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A Pathway Towards Music Art: the "Meloethics". – Some Connections with the Phenomenology of Life[1] –

Listening…Music…
Listening to an *art of music*'s work!
Something important happens to us.
Why?
Because our soul is touched and moved at its deepest levels.

In contact with *music*, a spiritual tumult invades our entire being; and we are revealed to ourselves in a new and previously unknown way. Face to face with the harmonious sounds – giving music the status of an artistic "text" – we find opportunities – maybe the best possible – to unfold our unique capacity to participate in, understand and even interpret *life's expanse*. We put ourselves in the state of better self-knowledge and comprehension, by that hermeneutic polarity of "proximity and detachment" – according to Paul Ricoeur[2]. When we listen to *music*, each of us gives ourselves the chance to live the "absolute moment" – meaning, "at the same time, self-denial and self-mediation. Everything that tears one away from anything restores the whole of totality of "being", the subject installs himself in the profundity of "meaning's continuity"[3].

In listening to *music*, the human being experiences *universal communication*, reaching the root of the *major ethical truth of life* – some of the "Logos of

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[1] Lecture sustained at St. Joseph College, West Hartford – Connecticut, USA, on April 18, 2005, in the presence of Professor Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, as honourable guest.
[2] see Paul Ricoeur, *Du texte à l'action. Essais d'herméneutique, II*, Editions du Seuil, 1986.
[3] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Warheit und Methode*, Romanian translation, *Adevăr și Metodă*, Bucharest, Editura Teora, 2001, pp.106; 109.

Life", the center-concept in Phenomenology of Life elaborated by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka[4].

"Two plans": the "first" and the "second" – using Nicolai Hartmann's aesthetical terms – are working together, in the accomplishment of *musical art*, within the intuition and comprehension process to create a unitary view of this complex phenomenon. Through contact with an audio-sensitive matter, the listener deciphers a spiritual content molded into an artistic form. This content, its sense, and the force by which a *musical work* preserves and increases its identity over time are revealed through examination of the "relation between these plans", through analysis of the whole *musical experience* in their "pure inner, autonomous connection"[5]. So we can speak about the relation between the material elements of the structure of musical language and what is "unreal" behind the spiritual elements of the plan.

Hence, a question comes into profile: What is the reason for *music's life*? What is its genesis, development, strength; actually, its undoubted value throughout its evolution over the millennia?

We maintain that the *ethos* constitutes its great existence; the *ethos* – "rather than the eidos", speaking in terms of Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka[6], which assures even the "ontique-ontologique" differentiation (acknowledged by Martin Heidegger in his philosophy of Being). In discussion is the intimate relation between manifestation, external phenomenally, and intelligibility, internal foundation, essence.

Beyond the empirical domain, that of the organized sounds in melody, harmony, and rhythm, let us examine the substratum of interiority within which a plenitude of *ethical values* makes their home. Consequently, we set up a new concept: the *meloethics* [7]- a complex philosophical construct, a structural-dynamical unity of the components (from Greek): "mélos" / "μελος" = song, melody; by extension: music; and "èthiké" / "ηθικη" = moral, which belongs to ethics; herein, the system of moral values.

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[4] see Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, *Logos and Life*, Books 1–4, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988–2000.

[5] Nicolai Hartmann, *Ästhetik*, Romanian translation, *Estetica*, Bucharest, Editura Univers, 1974, pp.104-105.

[6] cf. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, *Logos and Life*, Book 4: *Impetus and Equipoise in the Life-Strategies of Reason*, Dordrecht / Boston / London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000, pp. 525-568.

[7] see Carmen Cozma, *Meloeticul. Eseu semiotic asupra valorilor morale ale creaţiei artistice muzicale*, Iaşi, Editura Junimea, 1996; and *Ethos of Music Art. Essays in Moral Philosophy*, Iaşi, Junimea Publishing House, 2000.

The "meloethics" supposes the coexistence of both the previously mentioned elements, by the recognition of each identity in part, as well as their connection on the one hand, and the active relation between them and the whole, on the other hand. Fully speaking, the "*meloethics*" imposes its effect on us by the musical "creation-performance-audition" totality.

The entire history of musical art offers good arguments for the interaction of "musical creation" and "moral values". We discover its beginning in the framework of the Ancient Greeks" *theory of musical ethos* that has influenced the entire further evolution of any attempt to theorize the art of harmony. A valuable conception is one which focuses on art as *mimesis* / μιμησις, *poiesis* / ποιησις, and *catharsis* / καθαρσις, more explicitly, on art as *imitation, creation*, and *purification*[8].

The Pythagorean doctrine of the "music of the spheres" and the idea of universal harmony expressed by the concept of "number", further developed by Plato and Aristotle, by the Peripatheticeans and Stoics – like a theory which admits an immediate correspondence between the phenomenon of music and the movements of the soul – have recognized the peculiar *moral expression and power of music*[9].

Our concept, the "*meloethics*", enlightens us even about the initial term used to design the "music"; namely: "hàrmonía" / "αρμονια"[10]. It is a significant term, brought to perfection by the Socratean ideal regarding "consciousness as Virtue". In his turn, Plato, speaking about "authentic music", that is claimed by free men, has defined harmony as the expression of a purified love, of the most noble impulses of human being to Virtue. Later, according to Immanuel Kant, through music the dignity and the rational nature of man are expressed. Its cultivation must, therefore, be in concord with the cultivation of the cardinal virtues: "courage", "temperance", "justice", and "wisdom". Otherwise, among the Ancients, Aristotle was inquiring "is not music rather a way to reach Virtue?"[11].

Briefly, the original notion used for music, "hàrmonía" / "αρμονια", must be taken in the sense of "equilibrium", "symmetry", "measure", "order", carrying to a complete *moral significance for virtue*.

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[8] see Aristotle, *Poetics*.

[9] see, for example, Jules Combarieu, *Histoire de la musique*, Tome I, Paris, Librairie Armand Colin, 1930; Th.Reinach, *La musique grecque*, Paris, Payot, 1926; Curt Sachs, *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World*, New York, W.W.Norton & Comp., 1969.

[10] cf. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and Doctrines of Eminent Philosophers*.

[11] Aristotle, *Politics*, Romanian translation, *Politica*, Bucharest, Editura Cultura Naţională, 1924, pp. 196-197.

We could extend our understanding of the *ethos* contained in the most abstract and free art by resorting to interesting examples from philosophical thinking. But for the moment we will just emphasize some coordinates in support of the concept of "*meloethics*"- a veritable pathway for anyone to appropriate the universe of *music*.

The statement of the "*meloethics*" across the centuries has a distinctive sign through the manifestation of the aspiration to an *ideal of existence*, by working up the *feeling of life* to a superior level. And this is, foremost, an *ethical ideal* defining even the ontology of musical creation under the auspices of "making and re-making *human* unity"[12].

Generally, all *musical works* can be related to *universal-human values*, conceived in their *ethical-philosophical determinants*, in the horizon of: "utility", "pleasure", "happiness"; and, correspondingly, belonging to three *ethical doctrines*: Utilitarianism, Hedonism and Eudaemonism. Thus, it discloses something of the deep meaning of the "human", as aspiration, but also as settling down in life; and, consequently, a way into the occurrence called "the awarding of sense to our existence" and its achievement[13].

In the area of axiology, *moral values* are brought into bold relief by the theory of artistic musical phenomena, linking not only to the *specificity of musical art*, but also to the *source*, the *genesis*, the *existence of musical works*, to their *message* and *effect*; also, to the *creative process*, the *intention* and the *personality of the subject able to compose music*; and, last but not least, to the *capacities of the subject who listens to music*.

Certainly, our primary interest is in the *positive ethical values* that cannot be separated from the "humanness" of man and human culture; values like *love* and *communion*, *joy of living*, *dignity, devotion, wisdom, freedom* and *happiness*, the *aspiration into Good and Beauty, into harmony and order, into Logos* – "the Logos of Life" from Tymieniecka's phenomenology.

Having a real power to convey even the Idea, the "being", as the "royal art" – to use Schopenhauer's terminology[14] –, *music* reveals to us the profound principle of existence, making to hear *humanity*'s voice, the *ideal* of the supreme *general-human fulfillment*. The art of harmonious sounds is developing in connection with the cultural and moral evolution of man.

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[12] Edmond Buchet, *Connaissance de la musique*, Paris, Editions Corrêa, 1940, p. 246.

[13] We wrote about this issue in our study *Musical Art as Enlightenment and Understanding through Ethos: The Experience of the "Human"*, in Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (ed.), *Life-Truth in its Various Perspectives*, Analecta Husserliana, volume LXXVI, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht / Boston / London, 2002, pp. 151-158.

[14] cf. Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, volume II.

It is accompanying him with the highest degree of accuracy, in what was always most significant to him: *his humanness*, specifically, in the felt tension between what *he "is"* and what *"he should be"* and *he "would like to be"*.

In *music* we can discover the creative and moral *liberty* which is one of the great developments of our *human condition*. Here, we find a great example for Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka's philosophy focusing on the *creative act* of human being: actually, the nucleus point of Human Condition[15].

More than any other kind of human's artistically expression; *music* is re-presentation, the essential one for the "humanness" of man. For the one who lives the *experience of music*, the labor is one of sensory-emotional comprehension (first of all, while listening), of meditation on what was heard and fixed in memory, and after that, reasoning in order to judge. This path passes from initial vagueness and spontaneity to clarity and the integration of the substance.

The ethos of music is one of becoming conscious, of amazement and interrogation, of raising problems. Contemplating the sensible musical reality, we secure access to authentic *human* being. The pathway is *from* and only *through* sensible existence to the essential "*to be in the horizon of humanness"* – the big work of self-creation of human being in its effort to "self-individualization", "self-explication in existence", and "self-interpretation in life"[16].

By his creations, the composer demonstrates an elevated level of *generosity, respect* and *duty's filling*, of *sympathy* and *solidarity*, of *responsibility* and *benevolence*, of *communication and sharing in love* with the whole of existence; briefly, his capacity-attitude – as "moral experience"[17] – of a profound *communion* with the entire living texture; giving, an eloquent image of that status of man as "Custodian of everything-there-is-alive"[18].

Putting into action a twofold attitude of *autonomy* and *relationship*, the musician-creator essentializes an inner and outer world by the fact that he is able to mark the *human becoming* into the "kallon kai agathon" / "καλλον και αγαθον"; respectively, the ideals of the Beauty and the Good in human life. At the same time, he intensifies the faith in the

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[15] see Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, *Logos and Life*, Book 1: *Creative Experience and the Critique of Reason*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988.

[16] cf. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, *The Creative Self and the Other in Man's Self-Interpretation*, in *Analecta Husserliana*, Volume VI, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1977.

[17] cf. Fr.Rauh, *L'Expérience morale*, P.U.F., Paris, 1951.

[18] Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, *Phenomenology of Life and the New Critique of Reason: From Husserl's Philosophy to the Phenomenology of Life and the Human Condition*, in *Analecta Husserliana*, Volume XXIX, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1990, p. 16.

divine seed putted in man by the Creator, that seed which must be uncovered up through a continuous formative endeavor.

By a very strong psychical resonance, which challenges the listener by provoking serious effects on his emotions, feelings, thoughts, reactions – producing a *total living experience*, by the "movements of the soul", according to Tymieniecka's terms[19] –, *music* unveils itself in its *ethical substratum*, helping the human being to inscribe on his or her experience the mark of a vital progress, to work upon the self towards a conquest of the *meaning of life*.

We believe that the *experience of musical art* represents the most efficient pathway by which to introduce the ideal into the womb of reality; and, eventually, to assure our correct *human measure*, guiding into the self-education process – relating with our very own beingness, with others, with society and nature. "Solitude", but at the same time "unity with everything that exists in a common world", beyond strict individuality. "Restlessness", but also "reconciliation", "stumbles", "failure", but also "impetus" and "achievement", "critical judgement", but also "obedience to life's laws", all of these are manifested and developed, including every extraordinary kind of experience that a human being may encounter.

Magnificent composers like J.S. Bach and Händel, Mozart and Beethoven, Tchaikovsky and Dvõrak, Mahler and Richard Strauss, Debussy and Enescu impose themselves as "musicians" – a category that, in a Platonic sense, implies the status of "authentic Sages". They give us, anywhere we are, anytime, a veritable lesson of an *ethical experience living*. And their impressive works, as long as they can be heard, illustrate the value of "*meloethics*"; the "*meloethics*" – a concept in resonance with the ethics and the aesthetics around the "Ontopoietic of Life's development" from the monumental phenomenological work imposed by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka in the framework of the contemporary world philosophy.

[19] cf. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, *Logos and Life*, Book 2: *The Three Movements of the Soul*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988.