every other second."

From *Moments of Being* (1977).<sup>21</sup>

I feel that I have had a blow; but it is not, as I thought as a child, simply a blow from an enemy

hidden behind the cotton wool of daily life; it is or will become a revelation of some order; it is a token of some real thing behind appearances; and I make it real by putting it into words. . . . From this I reach what I might call a philosophy; at any rate it is a constant idea of mine; that behind the cotton wool is hidden a pattern; that we—I mean all human beings—are connected with this; that the whole world is a work of art; that we are parts of the work of art. *Hamlet* or a Beethoven quartet is the truth about this vast mass that we call the world. But there is no Shakespeare, there is no Beethoven; certainly and emphatically there is no God; we are the words; we are the music; we are the thing itself.

[Woolf's diaries record that her decision on how to end her novel *The Waves*, including its final words, came to her one evening while she was listening to a Beethoven quartet. Her investment in the quartets echoes that of George Eliot, who attended performances of them every chance she got; Woolf and Eliot together might be taken to exemplify Proust's observation, in the second volume of his novel, that "it was Beethoven's Quartets themselves [the Twelfth, Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth] that devoted half a century to forming, fashioning and enlarging a public for Beethoven's Quartets, marking in this way, like every great work of art, an advance if not in artistic merit at least in intellectual society, largely composed to-day of what was not to be found when the work first appeared, that is to say of persons capable of enjoying it."<sup>22</sup>]

Ellen Glasgow

From *Barren Ground* (1925).<sup>23</sup>

She sat in the concert hall waiting for the music to begin. At first she had tried to make out the names on the program, desisting presently because they confused her. Beethoven. Bach. Chopin. She went over the others again, stumbling because she could make nothing of

<sup>21</sup>Woolf, *Moments of Being: Unpublished Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Jeanne Schulkind (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977), 72.

<sup>22</sup>Translated by C. K. Scott Moncrieff as *In a Budding Grove*, <https://www.planetebook.com/free-ebooks/within-a-budding-grove.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup><http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks07/0700091h.html>.

the syllables. A-p-p-a-s-s-i-o-n-a-t-a. What did the strange word mean? P-a-t-h-é-tique—that she could dimly grasp.

Suddenly, while she struggled over the letters, the music floated toward her from the cool twilight of the distance. This was not music, she thought in surprise, but the sound of a storm coming up through the tall pines at Old Farm. She had heard this singing melody a thousand times, on autumn afternoons, in the woods. Then, as it drew nearer, the harmony changed from sound into sensation; and from pure sensation, rippling in wave after wave like a river, it was merged and lost in her consciousness.

In the beginning, while she sat there, rapt in startled apprehension, she thought of innumerable things she had forgotten; detached incidents, impressions which glittered sharply, edged with light, against the mosaic of her recollections. . . . She felt the music playing on her nerves as the wind plays on a harp; she felt it shatter her nerves like broken string, and sweep on crashing, ploughing through the labyrinth of her soul. Down there, in the deep below the depths of her being, she felt it tearing her vitals. Down there, in the buried jungle, where her thoughts had never penetrated, she felt it destroying the hidden roots of her life. . . . Now it was dying away. Now it was returning. Something that she had thought dead was coming to life again. Something that she had buried out of sight under the earth was pushing upward in anguish. . . . Suddenly she was pierced by a thousand splinters of crystal sound. Little quivers of light ran over her. Beads of pain broke out on her forehead and her lips. She clenched her hands together, and forced her body back into her chair. "I've got to stand it. No matter what it does to me, I've got to stand it."

[Glasgow's scene of initiation by Beethoven's music is one of several that appear in this miscellany, with two revealing added elements: the way the unintelligible letters that comprise the music's names come to make sense only when the music reinscribes their meaning directly on the senses; and the post-Freudian metaphors of a repressed—"buried"—unconscious depth of being that only the music can bring to light—the piercing light of splintered crystal sound.]

Marcel Proust

From *Swann's Way* (1913).<sup>24</sup>

This passage makes an interesting contrast to the earlier quotation from Tolstoy's "Family Happiness." Proust places the "Moonlight" Sonata almost exactly where Tolstoy had placed the "Kreutzer" in the novella named for it.

[Swann] could see the pianist sitting down to play the Moonlight Sonata, and the grimaces of Mme. Verdurin, in terrified anticipation of the wrecking of her nerves by Beethoven's music. "Idiot, liar!" he shouted, "and a creature like that imagines that she's fond of *Art!*" She would say to Odette, after deftly insinuating a few words of praise for Forcheville, as she had so often done for himself: "You can make room for M. de Forcheville there, can't you, Odette?" . . . "In the dark! Codfish! Pander!" . . . "Pander" was the name he applied also to the music which would invite them to sit in silence, to dream together, to gaze in each other's eyes, to feel for each other's hands. He felt that there was much to be said, after all, for a sternly censorious attitude towards the arts, such as Plato adopted, and Bossuet, and the old school of education in France.

Ludwig Wittgenstein

From *Culture and Value*.

There are problems I never get anywhere near, which do not lie in my path or are not part of my world. Problems of the intellectual world of the West that Beethoven (and perhaps Goethe to a certain extent) tackled and wrestled with, but which no philosopher has ever confronted (perhaps Nietzsche passed by them). And perhaps they are lost as far as Western philosophy is concerned, i.e. no one will be there capable of experiencing, and hence describing, the progress of this culture as an epic. Or more precisely, it just no longer is an epic, or is so only for someone looking at it from outside, which is perhaps what Beethoven did with prevision (as Spengler hints somewhere). It might be said that civilization can only have its epic poets in advance.

<sup>24</sup>Translated by C. K. Scott Moncrieff, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/7178/7178-h/7178-h.htm>.

Just as a man cannot report his own death when it happens.

[Wittgenstein regarded Beethoven as one of a small group of exemplary figures—all men, alas—who represented the West before its passage into what Oswald Spengler’s widely read book of 1918 announced: *The Decline of the West*. Echoing Spengler’s pessimism, Wittgenstein is reported to have told this anecdote in 1930: “I was walking about in Cambridge and passed a bookshop, and in the window were portraits of Russell, Freud and Einstein. A little further on, in a music shop, I saw portraits of Beethoven, Schubert and Chopin. Comparing these portraits I felt intensely the terrible degeneration that had come over the human spirit in the course of only a hundred years.”<sup>25</sup>]

From a diary entry (1931).<sup>26</sup>

Beethoven is a realist through and through; I mean his music is *totally true*, I want to say: he sees life *totally* as it is & then he elevates it. It is totally religion and not at all religious poetry. That’s why he can console in real pain while others fail & make one say to oneself: but it is not how it is. He doesn’t lull one into a beautiful dream but redeems the world by viewing it like a hero, as it is.

Sigmund Freud—after a fashion.

The sketch signed “Kraft” was published in a Viennese daily newspaper on the occasion of Freud’s eightieth birthday in 1936 (plate 1). Freud clipped a copy for himself; it is preserved



Plate 1: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Sigmund Freud Papers: Subject File, 1856–1988; Birthday celebrations; 1936; Folder 2.

<sup>25</sup>*Recollections of Wittgenstein*, ed. Rush Rhees and Norman Malcolm (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 112.

<sup>26</sup>Quoted in Ilse Somavilla, “Wittgenstein’s Coded Remarks in the Context of His Philosophizing,” in *Wittgenstein after*

in the Library of Congress in the Freud Papers.<sup>27</sup> The image shows an anxious waiter bearing droopy flowers and carrying what seems to be a copy of *The Interpretation of Dreams* in his back pocket. (It seems about to fall out—another secret unveiled.) Freud stares at the hapless waiter rather sternly, seemingly more interested in ordering from the menu than with the pile of congratulatory letters piled up in front of the table or with the uncut birthday cake on the tabletop.

The text is a parody of the “Ode to Joy.” It is essentially untranslatable because it reproduces exactly the rhythm of Beethoven’s setting of Schiller’s verses:

Sigmund Freud, du Götterfunken,  
Sohn aus Analysium,  
Statt mit Würden kannst du prunkeln  
Um so mehr mit deinem Ruhm.

Unter den bewusst Beschränkten  
Schränkt man dein Genie zwar ein,  
Aber dass sie dich verdrängten,  
Wird doch nur ein Wunschtraum sein.

---

*His Nachlass*, ed. Nuno Venturinha and Michael Beaney (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 34. Italics in original.  
<sup>27</sup><http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/ms004017.mss39990.01334>.

Libidinerei beiseite,  
Anerkannt wird weit und breit,  
Ungezählte schon befreite  
Seelen-Freud von Seelenleid.

Jeder Gutgesinnte wird dir  
Heute huldigen wie wir,  
Und vor allem gratuliert dir,  
Der Neurosenkavalier.

The unstated but obvious pun is a play on Freud’s name; the “Ode to Joy” becomes an “Ode to Freud.” Accordingly Joy, Freude, daughter of Elysium, becomes Freud, son of Analysium—the coinage not only an ad hoc homophone but also a play on the curative promise of psychoanalysis. The third stanza develops the idea and renews the pun: for countless people, psychic joy, *Seelen-Freud*, has been liberated from psychic pain, *Seelenleid*. The verses playfully rehearse various psychoanalytic terms throughout: libido, repression, the wish-dream. Finally, in one last musical stroke, Beethoven exits and Richard Strauss takes over the waiter’s bouquet (*Strauss* meaning “bouquet” when it does not mean “ostrich”). Freud becomes “Der Neurosenkavalier” and modern music, together with modern libido, picks up the tune. 