Piano Sonata in C Minor, Op. 111

LITERATURE

“. . . cri- cri- cri- cri- ti- ti- ti- cize- cize—not until the end of time, that you cannot.”

LETTER by Beethoven of October 9, 1811

Schindler\(^1\) writes in a letter to Lenz (see Lenz, p. 102):

There I once took the liberty of asking whether this Op. 111 would, then, get no concluding movement; for without having so far heard more of the work than Beethoven’s fingering trials . . ., I wanted already to have achieved certainty that here a third movement, corresponding to the first and every bit as fiery and dashing, would have to follow. My dear friend and teacher cut me short with the terse answer: I have no time to write a third movement. But he thereby admitted that a third movement would be necessary. We never again had occasion to return to this topic.

Cut off, as he himself admits, by Beethoven, Schindler should now really just have spared himself the trouble of drawing and flaunting such empty conclusions about the “necessity” of a third movement. He must surely have been aware that a master

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\(^1\) If I here, contrary to what was stated in \textit{109}, p. 4, by exception cite also Anton Schindler, the author of the Beethoven Biography (third printing 1860, new print 1909), I do so not at all for the purpose of appeasing or reconciling with historians, who in the representation of a musical content find indispensable the depiction also of secondary circumstances and persons, but because I want to show, precisely with reference to the question brought up by Schindler (a true layman’s problem) of why the sonata Op. 111 has merely two and not three movements, the kinds of surrogates to which musical writers—see later, Marx, Lenz, etc.—devote enthusiasm, time, and effort when forced by intellectual poverty to steer clear by far of a musical content.
like Beethoven, who had long since marshaled sufficient proof of the greatest mastery, was and had to remain in every sense solely competent for what he considered “necessary” in his own creative area. And Beethoven had, of course—long before Schindler posed the question to him about a third movement—, shaped the second exactly as it now appears, so that nobody any longer was entitled to venture even any curiosity about an allegedly missing third movement—least of all anybody who didn’t even know how to read the two existing movements correctly.

Again in another passage, in an open letter, Schindler reports (see Lenz, p. 103):

In a letter written from Baden, July 15, 1824, to Schlesinger of Berlin, Beethoven refers to this manner of judging musical works (this letter was kept, and is now in my possession). Briefly, that Marxian depiction supplied our great master with reason and material to expatiate in more detail about Op. 111. On this occasion too he spoke of a third, a final movement. If memory serves, he stated that the Variations would in part have had to be shaped differently if he had written a third movement.

Thus Schindler’s peculiar concern, which was certainly only his own, but never also one of Beethoven’s, was authentically laid to rest by the master himself; did Schindler need to waste yet another word about it? Did he have any option but to interest himself thenceforth only in the manner of artistic resources the master was able to apply in order to intensify the Variation movement suitably to serve at all as a finale for the sonata? But, of course, exactly on the only available path, Schindler could not follow the master, and so, because precisely this he could not do, he did the same thing that all lay people, hermeneutists, and historians thoughtlessly do: instead of attending to the tonal intentions actually realized in the work of art, they concern themselves above all with questions that lie outside the work, including plans and intentions that were never carried out. And just for this reason Schindler, even despite Beethoven’s definitive explanation, again falls back on himself and concludes:

A third movement was certainly and definitely in the original plan, but the Ninth Symphony urgently needed to be set to paper, thus no time for the third movement, and thus the physiognomy of the Variations as we have it.

No trace even from Schindler as well of that trust that would under all circumstances be due a Beethoven. Thus is the genius already subject, in close and closest spatial proximity (“my dear friend and teacher” Schindler dares to write!), to the lamentable counteraction of only fugal2 forces, which are brought to bear against

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2 [The beginning of a word-play—see below.]
him—admittedly with greater intensity—by all of the remote and remotest world. Indeed, mankind’s attraction to the genius is only illusory: in reality, mankind always turns its back on him; it is not genius-centripetal, but unfortunately only genius-centrifugal.

It remains ever beyond the grasp of mankind that an artistic creation, once having attained its definitive shape, occupies domains high above, where earthly time and earthly space depart from it like irritating shadows. What could be the point of posing questions to the now time- and space-less work to which it—having just become absolute—has long since had nothing more to reply? What, in particular, could then still be the use of asking specifically about time and space when that time and that space in which the genius completed his work of art have truly nothing in common with the general time and general space of everything else? And yet—they all do so. All lay people, hermeneutists, and historians relish questioning about time and space of the genius. But of course, the results are as one would expect, and they are intended for those who in turn share only most wretched everyday tedium with the wretched questioners.

Whoever needs further proof of how slight the interest of a Schindler really was precisely in the intentions of the master, however, should wonder why he never saw fit to inform us at all about the master’s actually existing intentions as they have become known after the fact in, for example, sketches and drafts, and which are indeed far sooner, if not exclusively, to be regarded as the true intentions of the master?

But it gets worse. For even still in his biography, p. 326ff., Schindler returns to the same question. Although the account here is at first in accord with the above cited letter passages, it continues as follows:

Since up to that day I had heard this work only in fragments during the finishing process, this reply\(^3\) was sufficient. But later, after the work had fully revealed itself to me, I began to reconsider the stated reason that it lacked a third movement, and openly admit that to this day I truly lament it. I was and am still unable to grasp how the two movements, so sharply contrasted in respect to characters, are to represent a self-contained, unified whole; for in the first of these we find the expression of almost impetuous passion with only brief interruptions by a few lovely melodies, but next to it a musical painting that is kept almost throughout in a somber tone, which is without equal in the whole output of our master. The appearance was and remains that in

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\(^3\) [Beethoven’s reply (see above) that he had no time to write a third movement; this is a direct continuation of the earlier Schindler extract.]
this movement the tonal poet has, in respect to variety in the formal domain and in application of an excess of intellectualizing to such a simple material as the “ARIETTA” (the Theme of the Variations etc.), outdone himself.—Something that from now on will often make its presence felt in the works to follow. The Leipzig criticism offered in regard to this movement among others the following commentary: [extract follows further on].

Beethoven’s “friend”—in a display of vanity—thus makes much ado just about the fact that he is “unable to grasp” the shape definitively given by Beethoven to the work. But then how could he venture such a judgment? Obviously only for the reason that he regarded it as established that the work had later, as he says, “fully revealed itself” to him! But do we not recognize there the so distressing phenomenon, unfortunately consistently recurrent among lay people, hermeneutists, and historians, that they never doubt themselves and their own clarity of judgment, but are still—just by virtue of this alleged clarity—“unable to grasp” why the composer, who thus is by implication presumably in a state of unclarity, did this or that? Yet the reader in such cases need only examine the objections of the admonishers to discover immediately that if they were “unable to grasp” the ways of the composer, that was not at all the fault of the composer’s unclarity, but on the contrary only the fault of their own inability to see clearly that which is clear.4

Nevertheless, let a few further words be devoted here to the objection of an “excess of intellectualizing.” Among the consequences of the previously mentioned genius(centri)-fugal tendency of mankind is that in religion, manners, art, and science—in short in each and every area—it derives both concept and practice not from the most highly prized geniuses, but only from the mediocre. Thus since days of yore, however greatly and superbly the moral code may have been forged by the greatest and strongest thinkers, by religion founders and similarly powerful heroes, a residual mankind, as if possessed and devour by vanity, was pressed nevertheless to dissent from the greatness of that moral code both in concept and in practice, and for the reason only, thereby to be able still to make for themselves, with all their so mediocre doings, a place in the moral world. If it were not for hypocrisy, mankind would truly have to admit to having taken its behavioral code from a strange criminal world, and not from those glowing heroes!

4 Goethe: “Whoever is inclined to fault an author for murkiness should first inspect his own interior, to see whether it is then completely clear. In the approaching dusk a very clear text becomes unreadable.” [Goethe. Maximen und Reflexionen, 1065 (under the sub-heading “Aphorismen. Freunden und Gegnern zur Beherzigung”), see “Bibliography of Cited Works by Other Authors.”]
Thus now, unfortunately in music as well, all too little attention is paid the art imperatives of precisely the greatest masters, since people instead—who fails to notice that even today with horror and dismay?—prefer to derive theories and other art concepts from the most mediocre authors instead of from those masters themselves. And thus our dear Schindler too had taken his conception of variations from works of whatever mediocre authors, and has the nerve, instead of targeting the mediocre source of his mediocre conception—indeed of targeting above all himself—, to aim the arrow rather at the genius. If on the other hand he believed he had derived his conception from, say, Haydn or Mozart, then this was an error of incapacity, for only the straightest line connects the variations of these masters too with those of Beethoven.

For Nature has wisely disposed that those who take up arms against the genius, as though asking for punishment, are not exactly the ones most overly endowed with courage, self-confidence, conviction, and character. And thus Schindler too, obviously in order to buttress his insecurely perceived opinion, looks about for a key witness, which he now finds in the reviewer for *Leipziger-Musik-Zeitung* of the year 1824. It will certainly interest the reader to hear the latter for himself:

An altogether remarkable work of art. The first movement is grand and broad in plan, and truly impressive in execution. The Introduction begins in the bass with the diminished-seventh chord of $F\#$, with few sharply accented notes reinforced by octaves, and proceeds in that way, preparatory to something of great impact, up to a caesura on the dominant, with which the Allegro part begins. The main theme of this part consists actually of only three notes, but what an excellent, rich, truly magnificent work of art has the master shaped from these simple materials!—A brisk vitality, indeed one might say a kind of wildness, animates the whole; it is interrupted from time to time, however, by an incomparably melodious theme, which provides the loveliest contrast to the powerful, passionate driving. We can point out only a few features of truly excellent effect: the superb construction of the chain-progressions that bind the individual parts, together with their forceful inversions; the place in the second clause where the principal theme appears augmented as fugal theme, and, while the theme itself is built in above and below in its original tempo, is imitated three times; and finally the incomparably splendid passage in which that melodious phrase lies in the bass and, just there, most intimately speaks to the heart. The most remarkable movement by far is the last. We by no means wish to place it above the first movement. On the contrary, in our opinion it ranks far below the latter. We call it the most remarkable because in regard to features of striking character—but by no means in regard to melody,
modulation and the like—it outstrips all of such things that we have ever seen in the realm of pure piano music. The Theme, mostly presented in four voices, is as simple and peaceful in its progression as a theme that is to be varied and, as here, paraphrased, as any theme could be desired to be. But it pleased the composer to employ in its treatment for the most part only such artistic resources as we find not truly worthy of his great genius. He resembles in this tonal picture a painter who fills the space for an altarpiece monotonously with miniatures. The movement teems with notes in the most peculiar time-divisions which often completely contradict metric sense; the melody is enfolded in the most unusual triplet-ornaments; both of these features, however, mostly without the primary element: effect on the mind; yet the imagination of Herr van Beethoven is a sun, which is able to break through the thickest mists of the lower atmosphere. On p. 19 it glows again in all of its intrinsic glory, and spreads warmth and life. From here on to the end—we would have preferred the discourse to be somewhat shorter—the movement gave us a great deal of pleasure, especially too because we seem to feel that we have received in this concluding section a new pledge: the great master will not long tarry in these espaces imaginaires et d’erreurs, but will often still enchant those who marvel at his magnificent art-garden with truly excellent things upon paths that quickly turn back toward the beautiful. We wish this for him and for ourselves.

Such unseemliness toward Art and in particular toward the work under consideration! What jargon Beethoven had to read there with his own eyes! And it is to these hacks that Beethoven’s “friend” appeals to the extent that he partially quotes in his work (see above) their comments on the second movement! Just let anybody still say that the world has tendencies toward the genius! But steady: the immortality that is intended for the genius can never be deferred by skeletons, and all the cemeteries in the world will be no match for the immortal creations of the geniuses!

In the year 1824 a review appeared from the pen of Marx in the Berlin Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung that was couched in the form of a Letter to the Editor. At first this letter—it abounds with intentionally strange features and therefore gave occasion for much misunderstanding (see below, Nagel)—presents the caricature of a poorly instructed critic, only afterwards to continue in a fictitious conversation in which Marx’s own thoughts obviously are expressed by the person called Edward. The

1 I quote the thoughts occasioned by Op. 111 and written down by Marx in nearly their full breadth, and indeed less for the purpose of illustrating the tragedy that has emerged in Beethoven’s situation of such a contemporaneousness: there the deed of a Beethoven, just here the reply by Marx, than to show how even today ruminants in aesthetics take their nourishment from exactly the same phraseological fruits on which their ancestors lived.
possibility is certainly not excluded that Marx perhaps wanted with that caricature to persiflate on an earlier stage in his own critical development; but as little as it appeared important to him to move beyond the typical significance of persiflage and to emphasize the distinction of the personal aspect, equally little will such distinction now come into question for me, for which reason I shall here speak only of the “critic” (of Marx’s critic!). Marx writes:

Gentlemen: you will be surprised to receive back, instead of the review of the 111th Sonata, the latter itself. I want to tell you how I have fared with the exasperating sonata. What put me into an unusually favorable frame of mind as I took up the sonata was the fact that on exactly the same day fifteen years ago (1809) I expressed myself for the first time about Beethoven. I remember with the joy of the righteous how carefully I had at the time compared Beethoven’s composition—I believe it was the C-minor Symphony—with the rules, with the prevailing system and the works of the earlier masters. Despite the irregularities that Beethoven already permitted himself at that time, I recognized his talent with encouragement, indeed, I went so far in this well-meaning mood as to suggest the possibility that one might eventually see in him the ideal goal, a second Mozart, at least in the symphonies, if he were to rein in the excesses of his genius; excise from his compositions the Baroque, the quixotic; write in a less contrived manner, more clearly and understandably. What is the use of critics if nobody listens to us?—Beethoven has not listened, has always gone his own way. What is the point, I wonder, of repeating those truisms? He cannot do otherwise, and young composers of understanding are sufficiently warned not to become Beethoven. Well, what about the new sonata, then? Another work like the so-called Sonata quasi una fantasia in C-sharp minor, which begins with the Adagio because no first movement would occur to him? or like his 54th sonata, where one never gets past the strange sounds? Just look, the new one has only two parts, no Finale. However, let us take it as it is. But what shall I now say about the content! All right, maybe I couldn’t play it. He never writes in a way that fits the fingers, and one has learned to infer from the notes how it would have to sound if it were to be playable. But these strokes in the introductory section; this confused, uncontrolled storming and raging in the Allegro: is that music? indeed, is that an aesthetic treat, to be yanked about by storm-winds?—This driving upward into the highest heights; this rumbling in the depths: is that reasonable, clear, orderly development? Is there any melody here? Yes indeed! Amongst the storming and rolling there comes once a little phrase of one, two bars. But what would one say of a painting where amid fog and night here a star shimmered, there a will o’ the wisp flickered, a flash of...
lightning penetrated? And now these little melodic phrases—any child sings like that in its innocence; that’s artistic invention?—I came to the Variations. The theme, a very pretty, folklike Arietta—Beethoven noticed, since Weber’s *Der Freischütz*, what’s in the wind; but, but, for heaven’s sake, such an accompaniment! Two octaves below the melody, in the lowest bass-notes, with sustaining dominant, it hums and soughs along like the dying-away of a distant bell; and why? Because it is the rule of polyphonic setting, not to separate the voices but, by analogy with simultaneous tones, to keep them together in the more central region, and because it pleases Beethoven to set himself above every rule. I only glanced at the first three Variations. Well sure, they are ingeniously made, but where in them is a pleasing, tasteful, brilliant figure? The voices press against and through each other as if intimidated, and that goes on so endlessly that one might lose one’s breath.

It must be granted that this persiflage strikes home. Marx successfully shows us how that certain critic first of all sings his own praises: he, he was the one who for the first time already so-and-so many years ago expressed himself about Beethoven (as if such fainéant vanity–dates in the life of a critic were important dates also in the history of music); he, he was the one who consistently gave the composer words of encouragement (as if a master would not have followed the path that talent laid out for him despite any reproof, indeed despite suppression by the critic); indeed he and again only he was the one who gave the composer . . ., etc.

When the critic then comes to the subject itself, it turns out—Marx represents even these traits of objective insufficiency very well—that he is not even able to grasp the content of the work to be adjudged. He thus perforce hides himself in the bushes, so to speak; draws above all comparisons with works of other composers (as though one could get to the bottom of a new work that one doesn’t know by means of older works, of which one still knows just as little); takes in the process as his basis—wantonly enough in relation to a genius—the art of “setting” (of which he, to judge by the examples just offered the reader, really still understands nothing); invokes also aesthetics, which of course always remains the most welcome asylum for mentally stunted know-nothings, etc.

The reader may well now be all the more eager to hear what Marx himself henceforth sets for his critic as a standard of musical objectivity:

Here the music-director interrupted me, and led me to a young man, also an artist, and now begin my worst ordeals. Already as we conversed I had heard with pleasure how roundly and precisely the young man—I will call him Edward—brought out the Beethoven sonata (he had sat down with
it in front of him at the piano), only too stormily and strong—at his age one is not yet timid. Now—he was already deep into the variations—I was gouged in endlessly repeated strokes by a tone like a dagger-strike in the ear; later a passage in which I know not how many trills brayed as one. Edward let his hands sink. How I felt the triumph of my opinion: “so, my dear, can’t bear it any more?” He was very moved, and only too late said: it has to be completed. He played on. How difficult it was for me to await the end, and how astounded I may have looked when I finally learned that the interruption and the outcry was not displeasure: on the contrary, the youth, now tear-soaked, pale, and exhausted, was, by this chaos of sounds—but I must no longer speak in such a way—by this music so deeply gripped. But what do I know any more about what is music and effect when there is at least one human being, and moreover a man of the profession, whom this music touches?—Edward sighed: “Now suppose that Beethoven were dead and his gigantic ghost had appeared before man and had spoken: you have never known me; lift up your eyes, that was my mighty life; these painful things have purified me, these illuminations from Elysium, these sounds from days of youth have strengthened me, have revitalized the hesitant heart—and now I die.” “Yes, he has died!” Edward cried out. I mentioned the foregoing only to provide a transition to the following conversation.

I: So the music pleased you?
Edw.: Pleased? You see, I felt it.
I: Which movements, then, are the ones that most appealed to you?
Edw.: What do I know of movements? I heard no individual movement, but a stream flowing forth grandly and full; and you ask me about the individual waves.

Thus for Marx too, “feeling” represents the ultimate source of the evaluation; and in fact he allows himself to be immediately sidetracked so far as to devalue an entire movement in comparison to the work as a whole, as though, despite the whole, this part alone did not nevertheless deserve consideration already by virtue of its own self-containment and, in the first place, as an independent part. But does this process not clearly point to that “generosity” already represented above (see “Preliminary Remarks”) which on every occasion settles into the feeling of a human whenever more exact understanding of details eludes him? And incidentally, was it not likewise “feeling” from which the critic persiflated by Marx had formed his judgment? And where, in all these words of Marx’s, lies
even the slightest proof that unlike the feeling of the critic, only Marx’s own
would signify and encompass true objectivity, indeed objectivity at all? But let
us hear more:

I: You want to keep the unity of the whole in view; I want to acknowledge the
unity of the first movement. It is an able, if rather wild, fugato. But after
such a movement—an Arietta with variations? Is that fitting?
Edw.: These very variations belong among Beethoven’s greatest achievements.
How far his genius carries him along paths never-before trodden, never
explored; how he descends into the deepest depths, and how boldly he flies
again to the heights; what all is concentrated here—and how measured the
pace, how sustained, if I may use the equivocal expression, the form! With
such measured, dead-serious steps the Greek chorus may have trodden the
stage as it disclosed the poet’s deepest feelings.\(^6\) If I may speak as a composer,
it is my ardent quest to master form as Beethoven has treated it in the fre-
est flights of imagination, to be as free and uninhibited within the strictest
limit as he.
I: It is true, the more attentively I regard the sonata, the more strictly
I find the form maintained. You would not prove the same with just any
Beethoven piece.
Edw.: What do you mean by “prove”? Mustn’t what is actually there be able to
be seen by everybody who can see?

Only a feeling that lacks any objective design can immediately crave, as happens
here, also to insinuate itself as already the proudest and highest discernment.
Only a complete unawareness of “what is actually there,” inflated by the winds of
vanity—indeed, the gases of vanity smell no less bad than the incarnate wind of the
bowel —, is able to engender the self-deception that the “feeling”-dupe had actually
already seen all of “what is actually there.” Such wanton self-glorification of one’s
own completely faulty capacity for seeing! As though among the things that “are
actually there” the human vision were not altogether still one of the most problem-
atic. If a misguided science may, to be sure, sometimes in the first fit of enthusiasm
for this or that discovery dare to certify that it would at the end of the day after all
see and recognize everything that is “actually there”—fortunately however it has
meanwhile grown more modest and god-fearing —, never, I say, will God’s great
creation, so great and full as it is “actually there,” gain entry into the small human

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\(^6\) Marx used the association with “strophe and antistrophe in Greek drama” also in discussing the Fugue of the
Sonata Op. 110; cf. i,10, Literature, p. 7.
brain, any more than—to state it drastically—the full sun with all of its beams can fit within the narrow confines of the work-cubicle of the scholar! How long has it taken, then, for mankind to learn to see just a single atom of what is there, and moreover to see even that only in such a faulty way!

But why bother here with the Ultimate when we find Marx standing so completely helpless before the First? He is still in that embryonic state of the common vanity which lavishly blasphemes with its plethora of meaningless and empty phrases, as if everything to be investigated in the world around us were not already actual achievements of a true, great creative force, but only empty boasts of one or another shallow vanity of the same stamp as his own. It is therefore only too amusing to note how at the very first opportunity Marx, despite such hubris, evades—with true instinct for cowardice—the real substantiation of everything that he says “is actually there.” Why does Marx not immediately try to substantiate for his opponent that which only he himself “sees,” and why—we are, unfortunately, effectively compelled to address this otherwise intrinsically absurd question by Marx’s expression “every observer”—isn’t that critic naturally gifted, like Marx himself, with the ability to see “what is actually there”? “Every observer,” says Marx. Now just who is truly doing the “observing”? Really “everybody”? But if not everybody, who then, according to Marx, is the authentic “observer” who indeed “has to” observe everything “that in fact is there”?

If by “every observer” Marx perhaps meant that observer who actually can already observe, did he then really need expressly to say of this individual so gifted from birth, “Mustn’t what is actually there be able to be seen by everybody who can see?” How these same words, now recognized as otiose, become nonsensical as well when they are imagined to apply to just the one who still observes nothing at all!

Or did Marx in the end mean that the observed, although one observes it, still could never be substantiated to somebody else? But in that case was it permissible for him to speak of an actual observing at all, and of things “that are actually there”?

In the continuation we read:

Edw. (continuing): But it has often seemed to me that most of those who speak about Beethoven have simply not taken the proper point of view, from which alone his and all works of art can be surveyed. They all speak so much of Form and appear to designate thereby something having existence once and for all, an archetype for all products of the mind. So is the Form something independent? Is it something different from the manifestation of the Idea, the incarnation of the thought in the work of art? Every matured, healthy

7 [The Leipzig critic (see above).]
Idea must be manifested as such in a sustained Form. But isn’t the Idea identical to the Form? Or, if the hair-splitting intellect wants to and must distinguish between them: each Idea has spawned its own Form, which, like itself, must be organized. No act of identification can be more desirable, more necessary, in the case of a work of art than identification of the Idea; for only from this can the whole be viewed and judged.

Were all of these “thoughts”—genuine products of an aesthete-of-necessity—not expressed so impassionedly, with such hopeless earnestness, one would really be convulsed with laughter about the desperate position of the aesthete, who is ever and ever more entangled in the jungle of his own nonsense, so that as he founders and stumbles, no road takes him any further, no path leads him out. Thus Marx also steers clear of substantiation of the “Idea,” although he himself—such a comedy for the reader!—expressly said, “with a work of art no substantiation can be more desirable, more necessary, than substantiation of the Idea.” Now I don’t grasp what of a definite nature Marx could at all have understood under “Idea” so long as he did not include also the “Form,” of which he himself asserts that in each individual case it would be completely identical to the Idea; but in any event I am entitled to pose the question of why then Marx, if he does regard Idea and Form as really identical, did not instead prefer to declare substantiation of Form—which would likewise have had to lead to the Idea—more desirable and necessary than substantiation of the Idea? Is it not precisely the Form that “is actually there,” and rather the Idea that is the more remote, the more insubstantial? Doesn’t the former admit more readily of substantiation than the latter? But how does it happen, I ask, that Marx so completely one-sidedly, so tendentiously arbitrarily, propagandizes only for substantiation of the “idea” so soon after he himself granted every form (with evidently an only accidentally successful formulation in words?) its own independence? Thank you, indeed! There’s the trouble! Whoever, like Marx, feels himself so little able, indeed so completely unable, to cope with an actually present and graspable Form, must willy-nilly—must, I say—commit body and soul to the “Idea” as to a devil. From that, then—from the incomprehensible, also not further substantiable, Idea —, he now instinctively creates his own word-smoke, so as at least, while becoming intoxicated by his own smoke-arrangement, to realize a return on his vanity. But it doesn’t in the least dawn on the necessity-driven word-smoke producer how those fogs of smoke will finally engulf him and all his proud sentiments without a trace, so that the onlookers are unable for all the smoke to distinguish in any way
between him, the allegedly feeling and contemplating one, and the allegedly felt and contemplated objects.\(^8\)

Of this too the reader will be ever more deeply convinced the more he just follows Marx’s paths:

I: You said earlier that the first movement suggests to you, as though allegorically, the life of Beethoven.

Edw.: And the second, then, is the death of the great man. Do the very harmonies of the theme not swell like the mourning music of the funeral cortege

\(^8\) Lenz, who now likewise cites (p. 104ff.) the above critique of Marx’s and in its course even accompanies with manifold comments of his own enclosed in brackets, bursts out at this point, completely in a transport, as follows: “Golden words, and they were read by Beethoven!” We see, no chaos of thought is so great that people would not nevertheless with honest conviction declare themselves truly to have understood that chaos as well (see Counterpoint I, p. xxiiif./XIXff.). All error, all nonsense that no amount of insight could dispel, and which one might pretend still to understand only under threat of commitment to a madhouse, all of this humanity purports to be able to understand immediately and easily, while on the contrary it is only the truth — just this alone — that humanity finds much more difficult to “understand” (\textit{de facto} understands not at all, of course). The brain of most people is in reality nothing but a chaos, a tohuwabohu, and as fog drifts back into fog, so chaos into chaos, error into error.

Whoever avoids the substantiation of reality — as of the solely concrete state of affairs — is necessarily obliged to seek refuge in empty words, in mannikins of “ideas.” But how deeply this is embedded already in the very nature of things may be witnessed by yet a different example, which for once is taken not from music but from the most recent political past, and which — precisely because it belongs to the concrete world — may exert that much more striking and drastic demonstrative force.

Just recall that note by the American government to the German government on the occasion of the much-deserved torpedoing of the Lusitania. In its note, the Anglo-American expressly avoided any reference to the proofs offered by the German government of the, according to international law, impermissible arming of the so-called passenger-vessel to indulge instead in “ideas” — in ideas of a true “humanitarianism” and “culture,” against which allegedly Germany alone had offended.

The Anglo-American did so deliberately, because somewhere in a far corner of his still completely thick, undifferentiated shopkeeper-brain, which still has barely learned to be startled by and strain to apprehend the crudest grotesquerie — he grasped even the box on the ear of the \textit{Lusitania} torpedoing only because it was so resounding —, somewhere he vaguely sensed that Germany’s proofs, pertaining exclusively to facts, could threaten to debunk his “neutrality,” “humanitarianism,” “religiosity,” in short all of the ideas that his star-spangled banner with such arrogant ostentation, with such meddlesome self-righteousness, flaunts before the world from sunup to sundown, and to make them appear in an inconveniently different light. But the true significance of a natural process is manifested only in the consequences, and thus we will now understand that an attitude like that of the Anglo-American must necessarily give his whole state its own peculiar profile, just that so repugnantily hypocritical, specific shopkeeper-profile, must completely engulf and destroy it. In fact, this shopkeeper-attitude of constant self-interest, which knows nothing of country, of humanity, of race, of nations, but only of consumers, immediate advantages of interest rates and dividends, has already so gnawed into and undermined its own land that already today that land must helplessly cower before the Yellow Peril, and, in case aid does not meanwhile arrive from the German element, appears as doomed to ultimate collapse. Just as soon as the all-too-cheap frenzy of economic goods, expanded to monstrous proportions — think of the trusts and those enterprising “kings” of industry, the so-called petroleum-, oil-, iron-, champagne-, soap-“kings” (what all doesn’t an uncultured shopkeeper-pack like to imagine under the rubric of “king”) — will have vanished, then people will recognize the land of “unlimited possibilities,” as it has thus far been so overpraised unfortunately even in Germany, as truly only the land of “most limited
approaching through the night? Already in the second part (A minor) the knell. Now the first squad of pall-bearers in long veils, the quietly grieving friends; more and more join in, the orange torch-light approaches; the death-knell reaches the ear, memory takes us back to the bed of suffering; once again I hear above the droning bells the heavy breathing of the dying titan; at first in a jumble and then ever more clearly he can hear the tones of angel-voices in the delirium of the final hour; high above sounds the song of children, like the trill of the lark in the most sublime ether-blue. The sacred triad pierces the brightening twilight with its crystal-clear call; harp-whispers, and then ever more powerfully swelling chords roar down from the angels’ harps—he is gone, the magnificent hero! And the whole earth grieves for the misunderstood beloved, and the death-chimes sound everywhere, subdued mourning, melancholy recollection, gratefully loving celebrations accompany him to his resting place. Who would fail to cast the most beautiful blossoms after his coffin? Which orphaned mourner would not glance most lovingly through a stream of tears after the cascading earth?

Wouldn’t such a mourning chime of words that has nothing to do with the work itself and only bewails its author have grievously wounded Beethoven? In fact, Schindler himself confirms as much in his biography (p. 327, footnote):

The author can attest that the musical poet, when he still enjoyed good health, found these and other wrong-headed interpretations of his music unpleasant.—Interpretations of Beethoven’s works have from then on come increasingly into the public view and will soon equal Bible-interpretations in abundance.
Well, this disapproving utterance by Beethoven later came to the attention of Marx himself, but in this plight—as will be shown below in more detail—he defended himself simply by attempting to blame the error on Beethoven instead. For, however strange it may appear, it is part of the moral code of those still unable to grasp the work of the genius that, far from understanding how through that failure alone they injure the author, they frivolously try even then rather to fault the latter when he occasionally has the audacity—alas, sadly all too seldom!—to defend himself against the unjustified attacks of the can’t-read-notes contingent. So do the average humans, who feel a kind of longing to fall in with the can’t-read-notes crowd, gnaw away not only at the work of the genius, but also at his life.

What good reason Marx had to avoid substantiation of the form (however easy such would have been to provide, incidentally, in precisely our present case) I have shown above. Let nobody say, though, that he had not understood the peril of his standpoint, for he himself continues explicitly:

Music-dir.: Beethoven lives yet.
Edw.: O believe me, the often misunderstood genius has suffered much! Who will make comfortable the last days for this one who never tired of showering us with regal gifts? If he yet lives, he has nevertheless apprehended death, has drained the bitter cup! Which artist would give as well something other than what he experiences in himself?
Music-dir.: But—how do you know that Beethoven intended all of that, and not something completely different?
I: What all cannot be dreamed of in the case of a piece of music, what cannot be read into a composition, that the composer himself perhaps never imagined?
Edw.: I have had often before to listen to this objection. It is of such an indistinct nature that one can without detriment endorse it and without hazard contradict it. Whether Beethoven came to indulge in reflection on his creation I know not; such knowledge is not at all necessary, for I know with certainty that he did not compose on the basis of reflection.

Just look: even before Marx actually solves the problem, which had indeed already been attacked by him, of the interpretability of absolute music—a problem in which laymen, hermeneutists, and historians have, as we know, always shown and still show the keenest interest, since in solving it one apparently may dispense with all otherwise required objectivity —, he suddenly again introduces a new concept, just that of reflection, into the debate, without, however, giving this concept from the beginning the necessary precision any more than he did the ones proposed earlier (of “Idea” and “Form”).
Reflection! What a dishonest game don’t they play with this concept! If the composer writes a shallow work, the average person then has a feeling of complete superiority, because he can immediately gain control of the content; woe be unto him, though, if the work exceeds the limits of his power of comprehension: in that case the average person at first feels attacked, and, as though seeking satisfaction for injured vanity, then describes even the proudest creation of the imagination as the product of a “reflection,” by which he means only to express and pillory a kind of artificially willed effort which—allegedly alone—made it possible for the composer to create the work.

However, our dear average people speak of such reflection only so long as the star witness to their mental inferiority lives. If the latter has died, they immediately busy themselves with his works, and then especially with those that they most ardently sought during the composer’s lifetime to bring into disrepute as altogether too “reflected.” Only just now they perform these works with passion, copy them with still greater passion; only now (which is surely the most despicable) they fraternize with the composer, because only now does it become—worthwhile to delude the next generation of scarcely fledged youth that they would thoroughly understand the “formerly so misunderstood” and reprimanded composer (as though it had not been they themselves who had formerly voiced misunderstanding and blame!) and would therefore be both entitled and obliged to pass on his works, just for the sake—in conscious deception—of little deals and little profits . . . O! this shopkeeper-pack!

What in particular Marx himself had imagined by the word “reflection” I know, of course, no more than he;—one thing, however, I know for certain: that it implies only an empty trick of vanity when, for his own part at least, he exonerates Beethoven of the charge of reflection. For although this was undoubtedly conceived as a rehabilitation for the master as well, what Marx in truth was still more concerned to do was above all to wangle for himself the vain honor of having emerged from the circle of those average persons who reprimanded Beethoven as a merely “reflecting” artist. Assuming, of course, capabilities commensurate to this task, what all Marx would still have had to write and demonstrate if he had seriously wanted now to rebut the accusation of reflection so often raised against Beethoven! Now he writes:

Edw. (continuing): But why query the composer? If the work itself doesn’t speak, if he has to tell us what it is supposed to mean, then his work and time has been wasted. But if the work of art is worthy of the name and if we are at all capable of comprehension, then I fail to understand how we should find in it something other than what it actually contains.

9 [Thought-out.]
Now what can we say to that? Marx, who still doesn’t grasp the work, considers it simply agreed—as is only too clearly inferable from his emphatic words—that the work would have to be understood because it is inconceivable that it should be not at all understandable. Clearly for the benefit of human beings he assumes that they are all able from the outset to comprehend the work of art, so that according to him it must be less the fault of humans than of the work if the latter is not understood. He seems to want to deny the reverse (thus precisely the normal) situation, in which humans would be still truly incapable of such understanding—a presumption of which, to be sure, he is so little aware that he proclaims with perfect complacency in the continuation:

Edw. (continuing): Is what we feel at a particular stimulus then a matter of our caprice? Just try “willing” an experience of happy, serene feelings in the case of our sonata!¹⁰

Such a coarsely drawn inference, then, serves Marx as nothing less than the conclusive proof of his thesis! If all humans merely agree in an otherwise completely indiscriminate manner on the hearing of a musical work that they experience from it happy or (on the other hand) serious feelings, then—according to Marx—through that alone the proof is supposed to be delivered that they all have actually understood the work! Let us apply this theory to poetry and ask: if so-and-so-many people agree after hearing, for example, a dramatic work that what they have just heard is a tragedy and not a comedy, does such an agreement, simply because it is an agreement of all, actually constitute—despite the obviously primitive quality of the perceptions—a proof that they all have understood the tragedy? Or doesn’t each individual tragedy rather manifest, in addition to the fact that it shares the character of a tragedy with thousands and more thousands of others, still various other individual traits? And now consider further that with works of poetry the odds are from the outset in their favor, given that the elements of poetry—that is, the words—are easily understood by hearers or readers in terms of their material sense. But how the result of perception in the case of musical art-works shrivels up when we consider that these works, unlike those of poetry, manifest from work to work new “words” in tones, at whose decipherment, as I maintain and demonstrate yearly and daily with outstanding masterworks, human beings have not yet succeeded! If the music-words, the music-ideas are not being heard and understood, like the words and ideas of language, even in their simplest material sense, can whatever

¹⁰ [“Ist es denn Sache unserer Willkür, was wir bei einer gewissen Anregung empfinden? Wollen Sie doch einmal bei unserer Sonate fröhliche, heitere Empfindungen haben.” „Wollen” of the second sentence is emphasized and links back to „Willkür” (“caprice”) of the first; the word-play is untranslatable.]
engenders in the listener such vague feelings as, for example, serene, happy, sad, sublime, etc., now come from anything else than only the most superficial part of music? In the final analysis, then, Marx’s thesis, as we see, forms only an all too impermissible conciliation to the standpoint of the layman; for only the layman, who continually wants to draw only something from everything, but not everything from something, and who—therein at the same time serving as a symbol of the whole of mankind—for lack of ability plays truant especially from the school of the genius, picks up the bad habit of contenting himself as well with undifferentiated feeling. If Marx thus shares the position of the layman, then, without pity, let him too suffer the same fate! (Let it be noted further that at this point too Lenz falls for Marx’s line to the extent that he adds: “In these words lies the key to reality in instrumental texts.”)

Marx, however, in an attempt to win over the reader all the more securely, goes still further, making it appear that he would by no means even wish to make the victory of that layman triviality so easy; he therefore expressly sets himself the obstacle of an objection, and writes:

I: So you deny that different persons can have different comprehensions of the same work of art? We ourselves, I would have thought, provided the proof.

Edw.: Allow me to dispute that on the grounds that it seems to me as though you had not artistically comprehended the sonata, but had only anatomized it.

Here we find, however, instead of an actual refutation of the objection, only the usual arrogance of the ignorant of crediting only themselves with “grand” artistic perception, while hurling the accusation of only mentally limited thinking at those of different perception. As a case of such mental limitation Marx here sets forth specifically the craving for anatomization, a discreditation that is all the more amusing since he himself, as we saw, did not have the courage even to attempt such an anatomization, but rather, as true perception-dandy and hollow intellectual marionette, sought with tremendous cowardice urgently to avoid any such thing. Nevertheless, Marx continues:

Edw.: But I do agree that the same work has to be comprehended differently to a certain extent by different persons. The effect of a work of art I imagine to be a product of its Idea and the personality of the one who is comprehending, and find a proof of the divinity of art therein, that it presents the various individualities with what is in each case appropriate.
This passage now inspires Lenz to the following words: “A conception that erases all doubt, and belongs among the most important statements ever made about music.” Thus I ask them both, then: what if the one who is comprehending—and this is normally the case—neither discerns the “Idea” nor otherwise manifests a “personality”? For, if one doesn’t want to trivialize the issue by immediately stipulating for any corporeal delineation at all of a human body already a “comprehending person” and thus at the same time a “personality” as well—even the mankind-adulators by profession would have to think twice before doing something like that—, which effect, I ask, may arise in any given human being if he does not yet discern the “Idea” (which, incidentally, doesn’t even exist)? However, an effect of some kind is no doubt there in all cases, but it is not worth much, and stands truly in no respect higher than, for example, that automatic reflex with which even the smallest beetle so promptly reacts at the impending threat of a human footfall. Should Marx, now, wish to have just such an effect—which, because of its triviality, one would tend to define as an effect without a cause—proposed as already the definite effect of an art-work as well, he would thereby encroach not of course upon his “comprehending layman” but upon art and especially the genius. However, Marx sticks to his guns and instead continues:

Edw. (cont’d): But at the same time I pray you not to lose sight of two things. First, there is surely a greater similarity among men than is often assumed. We are above all of one and the same lineage, we are of the same kind (Europeans), and the strongest, longest lasting, and most general influences, those that are exerted by sameness of time, country, language, we have in common. If now, in dealing with art, we strip away everything arbitrary, conventional, superficial, as we must in order to be capable and worthy of the pure artistic expression, the variation in interpretation will pretty much disappear. Then in the second place, however, let us acknowledge the power of the perfected art-work to lift each one who is capable of interpretation upward out of his individuality to the Idea of the work of art.

Since Marx, as has just been shown, was of the opinion that when a work of art fails to communicate its effect, it is above all the work alone that is to be held responsible, not to any extent the percipient as well; since he moreover even explicitly credits all humans with interpretive capability, provided only that the work of art “is worthy of the name” (certainly a vicious circle by definition!); since, therefore, he has yet to mention with a single word the most important thing, namely that with any interpretative capability, even a most brilliant one, the ability to hear a work of art would
on the contrary have to be expressly and thoroughly trained,\(^\text{11}\) so that it would be the hearer alone who would have to be considered responsible for the ineffectiveness of a superior work of art—from all of this, the conclusion can be drawn immediately that Marx intends thus to grant most humans not only some kind of interpretative competence, but, beyond that, almost the same kind. How surprised we are, then, when in the above passage he himself now speaks of the “one capable of interpretation” in a suddenly altered sense, and, to be sure, as though the capable one were only he who had grasped the perfected art-work! Could he offend so flagrantly against his own premises? Is the petitio principii\(^\text{12}\) not obvious? And, incidentally, for the sake of his “interpretatively competent”—just show me any such outside the most exclusive circle of those of genius—haven’t all above theses and ideas of Marx’s fundamentally become actually superfluous? (See above, his expression “every observer”!)

Far more important, though, is to reject altogether, for its intrinsic danger, the thesis of the “similarity” among men, which Marx so impermissibly transfers into the domain of art as well. No doctrine was ever accompanied by such treacherous consequences among men than exactly that of an alleged similarity. So little as all the rest of nature insists on similarity (of stars, of animals, of plants), exactly so little is there any such among men; indeed, anybody who thought teleologically could and might with reason advocate even the complete opposite, that as the eternally true principle of creation, only a dissimilarity willed by the Creator from the outset would be in effect. In point of fact, whoever studies the history of mankind in particular must have noticed that it has scarcely served for the benefit of mankind when, appealing to that error- and delusion-theory of the equality of all (because, after all, they are all humans), the incapable (the small) too not only regarded themselves already as capable (as great), but wanted to be so regarded by all others as well. How often, for example in political areas, hasn’t the false equality-delusion led to institutions which in many ways impeded the progress of nations and of individuals? And how often haven’t orgies of plundering and thievery been visited on mankind merely because the incapable (the smaller) considered it their legitimate right to appropriate to themselves without delay the success of the more capable (the greater)? Since the

\(^{11}\) Goethe: “The person born to reason still needs great education, whether it be presented him through the care of parents and teachers, through lenient example, or—step by step—through rigorous experience. Likewise only the budding artist, to be sure, but not the mature, is born: his eye may view the world afresh, he may have a good sense of shape, proportion, motion; but for higher aspects of composition, for position, light, shadow, color, he can lack the natural talent, unless he is made aware of them.”

And: “Now if he is not inclined to learn from more highly developed artists of the past and present that which he lacks to become a real artist, he will, in the false notion of preserved originality, fall short of what he himself could achieve; for it is not only that which we are born with that is ours, but also that which we can acquire, and that is what we are.”

If a Goethe thinks that way of the artists, what must we then think of the laity?

\(^{12}\) [Begging the question.]
incapable individual really is incapable of imitating the accomplishment of the capable one, to say nothing of competing with him, therefore, begrudging the latter’s success only the more keenly, he tries in the company of like-minded incapables (of which there are always more than of the capable) to snatch for himself by force precisely the goods produced by the capable, or, what is still more lamentable, even to destroy them.\footnote{And what, incidentally, is the World War of today, with which we are all so preoccupied, but a thousandfold-intensified curse of that equality-delusion of the less able or more primitive races and nations? They all, all who so maliciously attacked Germany and Austria—the English, French, Italians, Russians, Serbs, and all the others who joined with these forces behind the mask of neutrality, like the Anglo-Americans, Japanese, Rumanians, etc. —, they all, all march, as they say, “at the forefront of civilization” (as each individual nation fancies, certainly only with itself “at the forefront”), and therefore believe themselves also justified in tearing down the German “barbarian” and simply robbing him of all his goods.}

It is certainly true that to all of them (as especially to the “white Englishman” [the apt designation stems from the reports of the German General Staff] or to the Anglo-American), the meaning of their existence is above all the “Purpose,” to wit:— “Sport” (as again precisely to the Englishman, who through the educational ideal merely of a trained, healthy half-wit has already learned enough to dispense with religion, custom, art, science in life and who, just to gain completely the convenience of that sport-blessing, does not scruple to plunder all of the weak of the world, to kill them and wipe them out by force, with hypocritically raised eyes—crude inside, barbarous, mendacious, revolving as ever a race that has meddled on the earth);

— so-called “good style” (the stiff, correct; the sweet, the sweetish, the tearjerk; in short: all of the so tacky “courteous” style with which people so vainly, hypocritically, and self-deceptively try to set themselves in a favorable light before their fellow man, all the more easily to commit fraud against him if necessary);

— the “art of living” (as to the “white Frenchman” [this designation too stems from the report of the German General Staff], who, still devoid of all sincerity of character, devoid of a deeper worldly wisdom and culture, dolled up to the point of craziness with absurd phrase-work, now frivolously calls even the cheapest dog-carnality by the name “love” and—but then such a shortsighted life-artist!—meets his end precisely through his art of living!);

— “cleverness” (as to the Italian, who, lacking the chivalry of bandits, has coined for bandits the bandit word of sacro egoismo, who in his unspeakably primitive state of mind still believes in the efficacy of the devious paths of trickery and dishonesty, and by preference bleeds to death on them rather than opting for the straight, open roads that, with mental effort, foresight, and energy, alone guarantee conveyance to the goal);

— “craving for lands and devouring of nations” (as to the animalistic Russian, who foists off weepiness and sentimentality in alcoholic inebriation as nothing less than goodness of heart; who, if he failed to contribute to culture a Moses, Christ, Luther, Mohammed, and otherwise the highest assets of science and art, gave it instead, as the most beautiful flower of his goodness of heart, the invention of the pogroms”; who, although he has not even digested what he has piled up in his stomach of voracity, nevertheless craves new victims from hour to hour; who, driven by alcohol, hurtles onward as the most hideous murder- and fire-menance in the world—consider the sacking of Poland);
And now in the province of Art as well the same spectacle: those who are capable establish things of value, the incapable destroy them merely through imitation or erroneous interpretation; nevertheless, even the most incapable want to be regarded as fully equal in ability, and, as the “equally able,” get into the way of the one who is truly capable, complicate his life and work—in short, do everything that provides any kind of satisfaction for their envy, etc.

imitated so cheerfully even by the most abject savages (where in the world, be it in the smallest township, in the poorest village, isn’t there already a so-called “Little Paris”? where not already the vain, true French “Art of Living”? where not also the “good” English, French, Italian “Styles,” where not cleverness, top hat, fork, W. C., etc.)—but they march nonetheless all, all, as they say, “at the forefront of civilization” (and as each individual nation fancies, only with itself “at the forefront”!)

But those who live by the “Purpose,” perish by the Purpose. One day, standing in the service of things created by God and the verity of such things, the Nemesis will rip the mask from the face of “Purpose-individuals” as well as of “Purpose-nations” and punish them pitilessly, without first asking whether, because of a blameless incapability, they were unable to discern the inadequacy of their ability (this may be true of the French, Italians, Russians, for example), or whether, perhaps dimly sensing their mental inability and their lack of character, they thickly smear their unclean cheeks with rouge only to make a better outward impression (as may be true of the English and Anglo-Americans, to whom hypocrisy is the most complete expression of the soul).

The executor of the Nemesis, however, is the Intellect.

Especially for the artist, as representative of the Intellect, such a conflict between “Purpose” and “Intellect” is an almost daily experience:

There the man of “Purpose”: he considers only the commodities (the money) as the truly “practical” value of the world, accordingly only himself, who produces, buys, or sells the wares, as the true “Purpose” of creation; regards on the contrary the Intellect, to the extent that it cannot be traded in and exploited as a commodity for business purposes, only as a really superfluous, impractical accessory to life, thus also its representatives as beings lying outside of the “Purpose of creation”;—but here the artist: he represents the actually absolute, the apparently purposeless; regards the “practical” of the Purpose-person as impractical, the absolute as the only “practical” thing, but “practical” in the elevated, productive sense of the word unfortunately still not accessible to the Purpose-individual; knows that that man of Purpose, therefore his opponent, as a rule owes his worth not so much to his own ability as above all to the commodity (the money), in comparison to whose, so to speak, latent superior abilities he himself scarcely plays any longer a significant role, since he instead lends his name only temporarily to it; knows that that man of Purpose, inherently replaceable at all times by a substitute (but can a Beethoven ever perhaps hire his composing done for him?), all too often represents, if absolutely necessary, barely a final zero, so to speak, after the last zeroes of his net worth.

In such cases of conflict between “Purpose” and “Intellect,” the “Purpose” does battle for the most part only with the all-too-cheaply-procured weapons of wealth, and by using at the same time all of the power accessories with which unfortunately the state too mostly vests only the latter, only trade and wealth—vests them unjustly, both in the moral and in the purely material respect, considering that the merchant, as primary representative of the “Purpose,” owes more to the commodity and the work of others than they on the contrary to him; that it is the merchant alone who has, with his avowal to the panacea of the “useful,” since time immemorial prevented religion and morals from becoming real among men; that it is none other than he who is the worm that sits in the craw of humanity and devours; that it is he who alone causes and wages wars, yet during the wars succeeds in making himself “indispensable,” only to commit further treason against the fatherland through usury —, the “Purpose” now, as though armed with the plating of all these advantages, essays to humble and conquer the Intellect by forcing it into at least material subordination and dependency, and thus pressing it down into a second, inferior position. Despite all of this, however, the Intellect alone remains the true victor. For even the richest Purpose-individual must, if he is not to degenerate like
Could Marx not have known all of this, not have experienced it? Oh yes, he knew it, and he himself gave forceful expression to this thought (see above, the passage where he speaks of Beethoven’s sufferings). Except that he didn’t know, indeed had not even any notion of how, through proclamation of an idea of equality, he was reduced to merely a mouthpiece for the all-destroying laity. In the hands of the

an animal miserable in its golden stall, grovel for blessings of art and science, and seek in their noble asylum refuge from the Erinyes, who hector and badger the intrinsically incapable and animalistic Purpose-humans from dawn to dusk, from dusk to dawn.

And if our artist is moreover a genius, then he knows—in the battle against the minions of Purpose—not only how to defend himself successfully against their attempts at humiliation: he knows in addition how to consign them to the lower stratum within the social hierarchy by if necessary showing them the door, and explicitly teaching them that the ”Purpose” of creation can be imagined least of all by one who, measured by his own trifling value, is certainly the most dispensable and purposeless of all, a being homeless on earth and in heaven.

And now, in a situation similarly propitious to that of the artist of genius in comparison to the ”Purpose-individual,” the genius of the German mind in comparison to the hostile Purpose-nations finds itself the executor of the Nemesis. Not only does it repel all manner of humiliation, the ”French intrigue,” ”Moscovian domination-quest,” ”English custodianship,” it is even in the position to show the door to those nations of pseudo-culture and to consign them to the second and third place, so as to keep for itself the first place of the culturally superior victor.

Blood still flows at all corners and ends. If those nations still so closely affiliate and hope that as many as eight or more of them in a federation might conquer the opposing two or three simply through superiority in numbers—merely because in keeping with their primitive shopkeeper-arithmetic they have learned this much, that eight is more than two or three —, the German mind will nevertheless prevail; because according to a different arithmetic, to be exact one of the higher true culture, which is unfortunately still unknown to those nations, often two or even only one signifies more than eight, particularly when along with the smaller number the mind too is a co-combatant.

The German mind will expose those nations—let them rally to whatever slogan they may, indulge in whatever true orgies of mendacity, hypocrisy, slander, dishonesty, cruelty, and so forth they will—in their inability and lowness; it will punish their conceit; and will finally make them housebroken, so to speak, for the culture room, as they truly have not been up to now.

But let the German mind also gather the courage to report: it is not true that all men are equal, since it is, rather, out of the question that the incapable ever become able; that which applies to individuals surely must apply to nations and peoples as well, so that unrestricted evolvement is no more attainable by the former than by these latter.

Let it finally dare to speak the truth openly to the face of the other nations, however unpleasant it might be to them; and let it not shrink back even from condemning this or that nation as a whole, despite the exceptions of important individual representatives. Even a criminal by no means commits murder without interruption from childhood into oldest age every day, from dawn to dusk, from dusk to dawn; even a criminal sometimes produces an excellent child, a fine idea; even a criminal is also sometimes calm and well behaved, especially so long as everything flows according to his wishes—and is nevertheless dealt with and scolded as a criminal only because of a single misdeed: why should we then not similarly name the English nation, for example, as a great criminal among the nations despite a Shakespeare, Carlyle, Byron, etc.? For peace will not come to mankind until inequality, the principle of all creation, becomes an axiom in the intercourse of nations and individuals as well, until the only strong mind will carry the scepter.

How much harm the world would have been spared if, instead of praising, for example, King Edward VII as a genius, it had promptly recognized him rather as a paragon of inability, which he in truth was (can a prodigal Sybarite, whose greatest accomplishments thus far manifested themselves only in foppery, suddenly
layman, though, the idea of equality becomes that cannon with which they have the temerity to try to shoot the genius down from the heights; for however much they do need the genius—what would their life be without the works of the genius?—, they cannot bear his presence. Equal, indeed, among themselves, the laity want to see the genius as one of themselves, and therefore instinctively despise the idea of inequality. It is thus only a poor service that Marx has rendered his hero Beethoven when he himself, faced with such a powerful documentation of human inequality as Beethoven, nevertheless articulates the idea of equality, and in its name welcomes even all laymen to the temple of Art as “interpreters” and “observers.” The fitting punishment befalls him, though, for, as I have shown just above, he became entangled in numerous contradictions, which ultimately led him to the most glaring misjudgment of Art:

Edward played the sonata. I confess that I sensed the lugubrious expression of the second movement, but that I could not agree with Edward’s interpretation. It is true, chimes sounded, and in the well-known trill-passage the striking of the low B♭ quite eerily penetrated the rest of the ringing. The music director began to argue that such a fearsome effect could not belong to the domain of beauty. Where then, Edward asked, would you draw the boundary?

Music dir.: Let me ask instead whether you would draw none?
Edw.: None, if Nature herself provides no stopping-point.
Music dir.: How can you prove commandment or silence of her?
Edw.: Art is life, is the world as recreated by man. What life creates belongs to Art as well, and miscarriage, stillbirth, is everything else. Are we not obliged to leave this life? to accept the idea of death, the loss of things most noble and precious? Why should Art not express what reality has imprinted on us with an iron stamp?
Music dir.: But Art is supposed to comfort rather than to aggrieve us.
Edw.: Comfort is for the weak. The sacred Art instructs us in that it shows and gives a foretaste of what must be suffered; it strengthens us in that it makes
us aware of the awakening powers in our bosom; it exalts us in that, like nature herself, it shows within the downfall the renewal, the new life, and within the end of the ultimate, the eternal.

Here Lenz comments: “How deeply and splendidly conceived,”—a remark that, taken subjectively, of course remains unquestionable, but, if considered objectively, amounts to a contradiction when one reflects on how little all of this allegedly deep and splendid conceiving has benefited either of them, since it was able to help neither Marx nor Lenz in approaching the content of the Op. 111 here under discussion. Here it was the emphasis alone that caused Marx’s thoughts to appear to his mentally as statements virtually pregnant with wisdom, while those truly advanced in Art had in reality to see only a mental vacuum.

No, no, Art and nature, Art and life are indeed different worlds, even though (which cannot be denied) Art ultimately belongs also to nature as well as to life. Art is at the same time also a world independent and of its own, in which, with its own resources, goals completely its own are pursued, so that it is idle to invoke life and nature as the final explanation of Art even before one has fully achieved clarity regarding its own resources. Under all circumstances though—and let this be set against the sum total of Marx’s ideas cited thus far—the work of art hovers above all horizons of all particular individuals, just as the sun and moon hover above the horizons of individuals. But let us not for that reason leave off the preparatory training of the laity for Art; let us merely avoid, for the sake of Art itself, doing the opposite and impeding the educational process by regarding all of them, just as Marx and the hermeneutists and historians all do, as already “interpreters,” “observers,” as authorities from the very outset!

More than thirty years later, in 1859, Marx writes in his Beethoven biography:

The third Sonata pour le Pianoforte, Op. 111 in C minor (the manuscript bears the heading “am 13. Januar 1822”) appears with a forceful, all-subsuming introduction, and unfurls before us in the first movement, fugato, a lifetime of continuous powerful struggle as seen in retrospect. The second movement (the sonata has but two) presents the Theme, an “Arietta,” a gentle, folk-like song, whose strangely wide-spaced voices, whose bass that wanders into the depths, whose turning in the second part (the first was in C major, the meter $9\over 16$) to A minor with the penetrating soundings of e . . . e . . . , whose overall treatment reminds us of those song-melodies of the final journey, blending melancholy and comfort together. Variations expand on what is suggested in the Arietta, all the while preserving its gentle, appealing manner,—who can say it all? who would be capable of saying it all? “I internalized much there,” Goethe once said in a similar situation.
But is this not also the tone of that critic castigated with such extreme severity by Marx himself back in 1824? And need I expressly demonstrate how here each word stacks up only poorly against the reality present in the work of art, and moreover transmits incorrect objective impressions? Just let us at least wrest from Marx Goethe’s remark, which he has so wrongly borrowed for help. I think: what an author internalizes, exactly that is what an observer is obliged to externalize. If even with respect to the Creator men either cannot or do not wish to deny themselves the externalization of hidden secrets of His creation, why will they deny themselves the same revelation with respect to a work of man, precisely to a work of art? No more than acquisition of knowledge about the laws of nature signifies disrespect for the Creator does knowledge of the laws of art constitute disrespect for it. Now if men stubbornly insist on shielding the secrets of a work of art from their curiosity, must this not logically be inferred to be the work of the vanity of the incapable, who need above all an attestation of respect for themselves, and who most surely find it just in the general and equal ignorance?

In the continuation of his portrayal Marx polemicizes too against Schindler’s objections regarding the two-movement plan of the work (see above). It must be granted that in this question he by and large polemicizes successfully against them (which, incidentally, was not difficult). Thus, for example, he writes:

The second formal point concerns the Variations, which form the finale of the C-minor sonata. We were able to find in them no trace of that “intellectualizing,” as the musicians call it (let us say richer contrapuntal style), to say nothing of an excess of it. The variations are figurational throughout. But even a surplus of variety could not be detected, provided that, say, a Haydn-Mozartian standard is not imposed. Beethoven, however, has exceeded this quantity in numerous earlier and later works, and indeed by dint of internal necessity, when, specifically, this form was the scene of an inner mental evolution rather than a mere tonal play. As examples we cite the sonata Op. 47 and the trio Op. 97. The variations in the C-minor sonata keep strictly on the same track; the evolution is altogether logical; its quantity is perfectly suited to their assignment to serve as finale, and indeed after the powerful and greatly expanded first movement.

To this let it be added only that it was not at all possible for a genius of Haydn’s or Mozart’s magnitude to restrain himself completely, not even where, for the

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14 Here as in several other passages—see below—let the esteemed gentlemen of the critical persuasion, who have so often accused me of polemics, be convinced how abundantly other authors as well, previously and now, have indulged in polemics; let the question of whether this has in all cases been done with the same right, with the same means, and—most important—with the same success remain open.
sake of accidental circumstances, his mental powers would from the outset bestir themselves only in moderation. In the variations of those masters as well there is always a certain—always precisely demonstrable, incidentally—Ur-something that can no longer be confused with “tonal play” as Marx understands it (compare *Ornamentation*, pp. 35–36/15–16).

We read further in Marx:

That Beethoven originally intended to have the second movement followed by a third, but later decided against the third movement and expanded the second to serve as the final movement. That he “didn’t have time” for the third movement we need not, given Beethoven’s diligence, take literally; he had reflected for a while on the formation of a third movement, and meanwhile the second had matured as a closing movement just as it now stands. Who knows what still might have been?—there can be no talk of that, especially as we have no basis to go on. Enough, we have the work as it came to be, as it was presented to the public by Beethoven. That is what we must go by; that is the basis on which we must decide whether the work, as it stands, is cohesive and artistically complete or not. Beethoven’s earlier plan, which in any case is not more fully specified, cannot impact the completed work and its interpretation.

Here again it is only the last sentences that we can object to, since surely nobody is any longer entitled to ask “whether the work, as it stands, is cohesive and artistically complete or not”—nobody, at least, who has not already proven himself able actually to read the work just as it stands (compare above, my comment re Schindler). I therefore skip Marx’s further arguments—which, incidentally, correspond completely to those already presented in 1824—and cite only the following sentence with which they conclude:

Even if interpretation sometimes goes wrong, if the imagination tempts the interpreter onto paths of error, even then we live in the spirit, instead of having lived as formerly only in gloomy searching and pondering, like the Dalai Lamas, who—both eyes staring at their navel—say “om” and all the while think of nothing but the abstract ideas of the abstract sacredness of the abstract commandment.

It would be desirable that similarly, now, the “Dalai Lamas” of the most recent variety as well—all of the still living laity, hermeneutists, and historians—understand how badly they wrong me, the one who, with his aid, brings them only deliverance from “gloomy searching and pondering.”
It makes on the contrary the most painful impression when Marx, having still the intent in the continuation of rescuing his reputation damaged by Beethoven’s rebuff (see above), now writes:

In mental freshness he still stood there, that we learn from a keenly observant witness; and his lustiness, though tried by much that he had experienced and by the exhausting toil of such creative work, was still by no means broken. Miraculously, the great man had made good that earlier statement: “I will reach down the throat of destiny, it shall certainly never completely bow me.” He had, like the brave commander, step by step, slowly yielding, given up that which could not be defended—only not himself.

But every force has its limit. The musician experiences in his work immeasurably greater assaults on the strength of his nerves than the poet or visual artist, especially if his art is no easy game for him, but the tonal expression of his inner self, and if he doesn’t rely on word and action, but surrenders his soul to the cloud-play of those indefinite, often indefinable conceptions and perceptions that are the content of pure tonal-poetic art. Imperceptibly the nerves are sucked dry; because the mind penetrates to the most profound states of observing and apprehending, the stuff of life volatilizes. It is certainly comprehensible that then, while the human being still appears to be at the height of his power and this power proves genuine, the faint, un-understood feeling of nervous exhaustion rises in ominous images of valediction and death.

And so, we believe, did the three sonatas arise that we have just considered. Schindler reports that people wanted in those days to represent Beethoven’s creative power as having been exhausted, and that, having been told of this, he wrote the three sonatas in a single stroke. The creative power was still there—that he has proven. Yet its very manifestations were directed toward those premonitions that emerge, disguised, turning away from Beethoven’s personality in the E major sonata, more definitely suggestive of him in the two following sonatas, of which the latter, if we have not gone astray, looks beyond death. Beethoven, according to Schindler’s account, is supposed to have received with displeasure a report (in the Berlin Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung) suggesting as much about this final sonata. We can easily believe that. Interpretations that penetrate more deeply into details (like that report, which is not to be discussed further here), can be downright unpleasant to the artist,

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15 This witness was, according to Marx’s own depiction, an Englishman who visited Beethoven on September 28, 1823, and took a stroll with him into the Helenental (in Baden near Vienna) in order to dine with him there.
who is made by them to feel that he has been taken as though literally. And did Beethoven himself know about the deeply buried content of these awarenesses? Did he not still deal with opera plans and other important designs, of which we have already learned? Was there no Ninth Symphony to write?—except that those plans remained unrealized! Except that the symphony itself was a word of farewell!—

All that was thereafter produced, leaving aside bagatelles, were only the last quartets.

Truly, in this matter they are all equals, the Marxes, Lenzes, Riemanns, and so forth: Herr Marx, who, despite the complete absence from his interpretation of objective content, nevertheless claims to be in the right in comparison to a Beethoven even after the latter, even after the master has in his indisputably superior knowledge completely dismissed that interpretation; Herr Lenz, who for his part now endorses with conviction such impudence and self-righteousness from Marx: “Schindler calls this explanation and others of the same kind [where did he find others of the same kind of this power?] wrong-headed; he reports that they were displeasing to Beethoven; he forgets that the work of art can be in the right even against the artist, that Beethoven the irritable could think differently from one moment to the next”; Herr Riemann (cf. 110, p. 12ff), who, having gotten himself into a situation with respect to Brahms similar to that of Marx with respect to Beethoven, now likewise tries to assert his correctness, despite the fact that Brahms had unequivocally rejected his opinion. They all refuse to entertain the notion that if Beethoven himself—“the irritable,” as they say—“could think differently from one moment to the next,” they themselves cannot yet think at all, at least where tones are concerned. In their so infinitely great shortcomings, the one in comparison to Beethoven, the other in comparison to Brahms, they still fail to notice how much impudence lies in words like “interpretations that penetrate more deeply into details.” Was just the composer, then, who created the thousand details as they do lie before all eyes, supposed not to have penetrated more deeply into those details than any interpretation-butler, who besides has yet to prove that he has even seen any of these latter? How far astray foolish self-righteousness can lead an interpretation-butler, however, is shown best of all by Marx’s final words: “only the last quartets.” Are the last statements of Beethoven then actually so little that one would be entitled to characterize them by the word “only”? Where an interpretation-butler cannot even recognize the definite marks of genius in the tones of the composer, he claims to have recognized clearly in them nothing less than the signs of death, which allegedly hovers over the genius and his tones! How, then, could this even be possible? And such a sin against the sacred natural force of the genius, such lack of respect toward God, who places the genius into
the world precisely in order to give humans access to Himself! Shall we now, faced with such a serious crime, perhaps be constrained still to discuss seriously Marx’s excusability, the much-invoked *bona fides*? No, no! Isn’t it really more to do with Marx than with Beethoven? Why should Beethoven pay for what Marx has committed against him? No more than ignorance of the law excuses a crime in social life should ignorance of the law in Art, which is represented by the genius (Goethe says: “Nature operates according to laws that she promulgated in harmony with the Creator; Art according to laws about which it has reached agreement with the genius”), grant pardon to the criminal.

What *Lenz* has to say about Op. 111 betrays (just as with Opp. 109, 110) a complete lack of insight into its content; this applies particularly to the first movement, since the second, as a variation movement, poses lesser difficulties from the outset. He writes as follows about the Maestoso (p. 86):

> Animated by the combative mood of the giant sonata (Op. 106), the hero, in leaps through two octaves, arrived at the battlefield.

> Amongst the nocturnal figures that here surround him, he descends with the first notes (leaps of seven steps, from E♭ to F♯ in unison) to the dark powers of the deep. From this splinter of the diminished-seventh chord on F♯ in the initial notes, the full diminished chord is attacked at the leap back, from the lower octave, to F♭. This gaping chasm in G minor is the psychological theme of the preliminary question (introduction) and for that reason it opens ever wider (in C minor, third bar; in F minor, fifth bar). The final crash to the depths (F minor, fifth bar) attains the level ground of a succession of diminished-seventh harmonies of longing expression, most longing of all in the augmented-sixth chord on C♭ (seventh bar). This harmonic labyrinth fills five bars with its burden of ideas (sixth through tenth bars). Exit to C minor (eleventh bar), in which tonic the first armed forces assemble (line in quarters, the upper voice ascending, twelfth bar; reinforced from the low register, fourteenth bar).

Were the tonality of the introduction correctly represented by Lenz: “G minor—C minor—F minor—harmonic network—exit to C minor”—indeed, Beethoven then would not be that master at which Lenz and all of us marvel, but a simple—*idiot*.16

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16 Between me and a “leader” of the so-called modern movement—“each an apex in himself” used to be the characteristic Brahmsian quip—the following dialog once took shape on the street:

He: How do you like my latest string quartet?
I: Would you first tell me, in which key is the second theme of the first movement.
How can I put it in plain words: even Lenz, who, as we saw, spins out a tangle of unconnected statements in the rapid exchange, would never have the audacity to propose anything so ill motivated in language as he assumes of Beethoven in music. After all, indeed, each thought, purely as the sum of relationships, demands a certain breadth and unity, be it in language or in music (tone-”language”). Could the Maestoso, then, possibly have flowed so propitiously from the master if his inner view had not ruled over the space, already further staked out from the beginning, of only one single key, that of C minor in this case?

The solution to the riddle of the “psychological theme of the preliminary question,” however, I gladly leave to the ignorant, of whom I already said earlier that they appear equipped with special organs only for nonsense. As I see it, the actual question for Lenz too, once having tackled the musical depiction of the work, would pertain only to the musical, not to the “psychological,” theme. That ultimately, however, the thematic coherence, as I have presented it in the commentary, is still by no means accurately reflected by “the first armed forces,” is likewise clear.

The above description of the Maestoso is now supplemented by Lenz (p. 86):

More thunder rolls over the field, grows to maximum strength in the two first bars of the Allegro that bursts in above the organ-point on the dominant of the main key (written-out trill in the bass: g, a♭), whose motif is a thunderbolt. I refer to the quarters c, e♭, b (fourth bar) that impact, in unisono, the content of the lowest bass register; the jagged corners of the motif, which is then subjected to further segmentations (always in unisons), after a passage in the upper voice that rummages through the entire compass of the instrument (eleventh and following bars). The release into the Allegro of the Introduction above the broadly overflowing dominant gives the setting the energy of the overture-style. This Introduction is the footbridge that leads to the stormy sea of the Allegro. Similar to the sea in richness of content, different from it by a more tranquil surface.

Not a word of this betrays even the slightest awareness on Lenz’s part of the thematic relationship of the Maestoso to the following Allegro; all the more copiously

He: No key; must there be always and everywhere a key?
I: Certainly. How could we exchange even a single word if the bit of ground on which we stand were to lurch in the grip of an earthquake? And don’t you think, my dear—, that just like us, a musical theme too has as its prerequisite a secure ground? Doesn’t a lurching theme necessarily sweep the ear of the listener too up into its lurching? No more than the earth could tolerate an extended earthquake, or the human being, say, a lasting intoxication without collapsing can a lurching in key of musical themes bring to Art the life that truly can unfold only in complete definiteness—in definiteness of the foundation, of utterance and of reception.
his imagination trades in images and thoughts that, as they are completely indigestible by musical understanding, only wind up in the ear of the reader and nest there. But if even language rejects poetic pictures when their words lack all truthfulness in relation to each other as well as to the main object, when the words thus are merely procurers for frivolous liaisons, how much more forcefully must such pictures be rejected by music, where the latter—especially so truly and magnificently emerging as in Beethoven’s case—just in itself presents, figuratively speaking, the most wonderful pictures. It surely counts as criminal activity when one seeks to entrap the truth of tonal pictures with lies of pictures in language.

But just have a look at the appalling think-blot that Lenz manages to produce with the following words (p. 85):

Of all Beethoven’s solo sonatas, this is the only one that begins with an Introduction—that is, with a microcosm, as we have defined the conceptual category (Op. 5), that has standing in its own right. Not an accident, this Introduction, but an imperative of the content. The sonata-poetry represents in the dualism of its two-movement organization the dualism of the world: resistance—resignation.

To choose validly between these factors, an isolation outside of them was needed, a preliminary question.—This preliminary question is the Introduction, a drama of the resistance of the mind against itself.\footnote{It is astonishing: Bülow, Nagel, Bekker, etc. have frozen as though hypnotized in this think-blot. A veritable hermeneutist-battle was set loose over it (cf. 110, p. 18), which in its most blotted inkiness is really too priceless to withhold from the reader. In his edition, Bülow writes (p. 3, a):

We nevertheless recommend that the reader pay heed to the absolutely superb analysis that Herr von Lenz has provided. He summarizes the character traits of the two movements under two headings: resistance—resignation, or better still: Sansara—Nirvana. With this let Schindler’s tale—alas so widely propagated—that Beethoven dispatched Schindler’s advice to compose in addition a triumphal third movement with the not exactly sublime answer that he had no time for it, he had to stay at work on the “Ninth,” be laid to rest. Make no mistake: we doubt the authenticity of the master’s answer not in the least. But consider to whom it was imparted; marvel at the angelic moderation which lies in that evasive triviality, where a real response would have been much more to the point. One is almost tempted to congratulate the great tonal poet in his dreadful suffering, since that at least spared him the unmitigated awareness of all the disrespectfulness and inanities with which that numskull was constantly striving to annoy his great “friend.” Beethoven could answer a man who had not yet grasped the two-movement plan of the sonatas Op. 53, 54, 78, and 90 only with arguments \textit{ad hominem}, not \textit{ad rem}, in order to resist his importunities.

And so on.

Amidst so many wrongs committed against Beethoven, Bülow still finds the heart for such language—certainly an ill-advised lightheartedness from a man not at all cut out to get to the heart of the matter. But they hold it against me the moment I put musical evildoers, without even affronting them, on the pillory of my demonstrations!

Nagel writes to the contrary in his work (p. 378ff.):}
Regarding the first movement itself we find the following thoughts (p. 87):

It is in Beethoven’s pan-thematic mind that in the thunderbolt of the motif c, e♭, b, the b in C minor, like f♯ in G minor (Introduction), dissonates; but thereby the beginning of the Introduction is linked to the Allegro. . . .

From the wedge b in the motif the movement is accessible (twenty-third and following bars), surges toward all sides, all depths. With the a tempo, after a recitative-like moment of repose (thirty-fifth bar, espressivo, poco ritenuto), the wedge (c, e♭, b) in double counterpoint is driven into the movement’s entry (second a tempo). Where the imitation (ab, c, g) of the motivic quarters c, e♭, b comes to lie in the two-line octave, a fourth flat is added to the signature, [and] the contrapuntally permeated group is entrapped by gravitational force into the counter-motif.

A first victory, a first prize (leaps of the right hand across the tremoloing left in the bass, from the two-[recte three-]line F downward to great d♭; from great d♭[recte d] upward to the three-[recte four-]line e♭, forty-eighth and forty-ninth bars.

In this sense von Lenz found his familiar words: “resistance—resignation” for the content of the sonata. Concepts for which Hans von Bülow has—not entirely happily, it seems to us—substituted others: “Sansara—Nirvana.” The concepts of the Indian religions have no bearings on this work and on Beethoven that justify such a characterization. One can perhaps say: the two movements relate to each other in a sense as cause and effect; for the unrestricted consciousness of physical force that gave birth to the first movement requires, as the highest possible artistic opposite, the resigned mood of the second. Such a relationship does not obtain between Sansara and Nirvana according to the Indian teaching: the former is the eternal, fearsome cycle which causes the human being to be reborn after his demise, and makes the higher or lower station of his new birth dependent on the moral value of the deeds of his previous life; the latter is the disappearance and dissolution of all being, the cessation of all persistence, all stimulation of emotion, all passion, the end of Sansara, absolute nothingness.

And so forth and so on.

And Bekker:

Lenz has designated the objects as “resistance—resignation,” and Bülow has spun forth this thought by proposing the contrast “Sansara—Nirvana.” Yet both characteristics appear not completely to capture the truth, for in the second part of the sonata there is reflected neither the passivity of resignation nor the absence of desire of Nirvana. Perhaps instead the same force is at work in both movements, which turns itself toward the dark in the Allegro, and toward the light in the Adagio—not in self-forgetting abandonment of its own being, but in restless striving of a thoroughly personal energy cleansed of earthly slag. Nirvana-moods are alien to Beethoven. Victorious in his case is always innate force. It need not be manifested in explosive discharges: it can also, as in the Variations of Op. 111, rise in unrelenting thrust to heavenly heights. But precisely this thrust characterizes—with all wishes and hopes—the indestructible personality, and makes the two movements appear not as philosophically conceived, but as purely artistically realized contrasts. It is basically the same psychological process of action and reaction that in earlier years had evoked Beethoven’s mutually complementary twin-works, and which here applies this duality-type in a unifying manner to a single work of grandiose transcendence.

[Lenz renumbers bar 19ff. as 1ff.; Schenker has adjusted Lenz’s numbers to correspond to those of the score.]
But not having his fill of this in any case inadequate prattle, Lenz further anaesthetizes his readers with this narcotic (p. 87):

According to tradition, the poet, in apprehension of death, is said to have remarked about the motif: “thus Fate knocks at the door!” A fearsome knock indeed!—Schindler relates the words to the beginning of the C-minor symphony. Let us understand Op. 111 like that symphony as an ominous poem of fate.

Should it perchance happen that the genius, prompted by one or another instigation from without, clearly provides information in words, the recipients’ relation to the very word is again just as doltish as it is to the tones, which remain ever inaccessible to them. They retain, of course, nothing in memory—neither occasion nor the words of the master; and if the uncertainty that results from this incapability of the recipients now condenses into “tradition,” what then can even centuries and millennia do about a so abominably condensed laity?

The further course of the movement elicits the following sentences from Lenz (p. 88):

Counter-motif fiftieth—fifty-fifth bar, A♭ major. Modulation to the lower third instead of the relative key (A♭, lower third of C). The modulation by third is so close to the tonal poet, so organic for him, that here one could call it the Beethovenian lower relative key, just as in minor keys the pre-Beethovenian repertoire sought out the upper relative key.

The cry of longing heard round the world. Soulful richness in the thirty-second figurations (Meno Allegro). A few bars of hopeful upsurge! A passage on the diminished-seventh chord on d (fifty-fifth bar, tempo primo) drives everything hither and yon. The wedge of the motif buckles down in the basses (fifty-eighth and following bars) and treble voices (sixty-first and following bars). Stormy cadence of the first part in unisons (a). Reprise.

A unison, a-modal in itself, permits the greatest possible modulatory freedom. Beethoven employs the unison by preference for his third-modulation by leap, where points of access are unavailable to him—are, by the more weighty content, as here, excluded (compare the first movement of the F-minor Quartet [Op. 95], etc.).

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19 Who doesn’t know, for example, the similar case of the so-called “Raindrop”-Etude by Chopin, which by “tradition” is at the same time applied to several different works of the master? Primary for the layman is always just the “raindrops,” secondary the work.
Certainly, a whole world separates the musician from the hermeneutist and the layman. Just look: surely the figure in bars 56–57 appears to “drive everything hither and yon,” insofar as this locution expresses what the hermeneutist merely reads off with the eye; in reality it belongs most strictly to the structure of the second theme, for which it provides—just this is important to know—the necessary closure in the form of a cadence. In order to judge just how ridiculous and irrational that locution is in our case, one need only imagine that somebody should assert of the words at the last position of a thought, well established between two fixed points, that they—just they, the final words, “drive everything hither and yon.” (?!)

A unison is never a-modal, since every tonal series, even if precisely a unison, at least latently expresses a definite harmony (see Harmony, §76ff.). Only the scribblers and bunglers of today have brought it to pass (at first perhaps honorably from incompetence, but later also quite dishonorably with the full intent of the incompetence) through the pure concatenation of chords finally to arrive at tone-successions of an a-modal type, which however, for exactly that reason, no longer have anything whatever to do with music.

The following remarks (p. 89) pertain to the development:

Middle section (seventy-first to ninety-second bar, second part). A furious Roland.\(^{20}\) Appears on the scene at the weak (second) beat; the thunderbolt of the motif, transposed to G minor, in the iron fist (g, b\(^{b}\) quarters, f\(#\) half notes, seventy-second and seventy-third bar; f, a\(^{b}\) quarters, e half note, seventy-third and seventy-fourth bars). We recognize immediately the wedge of the motif, in ashlars of the cyclopic style, intensified to a double counterpoint (d, e\(^{b}\), a half notes instead of quarters, bar 76, treble).

At the point where the key signature of two flats is expanded by addition of the third flat, the wedge, strengthened from the unisono-motif to chords with diminished harmonies and half notes instead of the respective thirds quarters, encounters the tusk—that is, the seven sixteenths on the third (weak) beat, above the arpeggiated organ-point of the bass note G. We are led to the latter (in the eighty-fifth bar) by the doubled F\(#\) in the low registers. With Beethoven, one had to expect that the ominous leap to F\(#\) at the beginning of the Introduction and the tonality (G minor) thereby entered upon would bear fruit.

In its stupid vagueness the last sentence can only be called a monstrosity, which surely disarms any sort of seriousness.

\(^{20}\) [A reference to Ludovico Ariosto, “Orlando furioso” (1532).]
Piano Sonata in C Minor, Op. 111

The following (p. 90) pertains to the Reprise:

Return. Ninety-second—one hundred-sixteenth bar. Hewn into stone (unisono in double octaves). The motivic group is exponentiated. Never has the joint effort of all forces played a more magnificent role in piano writing, and the whole thematic complex is drawn upon to this purpose—even the small oasis of rest of the First Part (espressivo poco ritenueto) in the form of a ninth (c, g, db) that spirals longingly upward, against which (from the first a tempo onward) a storm-cloud full of quivering lightning-bolts rises. Undaunted, step after step the second a tempo fights onward, against the sharp corner of the motif (f, ab, e) in the bass, up to the light-radiating counter-motif in the major key of the tonic (C major, one hundred sixteenth—one hundred twenty-first bar). The tonal reconciliation of the heretofore unchecked dualisms.

Not a single word is devoted by Herr Lenz, however, to the fact that in this section as well the structure still modulates, and first of all expressly turns toward F minor (modulating section!), so as to attain the principal key C major from there only; thus nary a word either about exactly that which had to be one of Beethoven’s primary concerns, and which otherwise surely poses the greatest difficulties for composers in the task of winning the tonic key for the second theme in the Reprise when they seek something other than the most banal, convenient paths. Still more than in Beethoven’s brilliant key-treatment, Lenz delights in the chatter of his own depictions, with which he accompanies, in the manner of an auxiliary noise along with the music, the work of art. But for exactly that reason, entrapments only all the worse lurk in wait for him (p. 90):

The figuration in the counter-motif, deriving from that in the First Part (thirty-seconds, meno allegro):

\[
\text{Ihres Helmes Büsche wehen} \\
\text{In der Feinde Schwarm!}
\]

The plumes of their helmets wave
Amidst the swarm of enemies!

is, in this intensified affect, at this place, in this context—a stroke of piano-magic, which makes the tonally poor instrument appear as a tragic coloratura singer. Through spinning-out of the recitative-like points (ritardando, poi a poi [sempre] più allegro), through a two-bar (episodic) reference to the counter-motif (in its dotted component; minor key of the subdominant of the tonic, F minor)—and indeed
in imitative style, whose place in the first movement was justified by this expansion onto the counter-motif group—this counter-motif group is extended from six bars in the First Part to sixteen bars in the Second, and thereby takes on a character that is ever more urgent; it is followed by the magnificent closing-group of the First Part on the diminished-seventh chord of d (here of f♯).

And so, then, I ask: what in the meantime became of the C major? Why is F minor newly arrived? Alas, had Lenz only sensed how much more intrinsic poesy is woven into the life of the tones, how they, leading the genius but also led by him, follow—and must follow—here just this path and there just that path, yet ever only an image of itself (just as to men their own life signifies in turn only as much)—had he, I say, only known something of that, who knows whether he would not altogether cheerfully have exchanged for the pathetic grimaces of his own little pictures the vastly greater poesy of endless tone-Nature!

Lenz continues:

Cadence, as in the First Part, in two unisono-strokes. That the doubled octave C, the first note of the Coda (Anhang), announces the sharp corner of the motif, we recognize from the two following chords (twelfth and thirteenth bar before the end; the quarter-note wedges of the motif c, e♭, b); they are the substrate of the piano-Heroide of the First Part. The chords are c, e♭, f♯, a, e♭ and c, d, f, ab, b—in the first, the uppermost note e♭ belongs to the motif, in the second the upper b. Through the quarter rests between chords, the rhythm becomes syncopated; extraordinarily effective, they suggest half notes (in tonal effect)—let us call it enlargement (augmentatio) by means of rests —, and thus achieve an iron-clad unity of the motif. Through the displacement in rhythm, the motif, overgrown by polyphony, hides in the two chords like a weathered-away tomb-inscription among ruins. The wanderer marvels on reading it: Heroem calcas!

After the three marked sforzato strokes of the motif, solidly embedded as it is in chords of diminished harmonies, the bass, full of plagal associations, rumbles beneath with a rising and falling passage (F minor) [derived] from the eighth-note component of the motif. With the dignity of a Sophoclean chorus, the upper voices join the flowing bass in the manner of a chorale, with excursions toward C major,

\[\text{Schiller: “Mit dem Genius steht die Natur im ewigen Bunde; / Was der eine verspricht, leistet die andre gewiß.”} \]
\[\text{[“With the genius, Nature stands in eternal alliance; what the one promises, the other surely achieves.”]} \]

\[\text{[Ovid’s Heroïdes (Heroïnes).]} \]

\[\text{[Hero’s dust; from sta, viator, heroem calcas (“stop, traveler, thou treadest on a hero’s dust”), the epitaph inscribed by Louis de Bourbon, Prince of Condé (1621–86) over the grave of his great opponent, Franz Freiherr von Mercy (d. 1645). Information supplemented from http://www.sacklunch.net/Latin/S/staviatorheroemcalcals.html.]} \]
in the premonition of a release in the following movement, whose tonality is announced through the birth-pangs of this C-major.

The bass is completely seized by oscillations of the principal major key; these aim—along with the liturgical-solemn hymn hovering above in the upper register—toward the C-major chord, fading in *pp*, which is quietly spread out over five octaves.

How on earth did Lenz arrive at only an F minor with excursions toward C major? Would accordingly now F minor be the key which repeatedly swallows, so to speak, the C major and then belches it out? or would perhaps this very C major be the key, which (a real Charybdis) on the contrary slurps F minor in and out? But then what of the C major of the ending? And such an unclear thought process is supposed to have guided the pen of Beethoven himself, although he—as Lenz doesn’t dispute—achieved such clear results? How could that be at all possible? Or does the layman know better than the artist (Lenz does, we know, like to insist on this), and our piece would then end—as was allegedly unknown only to Beethoven—actually in F minor and not in C major?

The general characteristic of the whole movement, however, is described as follows (p. 87):

Ironclad will is the character of the tragic-emotive Allegro—incomparable in the conscious gravity of its decisions and the pertinacity of their execution; unprecedented in trenchant brevity along with overpowering content as a tempestuous gait taken to the highest degree.

In truth, Beethoven wrote clearer and better...

Now to Lenz’s conception of the Arietta. Right away the original instruction “*adagio molto*” gives him occasion for a critique, since he would have preferred “*andante quasi allegretto*.” No doubt he has in mind here the pace of the individual sixteenths themselves, in ignorance of the fact that tempo specification in the works of our masters by no means always relates to, say, the smallest units, but often to the pace of the larger (as just in our case to the *j*), about which only the concrete content alone decides (cf. *Ornamentation*, p. 44f./20f.).

He is still in the dark concerning the disposition of the variations, which here consists only in an increase of motion, whereas the highest degree of motion is of course finally contrasted by a corresponding moderation of the theme. Lenz’s understanding of the master’s individual meter signatures is thus no better; that he should now perhaps be able to recognize and reveal the marvel of the movement in particular—which reader would really expect such from him? Well, he then elaborates all the further and more noisily his idée fixe of Beethoven’s
allegedly new variation form, whose unveiling he had already undertaken in his discussion of Op. 109 (cf. 109, Lit., p. 7 f.). To my response presented there I shall add merely this: since music rests organically on repetition (cf. Harmony, §4ff.), it uses for this primary need so much of variations (repetitions, “reprises”\(^{24}\)) that one need not look for such only in the art-form of actual “variations.” It amounts to an injustice to music as a whole, therefore, to seek and marvel at the highest expressive power of variation technique of which music is capable only in variation-works. Hasn’t Lenz, by failing even to notice the profound variations just in the first movement of our sonata, already forfeited at the outset the right to laud the, so to speak, “official” “Variations” of the second movement as in music allegedly unprecedented variations? And is it not thus completely unnecessary for him to shelve as an “antiquated word” the term Variation and to recommend in its place Veränderung as a new concept-designation? Beethoven’s triumph, as I have shown above, has been precisely that of bringing about—with resources that for the most part were no doubt used already by Handel, Bach, Haydn, Mozart—a phenomenon that impresses the—permit, if you will, the all too true-to-life contradictio in adjecto—exclusively optically-hearing laity as a completely new thing.

To what extent Beethoven expressed himself in his variation works too in a still more stark, passionate manner than the older masters, however, remains—as a personal note—in comparison to the primary question of pure compositional and formal technique, definitely of only secondary importance. The lasting-power and significance of an art-form lies precisely in the fact that even the most varied temperaments, such as may well arise in the succession of generations, can still find therein an expressive medium.

Moreover, if Lenz considers the ordering of the variations here, in Op. 111, so cohesive and strict in a new manner that one could omit no variation without destroying the “one movement” (see pp. 62 and 96), he overlooks the fact that exactly the same may be the case for even the earliest variation works. And only because Lenz knows nothing of all this, he intoxicates himself—carrying away insecure readers—with the strangest fictions, which of course only attests that he was obviously impressed more strongly by Beethoven’s personality in general, as also by his variations in particular, than by the earlier masters and their variation works. The issue of the composer’s personality, however, as already stated above, must be kept separate from the artistic

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\(^{24}\) [Here Schenker has in mind not only the written-out “varied reprises” of, for example, many of C. P. E. Bach’s keyboard sonatas, as well similar unwritten variations to be applied at the performer’s discretion in sections marked for repetition by \(\text{F \text{\textlig}}\), but also the countless instances of varied parallelisms, as in the first three bars of Mozart’s B♭ Piano Sonata, K. 333 (the two descending fifths, \(F^\text{}-b^\text{}\text{♭}\) and \(c^\text{}-a^\text{}\)), and of antecedent phrases with varied consequents, such as Chopin’s Nocturne in F\(\#\), Op. 15 no. 2, bars 1–16.]
achievements that are without doubt rooted in it, at least until the latter have been understood in a purely absolute sense—that is, purely as tonal products per se.\textsuperscript{25}

After these demonstrations, I believe I do the reader a favor by sparing him all of Lenz’s raptures, so rambling and far too vacuous, concerning the second movement.

And Nagel too, in his turn, reads the first movement of the sonata altogether inadequately (pp. 374–406).

In the Maestoso he understands C minor as a “leading key” (?) Now apart from the fact that such a formulation intrinsically signifies a contradiction in terms—at any given point there can be only one key, while a simultaneous governance by several keys could only presuppose that perhaps one would count as “leading”—, he intends nevertheless to reconcile with that allegedly “leading key” a true modulation that “seeks out the most remote regions,” and in reference to this he says explicitly (p. 376): “Such movements, in which Beethoven, initially not establishing the key, conceals the goal of the modulation, we have already encountered. . . .”

He writes further: “The two bars of the beginning, as the Maestoso is constructed, are first transposed up a fourth. Then the initial motif begins once more in [the] lower register.”

Along with all of this, his head is abuzz with the following merry muddle: “a B-minor triad in the indefinitely dissonant six-four position”; “a surprising and mysterious chord-succession” (for bar 6ff.); “the key of the dominant” (in bars 10–11); “steadily rising upper voices” (for the principal motif of the Introduction); “the leading theme” (?)—and finally he gives, as though to compensate for all of these deficiencies of interpretation, a gooey aesthetic effusion, which, however, undoubtedly counts as its own complete undoing. For example (p. 377):

That here, in the Theme of the Introduction, two different psychological factors are again active, one easily sees: the pithy force of the beginning, which in itself at first undergoes no intensification, but a certain placation in the turn to the dominant of the leading key and through the descending line\textsuperscript{26} of the motif; and next, the second factor, which presents itself in the second bar and

\textsuperscript{25} Thus let us not forget that Mozart, for example, unfortunately died when still very young; who knows whether he too might not ultimately have sounded personally stronger tones if he had only lived to Beethoven’s age. Therefore I once jokingly, and yet quite seriously, answered a well-known architect who felt compelled to denigrate the earlier masters in comparison to Beethoven: I have the impression, that laymen first of all fear in Beethoven the strong man who under certain circumstances, particularly in a cross temper, was capable of throwing them down the stairs, which would never have been a threat to them with Mozart, the ever tender and kind one. Thus it happens that Beethoven’s more emphatic artistic statements above all instill fear into the layman, from which the latter then instinctively summons forth and nurtures also the emotion of a great reverence for him.

\textsuperscript{26} [The e\textsubscript{♭} – c – b\textsuperscript{1}, bars 1–2.]
which leads back into the energetic force of the beginning. Thereby is given, as always in such cases with Beethoven, the hint of what kinds of powerful opposites will collide with each other in the movement. And thus there appears as well several bars later a suggestion of the course of the entire work. […]

Or:

This jarring juxtaposition is like a foretaste of what is to come, which the movement shall unveil: once again Beethoven’s gigantic spirit will cast its thunderous word over the land, but then, in happy conviction of its unbroken force, find the courage for renunciation. In all of this lies as well the explanation of why this sonata had to be limited to two movements. . . .

Or:

How Beethoven here from the very outset comprehends his task more profoundly than in the Sonata Pathétique is shown by the Introduction in traits of a concentration not found in the earlier work. . . .

And so on.

In the first theme Nagel characterizes bar 23 (poco ritenente) as simply “an essentially psychological element,” as “a meditative element” (?) etc.; at the consequent, bar 29, he speaks of a “middle tonal region” and moreover divides the—as such still unrecognized by him—modulating section into “periods,” of which he designates the individual members as “a new one,” “a third one,” and so forth, and at the same time speaks particularly of the cadence of bars 48–49 as merely “two transitory bars” (?). Absurd too is the sentence (p. 384):

The sections under discussion are also noteworthy because they manifest sequential formations, such as are in part typical of Beethoven’s last creations.

In fact the critic, as what follows will show still more precisely, gets lost in the idée fixe of sequence formations in a downright calamitous manner, conveying the impression that he had either seen repetitions of such a kind—which are an integral component of any formal technique at all, and which therefore are not lacking in Op. 111 either—here for the first time and experienced them particularly deeply, or perhaps had only mentioned them out of uncertainty, just to fill space. Thus he then
sees sequences for example right away in the second theme, since he continues the last-quoted sentence as follows:

The second theme also contains something similar in the repetition of the rhythmic figure: \( \frac{1}{2} \) \( \frac{3}{4} \) \( \frac{5}{4} \) and its variation, the quintuplets.

Nagel continues:

The subordinate theme, which begins in a rhythmically altogether definite manner, is in its formal articulation not to be considered as antecedent and consequent: it rests until close to its cadence on the tone E♭, the dominant of the key; moves temporarily to F minor; and is led back to A♭ major without finding a real conclusion.

Or: “incisive dissonance-chord abruptly interrupts the mood of the second theme.”

Accordingly the second theme too is supposed to be in several keys at the same time (cf. above, Lenz as well), and the cadence of just this theme to signify an interruption—conceptions that can occur only to somebody who obviously has completely thought through neither the segments in question nor their content.

On the last movement, Nagel has the following comments among others (p. 385):

Here Beethoven has added to the Theme appearing in the upper voice two harmonic inner voices and a lower voice identical to the previously-used melodic figurations.

What in particular Nagel could have meant by the “identical lower voice” I must confess I truly have not even a clue; for the rest, I skip here his aesthetic musings devoted to the second as well as the third theme and quote merely the objection that he raises to the repetition called for by Beethoven simply with repeat signs (p. 386):

Thus the repetition of the First Part closed off by the repeat-signs appears not completely justified psychologically: such intense feeling of power certainly can, one should think, yield to sudden doubt, but not to the dark resentment and rigid defiance that is expressed in the main motif at the beginning of the movement. The repetition seems all the less necessary given that the main motif in the whole First Part has played and is destined to play a predominant role. So Beethoven’s direction to repeat the First Part of the movement may have occurred under the influence of the traditional practice; its eradication lies in the interest of unity of the sonata’s poetic idea and its development, in our opinion.
Perhaps just from this the reader will recognize best of all what separates a musician from a non-musician: on the one hand, our master is allowed “an intense feeling of power,” a “unity of the poetic idea” fashioned with superior intellect, on the other hand it is suddenly assumed that the master has himself at the same time severely violated this very unity! Instead of first asking why Beethoven considered it possible to demand a repetition of the First Part at all—and this is the only way that understanding could be gained of the true principles of form to which he has just given expression—, the undoubtedly inferior instinct of the critic contents itself instead with vague counter-demonstrations, which truly can serve no purpose!

The Development is for the most part left in the lurch with aesthetic phrases and interjections, as for example (p. 386):

Sudden doubt replaces the battle-happy and victory-confident mood of the conclusion of the First Part.

And so forth and so on.

The rests in bars 69–71 are characterized as “significant,” but probably only because their true significance—lucus a non lucendo—27—is still not in the least grasped by Nagel.

Monstrous too is the sentence (p. 387) that pertains to bar 76:

The passage begins with the conclusion that brings the ostensible digression to C minor.

Nagel, of course, assumes an augmentation of the Theme in the counterpointing half notes. Still more regrettable, however, is that he speaks regarding bars 82–83 of “both powerfully ascending and descending counter-lines,” and that in bar 86, where the main key of C minor, which has after all long been established, is now merely continued, he assumes instead of the V of C minor the abrupt appearance of a brand new key, G minor. Moreover, he thinks it necessary to return again, as the following sentence shows, to the sequence-succession (p. 387):

Here too, as at the beginning of the Development, one will note the sequential continuation of the motif, which occurs five times in succession on different tonal levels. But who should fault the treatment on that account?

27 [“From late 4th-century grammarian Honoratus Maurus, who sought to mock implausible word origins such as those proposed by Priscian. A pun based on the word lucus (dark grove) having a similar appearance to the verb lucere (to shine), arguing that the former word is derived from the latter word because of a lack of light in wooded groves. Often used as an example of absurd etymology.” Information from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Latin_phrases_(L).]
On bars 90–91, the following (p. 388):

... in that he... unites the chords and the arpeggiated segments of the bass into unisono lines.

An explanation of the key in bars 105ff. is not even attempted; instead, Nagel speaks in a completely naïve manner of a “passage beginning with the F-minor entrance,” so that he is then obliged only to comment likewise regarding bar 113, with similar naiveté, on the “transition to C minor.”

For the C-major key of the second theme, bar 116ff., he wants to have the following explanation accepted (p. 389):

Why did Beethoven furthermore have the second theme enter in C major instead of choosing the minor mode? The answer is not difficult, if one considers the unreservedly energetic course that the setting has taken in what precedes. Definitive for the major-mode version was obviously—in the sense of the concatenation of sentiments within the movement—not only consideration of the orientation of the parallel passage within the First Part (A♭ major); rather, here it was the forceful, internally unswerving sentiment of the preceding, which has been far more impressively emphasized than in the First Part, that contributed to the choice of the bright major key.

Naturally, Nagel speaks regarding the second theme of the Reprise as well (just as he earlier spoke regarding the second theme of the First Part) of a “modulation to A minor” in bar 120, of a “return to C major” in bar 121, and again emphasizes the sequences, in order finally, however, in admirable devotion to the genius, nevertheless to accept them willingly and with conviction (p. 390):

What of equal value and in the spirit of inner coherence could have served better at this point than these sequences?

all of these affirmations, as is obvious, do not guarantee that Nagel could also provide the solution to the difficult tonal issues of the Reprise. In fact, all that he can muster toward a real solution is only the following stammer (p. 389):

Here the contemplative character of the second theme gains significantly in breadth, and that already oft-emphasized element of intentionless music-making, so characteristic of the last works, claims greater space in the
far-flung lines of the upper voice (at the *meno allegro* in the first part of the second theme); the retarding elements accumulate for this reason; then for a moment there is a darkening as in the first version of the theme...

... Then the first tempo enters with sharply dissonant sound, and from here on a strange transition to F minor takes shape, in which key once more the second theme begins; here the quintuplets emphasized earlier return in greater number, so that a sequentially spun forth and upward-directed series is formed, which, in alliance with the powerfully forward-pressing rhythm of the lower voices, cancels the original significance (that of a retarding element) in which the quintuplets of the sonata appeared and turns it into its opposite.

The sublime essence of synthesis alone certainly rules out any question of intentionless music-making by a genius like Beethoven. Therefore no critic should dare to think up for the work of such a master such an obtuse characterization, which he obviously knows only from his own “intentionless” way of babbling and stammering.

Bars 132–134 are understood by Nagel rather than as cadence again only as “conclusion,” and of the key of the closing theme we read (p. 390):

The bright major key is extinguished, minor chords predominate; in place of the triumphal security of expression at the close of the First Part only restless haste appeared. The entrance of the minor scale can under no circumstances be motivated solely by tonal unity, as the rule of tonal construction could demand; here it is rather the vacillating sentiment that arrived in the movement with the entrance of the second theme that has become decisive.

But where was the “rule of tonal construction,” “tonal unity” earlier, when the issue in question was all the many difficult problems of tonality in the Reprise in general? Why did Nagel not already consider the question of key from this point of view long ago?

Among the comments regarding the Coda, let us focus only on this sentence (p. 391):

In the rapid way in which Beethoven mutes the sharp accents of the syncopes, in the manner in which, through the rising lines of the upper voices and the linking of the dark F minor with the bright C major, he finds an exit from the disquieting atmosphere of the closing movement, the nearly superhuman will-power of the master can be ascertained.
Just the very formulation “linking of the dark F minor with the bright C major” suffices to debunk the following sentences (p. 391) too in their aesthetically impor-
tunate laziness:

With might he subdues all ambivalent emotions, forces them into calm and steady paths of feeling. How incomparably great the moral strength of this man was, how great his power of expression as artist! The proud vow that he took, never to succumb to even the harshest destiny, he upheld throughout his life. These last piano sonatas too are a telling, eternally admirable witness thereto.

About the second movement in general, he has the following to say (p. 394):

To lay bare the infinitely tender venation of this movement through the analytic word, to follow the altogether finely differentiated moods in their individual ema-
nations, can be seriously undertaken by nobody with expectation of adequate suc-
cess. Every effort toward that end will necessarily remain only an attempt.

The reader doubtless understands the hint; nevertheless, he would have been entitled to expect better than what Nagel actually offers. He too, like Lenz, unfortunately lacks complete awareness of the intensification created by Beethoven with such incomparable clarity and that is indeed so distinctly perceptible, and also, as a con-
comitant, lacks understanding of the significance of the individual meter signatures of the variations. Veiled from him too the profound reason the so obvious expedient of the triplet marking is nevertheless on principle eschewed by Beethoven; indeed, in the key-related consideration of the Arietta itself he goes so far as to say: “The first period takes leave of C major only in the consequent, and even there only transiently,” by which he says nothing more and nothing less than that in bars 6–7 allegedly both a modulation and a remodulation takes place (how monstrous!). It is therefore truly not worthwhile to enter into his presentation of the details, since, having developed from the basic views that were just shown to be mistaken, it can at no point suddenly hit upon the truth.

But it should at least still be mentioned that Nagel discerns a “mildly suggestive recollection of the Theme in the broad chordal tones that stand shortly before the entrance of the trills and the modulating section,” and that he depicts the visionary transition to the fifth Variation as follows (p. 404):

The setting turns toward the tonic of Eb major, and here develops this marvelous, profound melody [quotation of bar 38ff.], reminiscent of the beginning
of the leading Theme, whose mysterious meditation remains inaccessible to the human word.

Thus he even fails to recognize therein the Arietta—an exceedingly unpleasant impression, which now really no longer permits me to expose further his aesthetic mush, for all that it would certainly benefit the reader to see where a critic must under all circumstances be led if he has not yet learned to focus his ear exclusively on the tonal life. Therefore, I spare the reader here also the quotation of a polemic that, apart from those directed at Lenz and Bülow (see above), Nagel moreover aims at [Ludwig] Nohl, [W. J. von] Wasielewski, indeed at his own spiritual preceptor, Marx. In this he has the mishap, as unnecessary as it is droll, of even failing to notice that he polemics against none other than Marx; for, unable to recognize as such the persiflage in the above-quoted critique of Marx’s, he comments on it in a footnote: “the index amusingly names Marx himself as author of this exquisite cry of distress.” Thus the Beethoven-literature provides unawares an amusement even outside the bounds within which the critics struggle with representation of the tonal activity.

In *Bekker* we read (p. 189):

“Dear young man, the surprising effects that many ascribe only to the natural genius of the composer are often enough easily achieved by correct use and resolution of the diminished-seventh chord.” Beethoven is supposed to have said these words to Karl Hirsch, a grandson of [Johann Georg] Albrechtsberger, whom he instructed for a brief time in harmony, out of piety toward his one-time teacher. The statement appears particularly credible, because it fully agrees with Beethoven’s own practice. Steps and chords of the diminished seventh are for him as for his contemporaries the strongest expression of painful affects. In his last C-minor sonata before this one, the Pathétique, Op. 13, Beethoven’s practice concerning the diminished-seventh chord in this role reached a temporary culmination. The Beethoven of Op. 111, even before conceiving the piece, stands upon the pinnacle to which he has been directed by the Pathétique.

I have already had occasion (see the discussion of Lenz) to explain that with all similar known utterances of our masters, only the greatest caution is always necessary. For if already in their letters (or in whatever they have otherwise communicated), those passages that touch on purely musical questions have invariably been interpreted only wrongly just because people have not yet learned to recognize behind the words in question the profundity of the masters’ corresponding practice, how much more do their oral statements for exactly the same reason lie at the mercy of
the recipients’ power of comprehension? But the judgment of the recipient does unfortunately play a central role with similar records: what he may hear from the master, he judges immediately, and probably decides just on that basis what and how he should disseminate what he has heard. But can one who, gifted with only little capability, long deeply mired in error, understand and take possession of the truth and high wisdom of the master’s words just at the moment when he appears before him? And if he has not understood these words (since that was impossible for him), how can he at all form a judgment of them? Mustn’t the judgment rather be absolutely only a false one? It is clear that there can unfortunately be no possibility of a really true literal transmission. Such an immeasurable loss! For if it were possible to secure the oral statements of our masters so accurately as their written ones have finally in great numbers come down to us, and to collect and elucidate them, the oral as well as the written—it would truly have to be the Book of Books, to which no manual on art could compare! What a boon such an undertaking would be especially for hermeneutists and historians, who would now be most magnanimously excused from their pointless work—“there is nothing more dreadful than busy ignorance,” as Goethe says. Unfortunately, they in particular understand nothing of

18 I can’t help remembering the deceased last master of German music, Johannes Brahms. He withheld from nobody, not even the young and youngest, requested comments on works presented to him. Many treasures were thus bestowed by Master Brahms in the last years of his life (between eleven and twelve o’clock each morning, in his modest room in the Karlsgasse), and perhaps still more treasures were given out when he was younger—but where has all that been scattered to the wind? (Let me cite here as evidence from his youth perhaps only, for example, the journal of Georg Henschel, an altogether disgusting renegade who has just now so shamelessly converted from the nation of a Brahms to the uncultured one of the English hypocrite—how clearly it can be read between the lines that he repeats the words of the master only most casually, without understanding their meaning! But what all else, and what of importance, Brahms may have told him in conversation that he could by no means even just notice, not to mention be able to write down. But if that were not enough—such shameful ingratitude was all too often our master’s reward: for not only did the recipients of those jewels fail, to their own detriment, to grasp the artistic wisdom of the master, they vilified him as they were scarcely past his threshold, and reviled him as an unsociable, brutal artist, indeed as a churl. Because they were not yet able to cherish the benefits of the masterly mentor and to understand the wisdom of his words, they defended themselves in their vanity with all conceivable means, like hedgehogs rolling up into balls, so as finally even to denigrate his character. Indeed, just precisely with the accusation of churlishness, the ungrateful churls were altogether quick—quicker than with their understanding! And thus, then, was one of the tenderest, most good-hearted, helpful artists—a man, of genius as a human, of genius as an artist, who showed himself capable of the highest love, deepest devotion, most noble loyalty and gratitude—dragged down by his dear contemporaries, merely because he spoke valuable truths that, however, still remained incomprehensible and therefore inconvenient, even hurtful, to those in error, or otherwise defended himself energetically against churlish deeds committed or attempted against him. And such a caricature of the great master, fashioned by a dissolute generation of contemporaries, sadly comes down to posterity and awaits rectification by an excellent mind, which just from the master’s tonal creations alone will reconstruct the image of precisely a radiant artist in manly perfection, and will fling the moral trash of a contemporaneity prattling with wicked tongue and of a posterity prattling in echo with equally unclean mouth back onto the heads of those who—humanly and artistically narrow of mind—dared still further to serve their own worthless vanity with a slander against the master!

19 [Goethe, Maximen und Reflexionen.]
that, and they in particular like best of all to tell of a thousand long-forgotten cadavers, whose words from the moldering depths they understand equally little (since these words cannot be understood, no matter how well-meant the effort).

The correctness of what has just been said will be evident to the reader when he now reads what Bekker writes in the continuation:

He does not dally long with preparatory phrases—with a bold leap he is in the midst of the fermenting chaos. The most excruciating dissonance known to his tonal language forms the introductory chord. Jagged rhythms full of dark majesty; abruptly hurling diminished-seventh leaps; solemnly saturnine harmonies, which are compacted by the chromatically upward-pressing bass notes and the sinking upper voice as though by a slowly closing iron clamp.

It is of course just one diminished-seventh chord ($e \flat^3$) that has come along, and look: Herr Bekker, who represented himself as so well versed in this chord, failed to recognize it, merely because the chord here by coincidence appears differently from those he encountered in the textbooks from which—instead of from the works of the masters—he gleaned his knowledge. “Chromatically upward-pressing bass notes,” “a sinking upper voice”—that is all he sees; only just the composing out of the diminished-seventh chord he doesn’t see. Yes, of course, third above third, three stories high this chord must stand before his eyes if he is to recognize it; but if he has once recognized it, then, then, yes then he raises his eyebrows, draws himself up to the stars, fraternizes with geniuses and judges from on high over artist and work and so forth. And this brain, so poorly carved according to bad textbooks and a still worse aesthetic, actually imagines that what Beethoven understands as a diminished-seventh chord was only the same three-stories-high one known to him and his teachers!

In a newspaper essay published not long ago Bekker sought among other things to propagandize for the notion that one day, finally, even the rule of “tonic and dominant chord should be broken.” What more does Herr Bekker know, then, of tonic and dominant than of the diminished-seventh chord? What does he know of how, in particular, a Bach, a Beethoven used these harmonies? If he knew it, indeed he could never again write so foolishly! But unfortunately, Herr Bekker is not alone with his thinking. I know, for example, yet another scatterbrain of today who recently, in a small sentence-conglomerate of about thirty lines (under the title “Why New Melodies Are Difficult to Understand”), took up arms against the cardinal principal of music, against “repetition.” Such a lamentably disgusting picture this sketch offers too! Here one who, out of unspeakably miserable incapability, has not yet even recognized the repetitions in the works of our masters, forthwith behaves boorishly toward all those who are not all too eager or able to sink with him into the depths of his ignorance. O, could I but summon this Don Quixote of un-composed-out sonorities, and all of his fellows, and the hermeneutists and historians as well, to a stage, a single, big one, in order to demonstrate to them all before a paying public that by tonic, dominant, diminished-seventh chord, by repetition, they understand only that which they themselves know and can do, and that therefore—such biting irony!—they only cut into their own flesh when, with such Indian howling, they attack the primitive triadic- and seventh-chord-structures and inane repetitions derived only from their own conception! But who furnishes them such concepts, such a practice, if not again only they themselves? Why do they take vengeance for
Still, let us hear more of Bekker:

A loudly groaning phrase sounds above the piercing bass sforzati.

From this it is clear that the main content of the Introduction is completely unknown to him as well.

And further:

Through the mysteriously brooding darkness, mildly rumbling thunder sounds, from which suddenly, with elemental intensification, the powerful theme emerges. It is an idea of immensely gripping plasticity. With the sixteenth-note triplet rolling upward to the root, with the mighty third-leap and the backward-leaning diminished fourth, it appears as the image of the steer, which lunges forward with horns held low. A brief, portentous break—then the battle begins. Wild unisono-passages, such as Beethoven has never written since Op. 57, spiral upwards. In the continuation of the theme as well, the diminished seventh dominates. With a tremendous leap from contra D to three-line C♭, the battle appears to have reached its climax: a bright A♭-major theme appears.

In the practice of his critical lines, the diminished seventh renders Herr Bekker really good services; the latter can in any case be seen more clearly than the alleged services of the diminished-seventh chord in Beethoven’s practice. Hermeneutically aglow, he then continues:

But the storm quickly breaks out anew, rising to accents of enormous impact. Even the second entrance of the motif of promise in brightly radiating C major brings no moderation. The basses take over the hope-awakening theme and drag it into the dark depths of minor, while the first theme dominates in irresistible triumph—until its strength is exhausted and it finally droops in faltering strokes. In an irrepressible fury, it has destroyed itself, has sapped its own strength. A short C-major epilog sings the dirge of the warrior, fallen through excess of his own obstinate will.

the inferiority of their own ear and artistic understanding just on the masters; why do they smear just the inimitably proud works of the masters with conceptual dung that has nothing to do with them? Our masters wrote their harmonies, their repetitions, truly differently, and those toddlers would have to wander the earth for centuries before they might even hope finally to comprehend the practice of our masters! And in such a mental condition the same toddlers believe themselves able to bring about or promote the “future” of music! What do unborn infants know of life, which may perhaps never be granted them? What, by the same token, is known of a “progress” to such musicians who likewise are to be compared only to still unborn infants? Let them still trade, according to trader practice, in “modernity”—they shall, however, leave our masters to their own timeless modernity once and for all!
Herr Bekker further attempts to explain the first movement—unknown to him, as we see—of our sonata through comparison with a composition just as little known to him, the master’s *Coriolanus* overture:

There exists a distant similarity between this and another C-minor piece of Beethoven’s: the *Coriolanus* overture. In both works a fractious energy is shattered by the weight of its own impact. Both works are monodramas. The contrasts are only of an appeasing nature; the tragic aspect is contained within the principal theme itself. In *Coriolanus*, the liberating transfiguration of the will crushed by its own power is lacking—it lay outside the intentions of the tonal poet. In the sonata, it is suggested already by the C-major conclusion. The will, annihilating itself in the earthly battle, is uplifted into the spheres of light. The refined force soars up to blissful transfiguration.

Regarding the second movement, Bekker opines:

The active basic character of the second movement, far removed from all passivity, emerges so decisively already in the theme, with its tremendous thrust upwards to the heights, that plan and course of the variations are already pre-drawn with unmistakable clarity. The melodic line, rising from C to G in both antecedent and consequent, characterizes the development of the whole, which the variations initially pursue further only through the ever more dissolving rhythms, until the radiant upturn of the melody as well occurs. Ever more ethereal, insubstantial sounds the singing. The higher tonal regions evoke the impression of inapproachable, imaginary heights, the accompanimental rhythms dissolve into undulating harp music, the stars glitter far above in trill-flickers. And among them hovers the melody like a silver thread, which the longing of a great human spans from earth to heaven.