

The Witness of Praise – The Hope of Dwelling

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“the praise that *responds* to the divine giving is the essence of human speech. It is in speech that the gift is received, and that we can give something of our own, in other words ourselves ... the voice that praises always has something tremulous about it, knowing at one and the same time that it cannot be enough and yet that nothing other than it *can* be enough.”¹

According to a highly influential tradition of thought, the purpose of a human life is to be elsewhere. It is not to be here—on this earth, in this body—because material bodies of any kind are deficient, defined by need, prone to disease, and destined for death. As characterized by Socrates, one of this tradition’s most eloquent proponents, no human being can be happy or attain the truth of its being if it fixes its attention on worldly things. Truth resides in the separation of the soul from the body, and the soul’s flight from the material world into an ethereal, divine realm, characterized by perfection. While we live, we must always be preparing to die—this is what the art of philosophy is all about (*Phaedo*, 64a)—since death marks the moment of the soul’s separation from the body, and, if properly trained, the soul’s escape from the material world.

Socrates is long dead, but his fundamental inspiration—a pervading discontent, even contempt, for embodiment and materiality—is alive and well today. It isn’t hard to see why. While we live, our bodies are often subject to conflicts and pains that drive us to despair.

¹ Jean-Louis Chrétien. *The Ark of Speech* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 123.

Pleasures may be real, but they are also ephemeral, and frequently outweighed by the immensity of the suffering and violence going on all around us. Given the misery of so much life, why put one's emphasis and trust in a body or a world that are bound to disappoint and fail, or simply get us into trouble? Even short visits to a hospital, prison, or nursing home are enough to conclude that life must be better elsewhere, and in some other (dis-embodied) state. No wonder, then, that some scientists, though having long given up on traditional talk of a soul's immortality, are working hard to invent a techno-immortality in which human minds, understood as information patterns, can be liberated from their bodies and uploaded into machines that can, in principle, be improved upon forever. ²

Ancient, Socratic soul immortality and postmodern, transhumanist techno-immortality act as bookends to a diverse array of dualist anthropologies that are distressing, if not perverse, in their assumption: the fulfillment of a human life requires that one learn to resent, turn against, and ultimately seek to escape from its embodied condition. By pitting soul against body, mind against matter, machine against flesh, and culture against nature, the success of a human's life is made to depend on the despising of the material contexts that make its life possible. ³ The hatred

² For a fascinating look into the worlds of techno-immortality, see Mark O'Connell's *To Be a Machine: Adventures Among Cyborgs, Utopians, Hackers, and the Futurists Solving the Modest Problem of Death* (New York: Doubleday, 2017). Max More and his wife Natasha Vita-More, for instance, believe that the human condition, as presently experienced, is upsetting because it is beset by the "tyrannical onslaught" of disease and mortality. The thought that our bodies can die at any moment is "unnecessary and unacceptable." This is why it is so important to develop the technologies that will produce a "diverse platform body," a machine-device, that will be more powerful and flexible than any organic body so far seen. When the technology arrives, human minds will be replicated and uploaded into these machines (22-41).

³ The rejection of traditions, and the perpetual quest for a new beginning that saturates the modern ethos, represent another form of dualist discontent. Like the imperfections of bodies and materiality, the mistakes and violations of the past have let humanity down. History, as Hegel once said, is a slaughter bench on which the happiness, wisdom, and virtue of peoples have been sacrificed. The response? Break with tradition, create a new future, don't look back.

and contempt at work in these philosophies, what Bruno Latour has called humanity’s “criminal intoxication by the beyond,” is hardly an abstract affair.⁴ It has been, and continues to be, realized in ecosystems degraded, habitats destroyed, species made to go extinct, human bodies brutalized, and communities mined for their labor and wealth, and then abandoned.

Dualist ontologies are hardly an ideal context for the offering of praise. Why? Because praise depends upon, and is a response to, God’s primordial and abiding affirmation of the goodness and beauty of this worldly life. From a Christian point of view, the world in which we live, its suffering and violence notwithstanding, is not a foul prison from which we should seek escape. It is God’s creation, which is another way of saying that each place and every creature exist because they are the expression of a divine delight that establishes their sacred worth. Rather than seek escape, people should desire to contribute to the healing, nurture, and reconciliation of the places and bodies that are hurt, hungry, and despised. Rather than express contempt, they should exercise the care that leads to the cherishing and the celebration of creatures. It is the goodness of God creating a wonder-full world that is the foundation of praise, just as any assault on or degradation of creation is the cause for lament. Apart from an appreciation of life’s abiding beauty and sanctity, there can be no authentic praise or lament.⁵

⁴ Bruno Latour. “Let’s Touch Base,” in *Reset Modernity*, eds. Bruno Latour with Christophe Leclercq (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2016), 11.

⁵ I am aware that world-denying, body-despising Christians have claimed to offer praise to God. In my view, their so-called praise is confused and a sham, because it rests on a hatred of what God loves. Moreover, it is a denial of God’s own, primordial praise: “The first of all praises is the praise that God himself utters at his creation. To this silent praise all human words of speech, whether profane or religious, will always be a reply” (*The Ark of Speech*, 115). David Bentley Hart makes the point clearly: “it is delight that constitutes creation, and so only delight can comprehend it, see it aright, understand its grammar. Only in loving creation’s beauty—only in seeing that creation truly is beautiful—does one apprehend what creation is” (*The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth* [Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003], 253). It is a contradiction to claim to affirm the Creator, while despising what the Creator creates and cherishes.

The inspiration for this way of thinking and speaking is Jesus of Nazareth, who gave practical and embodied expression to God's affirmation of the created world. Bodies simply cannot be the vile things dualists believe them to be, because the flesh of this man was the fitting and pleasing home in which "the fullness (*pleroma*) of God" (Colossians 1:19) dwelled. God is not ever opposed to materiality or embodiment. What God opposes are the sinful ways of being that degrade and destroy bodies. His feeding, healing, befriending, and reconciling touch of flesh, and his compassion for all who suffer, was the practical demonstration of his love of bodies, and is the soil out of which authentic praise grows. His way of life does not lead people to despise creaturely bodies and their places. Instead, it draws them more deeply into life with them, and so establishes the practical patterns that inspire and shape authentic dwelling and the fullness of life. To slightly modify an old theological maxim, God became human flesh and dwelt among us, so that we could learn to dwell with each other in his eternal ways of love. When God is all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28), that is, when divine love is the sole power that moves among and through bodies, then the places of life will have become heaven.

God does not *need* our praise. It is the world and all its inhabitants that need it, because when people learn to praise God for the goodness of creation, they will also take up a loving and delighting disposition with respect to everything they encounter and touch. Praise is the creaturely attempt to express joy in and gratitude for the goodness of this life.⁶ In other words,

⁶ It is important to note that praise is not confined to human beings. In scripture, creatures of diverse kinds are understood to offer their own forms of praise to God. Psalm 148, for instance, describes how all creaturely life, ranging from "creeping things and flying birds" to sun and moon and shining stars, offers praise to God, while in Psalm 65 the meadows, hills, and valleys "shout and sing together for joy." Their praise communicates the recognition that delight in God's good creation is not confined to human beings. Joy and celebration are the pinnacle of all life because in them creatures express their gratitude to God for the blessing that this life can and should be.

praise positions people in the world so that the care of creatures and the cherishing of places become the fundamental priority and the abiding aim. This is why God *desires* praise. The logic of praise always entails a double offering of oneself to God *and* to the world. Apart from a love of this world in the offering of oneself to it (in the various modes of attention, care, and celebration), one cannot be said to love God. This means that praise, far from being merely of pious or sentimental interest, is of the highest practical importance. The logic of praise leads, as its practical entailment, to the love of creatures and the world.

If my brief account of the logic of praise is true, then praising and particular forms of dwelling, particular ways of being with others, go together. As I will argue later in this essay, the inspiration to dwell in this world—here defined as the capacity to make one’s life and place a hospitable home—depends on an affirmation of others as sacred gifts from God. Rather than being sites from which to flee, creaturely bodies are the material manifestations of a divine love that calls people to care for, cherish, and celebrate them. The praise that honors and expresses gratitude to God, and the lament that sorrows in the spoiling of God’s gifts, finds its practical accompaniment in people who commit to being with others in healing and harmonious ways. As we have now to see, it is not to be taken for granted that people will find in themselves, or in the cultural contexts that form them, an ability to praise.

The Muting of Praise in Modernity

Franz Joseph Haydn’s masterwork *The Creation* (1798) assumes that the praise of God is the fitting response to a world that is wonderfully made. Though reality may begin in a state of chaos, the power of the Creator is affirmed as the one who accomplishes order and beauty. Building upon the opening chapters of Genesis, along with verses from the Psalms (19 & 148)

and John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Haydn composed a musical score that is meant to express God's own composition of the world from a disordered to an ordered state. Light banishes darkness, and reveals a delightful world in which grasses grow, eagles proudly soar, and numberless creatures emerge from the womb of the earth. The heavens declare the glory of God, while the world proclaims a Creator who looks after and provides for creatures. The whole of creation is presented as a lavish scene of fertility and fecundity. This is why the work of humans, as first witnessed in the lives of Adam and Eve, is, along with all creatures, to praise God forever. "Sing the Lord, ye voices all. The praise of the Lord will endure forever."

"Haydn's *Creation* stands as one of the final monuments to Enlightened Catholicism ... God's existence and his benevolence are celebrated—not argued, nor fought for."⁷ It also stands in a long tradition of thought, extending back to Greek philosophy, but then also developed by Christian thinkers, in which the order of the cosmos is believed to exhibit a harmonious musical structure, a *harmonia mundi*. One of the last Fathers of the Church, Isidore of Seville (560-636), gave a succinct expression to this idea when he wrote, "Nothing exists without music; for the universe itself is said to have been framed by a kind of harmony of sounds, and the heaven itself revolves under the tones of that harmony."⁸ Centuries later, Martin Luther (1483-1546) spoke

⁷ Mark Berry, "Haydn's *Creation* and Enlightenment Theology," in *Austrian History Yearbook* 39 (2008):25-44, 42

⁸ As quoted in Lawrence Kramer's "Music and Representation: The Instance of Haydn's *Creation*," in *Music and Text: Critical Inquiries*, ed. Steven P. Scher, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 139-162), 143. Kramer notes that "the metaphor of *harmonia mundi* was very much alive for Haydn's audience" (143). Haydn's musical score moved from unstable dissonance to tonal harmony, as when the chaos at the beginning of creation sounds in the C minor "chaos chord," but is then resolved in the C major "chord of nature." "As Haydn models it, the creation arises by repeating its own prehistory in 'harmonious' form" (153). Haydn simply assumed harmonization to be the way to represent the dawn of creation in musical form.

similarly: “from the beginning of the world [music] has been instilled and implanted in all creatures, individually and collectively. For nothing is without sound or harmony.”⁹

Why speak this way? The world appeared to the ancient Greeks as a cosmos, as an ordered and integrated whole. It was not irrational. If it was, we would have great difficulty speaking about it intelligibly. One powerful way to describe its *ratio*, proportionality, and order was through music, because, as Pythagoras had discovered, there is a relationship between musical pitch and the length of vibrating lines. Musical intervals, like the octave, follow a strict ratio of 2:1. What music demonstrated is that the proliferation of sounds we can hear, much like the proliferation of bodies we can see, have meaning and significance because they express an immaterial, eternal order that can be described in mathematical terms. For the ancient Greeks, and for those inspired by them, the true value of music depends upon “our ability to turn away from its concrete, sensual presence, and toward the bodiless beauty of number and form.”¹⁰ The musical harmony that we experience in this life, in other words, opens us to the cosmic harmony that orders and integrates the world. When recast in a theistic register, it opens us to the divine mind that created the world: “Arithmetic directs the mind towards immutable truths unaffected by the contingencies of time and space. But music advances even further towards...a penetration of the very heart of providence’s ordering of things...”¹¹

As historians like Leo Spitzer have argued, “The idea of world harmony, in which music is seen as symbolizing the totality of the world, is an idea which was ever present to the mind of

⁹ As quoted in Jeremy Begbie’s *Music, Modernity, and God: Essays in Listening* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 31.

¹⁰ Wayne D. Bowman. *Philosophical Perspectives on Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 62.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 64. Bowman is here quoting the eminent church historian Henry Chadwick.

the Middle Ages.”¹² Writers often described harmony to operate on three levels that exist in analogous relationship to each other: world harmony (as reflected in the movements of celestial bodies, the balance of the four elements, and the cyclical succession of seasons), human harmony (as reflected in the structures of the soul, the body, and their interaction), and instrumental harmony (as reflected in the sounds of instruments and voices and their interaction).¹³ Together, these expressions of harmony witness to a profound and all-encompassing order that make life and music possible. Earthly music, the kind that people create, can thus be a grateful and celebratory response to the eternal music that sings through everything.¹⁴ As Christians like Boethius developed this idea, they came to express the harmonizing power that unites and integrates the world as the power of God’s love. It is divine love creates, sustains, and orders a world that is so beautiful and fruitful. The task of human beings is to heed and extend this harmonizing power in their own interactions with each other and with the world so that the great diversity of places and life forms, now sympathetically attuned to each other, create a symphonic whole.¹⁵

To proclaim the world to be a place of harmony is not to deny that tension, discord, and violation occur. As various theologians also acknowledged, the power of sin has become

¹² Leo Spitzer. *Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony: Prolegomena to an Interpretation of the Word ‘Stimmung’* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1963), 35.

¹³ These orders are described in detail by Andrew Hicks in *Composing the World: Harmony in the Medieval Platonic Cosmos* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

¹⁴ Spitzer describes Ambrose of Milan as one who invented the Christian hymn as a performance of world harmony by human singing. In particular, he put a stress on polyphonic singing as a way of expressing gratitude to the Creator who joins the diversity of creatures into a beautiful whole (*Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony*, 19-32).

¹⁵ Hicks describes that for medieval writers it was not only God who listens to the harmony. The cosmos listens to itself and loves the concord that it hears. “The world’s balance and order, its proportionate structures, are loved because they are beautiful, and the recognition of that beauty puts the lover and the loved in relation, in proportion, in concord, and the cycle starts all over again” (*Composing the World*, 18).

pervasive, acting as an irrational force bringing about needless disharmony, degradation, and death. Sin is a discordant power that sets itself up in opposition to Jesus' healing, nurturing, and reconciling ways with the world.¹⁶ If love desires sympathetic attunement, sin moves through unsympathetic individuation. But sin is not primary or originary. It is a derivative, distorting reality that presupposes the world's primordial goodness, beauty, and rational order.¹⁷ Without this order, it would be very difficult to account for life's fertility, growth, and flourishing.

No person, of course, can presume to understand the full complexity of what this "order" or "harmony" is, and how it works. But one would have to be blind not to notice that we live in a world that is remarkably generative of diverse and beautiful life. As Saint Basil the Great put it in one of his sermons (*Homelia Hexameron 2.2*), "God has united the entire world which is composed of many parts, by the law of indissoluble friendship, in communion and harmony, so that the most distant things seem to be joined together by one and the same sympathy." What this uniting power looks like has been revealed above all in the person of Jesus Christ. Commenting on the Christ hymn in Colossians 1, Theodore of Mopsuestia wrote, "In Christ will be 'preserved

¹⁶ Maximus the Confessor argued that Jesus Christ is the eternal Logos that brings about the order and beauty of this world through the power of divine love. Sin is a disordered state that deforms and destroys life through the powers of envy, hate, greed, etc. "Jesus Christ ... is the fashioner and provider of all, and through himself draws into one what is divided, and abolishes war between things, and binds everything into peaceful friendship and undivided harmony" (*Ambigua*: 41:1313b, in Andrew Louth's *Maximus the Confessor* [New York: Routledge, 1996], 161-162).

¹⁷ It is important to stress that from a Christian point of view, the reason/Logos that creates, sustains, and orders the world is not an abstract, impersonal principle akin to a timeless Platonic form. Because Jesus is understood to be the eternal Logos that creates the world (John 1 & Colossians 1:15-20), the "reason" at work in the world is first and foremost a personal principle of love, God's being-for-others, and God's sympathy and care for creatures. This means that the work of harmony is not the application of an abstract, mathematical principle, but rather the embodying of love as the power that reconciles, harmonizes, and respects the diversity of creaturely life.

from this time on a harmonious, peaceful, and universal binding (*connexio*)'. He will preserve the 'perfect bonding (*copulatio*) of all things' and prevent any further dissolution."¹⁸

Haydn's *Creation*, as I have already noted, assumes a composer and a listening audience that is prepared to perceive the world in terms of its primordial harmony. From this perception, the praise of God naturally follows, because each person is the beneficiary of a world so generative of beauty and life. But what happens when people no longer find themselves in a position to perceive the world this way?

Praise is a precarious posture. There is no guarantee that people will believe it to be a suitable expression of their being in the world. To offer it, people must believe that the places they inhabit, and the creatures they dwell with, are good and beautiful gifts from God, and thus worthy of gratitude, cherishing, and celebration. They must perceive their world to be saturated with sacred significance, and embrace their life as a call to respond sympathetically to the divine goodness and beauty all around. And for any of this to be possible, people must inhabit forms and paths of life, along with the social/cultural supports, that "afford" this sensibility.

One way to characterize the time of modernity is to note the erosion of precisely this sort of affordance. First developed by the psychologist James J. Gibson, the idea of an "affordance" refers to an environment's calling forth in people particular kinds of responses. For example, a chair or chair-like object "affords" the posture of sitting to the person who comes upon it. For the person to sit, however, they must inhabit a sensibility in which sitting makes sense or is believed to be desirable. If a hiker is tired, even a smallish boulder or scraggly tree trunk will suffice to afford sitting. But for the hiker who is not tired, the appearance of the boulder or trunk does not

¹⁸ As quoted by David Grumett in *Material Eucharist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 114.

invite sitting, because the hiker has no need to sit. In the action of sitting, objective characteristics in the world come together with a person's desires, expectations, and training such that meaningful activity can be said to occur. What the world is perceived to afford is a feature of what is objectively in the world *and* what a person is primed and prepared to find. A river, for instance, affords or invites several responses: swimming, fishing, beholding, canoeing, damming, drinking, painting, poetry, and the skipping of stones (to name a few). Whichever response is chosen will be a reflection of the perceiver's sensitivity, their likes and dislikes, their fears or aspirations, etc.¹⁹

In the time of modernity, the world's ability to "afford" praise is called into question. It isn't that the physical topography of places suddenly changed.²⁰ Trees have pretty much the same size, contour, color, and smell. Rather, what changed is the constellation of sympathies and expectations people had, such that one's encounters in an environment no longer communicated sacred significance, and thus invited gratitude and celebration. The sacred grove now registered as so many board feet of saleable lumber. Put another way, what people experienced, how they

¹⁹ In *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (Hilldale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers, 1986), Gibson said, "An important fact about affordances of the environment is that they are in a sense objective, real and physical, unlike values and meanings, which are often supposed to be subjective, phenomenal, and mental. But, actually, an affordance is neither an objective property nor a subjective property; or it is both if you like. An affordance cuts across the dichotomy of subjective-objective and helps us understand its inadequacy. It is equally a fact of the environment and a fact of behavior. It is both physical and psychical, yet neither. An affordance points both ways, to the environment and to the observer" (129). Webb Keane has recently developed the idea of an "ethical affordance" in *Ethical Life: It's Natural and Social Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016). Rather than restrict moral norms or rules to mental constructs, affordances embed moral sentiments within the bodily interactions of daily life.

²⁰ Gibson insists, "The affordance of something does *not change* as the need of the observer changes. The perceiver may or may not perceive or attend to the affordance, according to his needs, but the affordance, being invariant, is always there to be perceived. An affordance is not bestowed upon an object by a need of an observer and his act of perceiving it. The object offers what it does because it is what it is" (Ibid., 138-139).

perceived, felt, and interpreted their encounters, shifted as people inhabited new sensibilities and ways of being such that the world ceased to register *as God's creation*. We can see this by attending to changes in the ways people began to think about music.

Daniel Chua has argued that music was naturalized in modernity. What he means is that music lost its grounding in an eternal or sacred order. Building upon the work of Max Weber, he shows how music was reduced to an acoustic fact susceptible to experimentation and manipulation by humans. Modernity is marked by disenchantment and desacralization, such that things are experienced as fragments, and as without value or meaning or purpose apart from the mastering subject that controls them. Rather than being an imitation of or witness to cosmic harmony, music is simply reduced to a human production. Whatever reason or ratio is to be found in music is the reflection of human calculation. Upon listening to music, what one hears is little more than the experiments of a contingent composer.

If we turn briefly to Vincenzo Galilei, the father of Galileo, we can learn how the process of disenchantment unfolds. In a series of experiments on sound conducted in the 1580s, Galilei showed how instrumental sound can be subjected to the controls of empirical science. Music is not a sonorous embodiment of an eternal mathematical order. Rather, sounds are emitted from particular bodies that, in their material configurations and proportions, determine the character of sound. Imperfect bodies produce imperfect ratios. Sometimes, if the material conditions are just right, they emit perfect ratios. This means that “there are no perfect, immutable sounding numbers that stabilize music, only the variability of lines, surfaces, solids, gut, steel, copper.”²¹ Even unison in sound is little more than the accidental coming together of material bodies, or it is

²¹ Daniel K.L. Chua. “Vincenzo Galilei, Modernity and the Division of Nature,” in *Music Theory and Natural Order from the Renaissance to the Early Twentieth Century*, eds. Suzannah Clark & Alexander Rehding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 23.

a contrivance of a human composer exerting his or her will upon an instrument. Here “the harmony of the spheres” is collapsed into “the song of the self.”²²

In his musical experiments Galilei was reflecting a fairly profound shift that would eventually define much of modern science. It is the shift from a *perceptual* approach that seeks to learn the order of things in terms of a larger, harmonious whole, to an *instrumental* approach that seeks to reveal the causes at work in things (so as to optimize their manipulation). In this latter approach, the idea that things reflect and fit within a cosmic order or divine intention disappears, and is replaced by the idea that whatever purpose things have will be decided by us. Contemplative analysis, we can say, is replaced by functional analysis.²³

The effect of this shift is immense, because when function eclipses contemplation, people, to borrow Jakob von Uexküll’s memorable image, begin “to deal with the world in the way a deaf person deals with a street organ. The turning of the roller, the vibration of the tongues and the aerial waves, these things he can establish—but the tune stays hidden from him.”²⁴ Insofar as people are caught in the grip of this scientific posture, they may perceive a great array of things, understand their causal connections, and be able to turn this knowledge to their own benefit through impressive engineering and artistic feats. What will be lost, however, is the sense that these feats have anything other than an ephemeral, self-glorifying meaning. To amend

²² Ibid., 28.

²³ In *From Nature to Creation: A Christian Vision for Understanding and Loving Our World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015) I describe this shift as the movement from an *iconic* approach, one in which the world is apprehended and engaged as a sacred gift to be received and shared, to an *idolatrous* approach, in which the world is reduced to matter that can be manipulated to suit the self-glorifying aims of our own choosing.

²⁴ Jakob von Uexküll, “The New Concept of Umwelt: A Link Between Science and the Humanities,” in *Semiotica*, 134 (2001), 111-123, 114 (as quoted in *Composing the World*, 13-14).

Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, this is world that produces music sung by an idiot, full of sound and fury, but really signifying nothing.

Why would one offer praise in a disenchanted world in which creative production is the demonstration of a fragmented, idiosyncratic will?

In addition to this shift in scientific sensibility, modernity also inaugurated multiple, practical forms of life—urbanization, wage and factory labor, industrial processes, increased mobility, consumerism, individualism, the spectator stance, and reliance on new technological media, for example—that made an encounter with the world *as sacred* less likely. In other words, the ways people increasingly positioned themselves in the world, and the new sensibilities and sympathies these ways of being fostered, made it unlikely that creatures would be perceived *as creatures* or as gifts of God, and therefore engaged in the modes of care, cherishing, and praise.

Julian Johnson's *Out of Time: Music and the Making of Modernity*, helps us understand how the muting of praise came about. Johnson does this not by making praise an explicit focus (in fact, it is not ever mentioned in his book). Instead he documents the many ways in which the sacred *harmonia* previously presupposed, came to ruin.

“The music of modernity is thus, from the start, a broken music. It is broken off from the past, but also broken in itself, defined by divisions and parts and no longer related by any pre-ordained order or unifying *cantus firmus*. As such, it is the music of a new conception of individual subjectivity, self-aware of its separation from the whole. Its task was not to

elaborate in sound the divine unity of the world, as in medieval conceptions of music, but to attempt to remake it..."²⁵

But how does one remake unity or construct order in a world that is believed to be fragmented and in ruins? How does one re-member a world that has been dis-membered by us? Johnson chronicles multiple shifts in practical life that reflected people's experience of their world as alien, fragmented, ephemeral, arbitrary, and boring—hardly conditions that afford or invite praise. Music thus became one of the primary ways for people to explore the prospects of home and a re-enchanted world. "To find a dwelling place in music, to create a home within its space, was always the task of musical modernity. Just as opera dramatized displacement and exile, and the quest for recovery and transfigured return, so instrumental music plays out, in elaborated

²⁵ Julian Johnson. *Out of Time: Music and the Making of Modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 33 (subsequent references to this work will be included in the text following the abbreviation *OT*). In *Who Needs Classical Music?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) Johnson describes how music has always been about human attempts to locate life within an order larger than themselves, whether that order be understood in natural or social terms. "If it now strikes us as amusing that music was once linked to astronomy or natural science, that is only because we fail to recognize *ourselves* there and the historical development of our *own* attempts to understand the world. If we no longer take music seriously as a way of defining our relation to the external world, perhaps we have become not more sophisticated but simply more self-absorbed" (13). Much of modern thought called the idea of a meaningful order into question, suggesting instead that human beings, to use Martin Heidegger's formulation, were "thrown" into a meaningless, even absurd, world. If meaning is no longer located in the world or grounded in a sacred order, then all claims to meaning and purpose must find their source in a self that, paradoxically, is itself presumed to be meaningless. Erazim Kohák has stated the crisis of meaning and value clearly: "If there is no God, then nature is not a creation, lovingly crafted and endowed with purpose and value by its Creator. It can only be a cosmic accident, dead matter contingently propelled by blind force, ordered by efficient causality. In such a context, a moral subject, living his life in terms of value and purpose, would indeed be an anomaly, precariously rising above it in a moment of Promethean defiance only to sink again into the absurdity from which he arose. If God were dead, so would nature be—and human beings could be no more than embattled strangers, doomed to defeat, as we have largely convinced ourselves that we are" (*The Embers and the Stars: A Philosophical Inquiry into the Moral Status of Nature* [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984], 5).

tonal forms, a drama of leaving home, of spatial derangement and complexity, and the search for return" (*OT*, 186).

When we attend to the various strands of musical modernity, we discover how difficult the task turned out to be. To affirm this world and to come to rest in its presence, one must be able to experience a present moment that one believes to be good and of enduring, even eternal, value. In other words, one must be able to inhabit time in such a way that passing moments are potential occasions for celebration and praise. Johnson shows how this way of inhabiting time is precisely the problem that modernity presents: "to be modern is to be too late, fractured from an anterior wholeness by a moment of catastrophic rupture and thereafter separated by a temporal abyss" (*OT*, 16), even as "to be modern is to be too early. It is to be waiting for the dawn, scanning the horizon for an arrival that is still distant. It is to be not at home in the moment, but straining with every fibre to realize a future still far off" (*OT*, 70). To be modern, in other words, is to be "out of time," wandering between a ruined past and an unreachable future, unable to experience the present as compelling and as worthy of our abiding commitment.²⁶ Insofar as the present is experienced as "empty and stagnant," one of the primary tasks of music is to help people stave off boredom, meaningfully "pass the time," and give to temporal progression some semblance of purpose.

²⁶ Johnson observes that "The greater the tension between the opposing currents of past and future, stability and change, the more intensely the present moment has to be seized; the more elusive it becomes, the more time is experienced as essentially empty and stagnant" (*OT*, 96-7). One of music's central tasks, therefore, was "to locate the listener in the present moment with such immediacy and intensity that while the music lasts, there is no past or future" (*OT*, 97). That this role for music has not subsided can be seen by attending an Avett Brothers or Mumford and Sons concert. The intensity and passion that these musicians communicate in their musical performance is such as to make their listeners believe that, in this moment at least, life matters and is of value. Fans sing along, raise their arms, sway and dance to the music in postures that readily resemble praise.

The Hope of Dwelling

To be “out of time” is invariably also to be “out of place.” That is, the inability to find in the present moment a compelling presence finds its corollary in an inability to make of one’s place a cherished and praiseworthy home. Though people clearly are in places—since “to be is to be in a place”—their experiences of place are increasingly characterized by bewilderment, estrangement, and homelessness, what German thinkers referred to as *Unheimlichkeit*.²⁷ Multiple practical factors contributed to this feeling of placelessness, including: the acceleration of travel by rail;²⁸ the industrialization and relocation of work from one’s home and community to an impersonal factory (where, as Karl Marx so well analyzed in his 1844 manuscripts, multiple forms of alienation were created); the centralization and corporatization of energy;²⁹

²⁷ The maxim “to be is to be in place” is from the ancient Pythagorean philosopher Archytas. For a detailed account of the meaning of place, along with humanity’s movement in and out of place, see the magisterial work of Edward S. Casey in *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997) and *Getting Back Into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*, 2nd Edition (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009).

²⁸ Wolfgang Schivelbusch describes how the development of the railway altered in the most fundamental ways how people negotiated their places. Rather than founded and dependent upon an organic, embodied, animal interaction, now movement and power were negotiated through machines. “Motion was no longer dependent on the conditions of natural space, but on a mechanical power that created its own new spatiality” (*The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* [Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1977], 10). Insofar as rail transport facilitated a quick movement in carriages between points on a map, several important things happened: the idea of a landscape develops as something to be viewed, the arrival at a destination eclipses the journey itself (and the many interactions a foot or horse journey would have made possible), and speed of arrival becomes a dominating concern. Land becomes something to “move across” rather than “live into.” Railways had the effect, as John Ruskin noted, of turning travelers into more or less self-contained packages that arrived at their destinations much as they left, untouched and unaffected by the spaces they traversed (38-39).

²⁹ As David Nye has well demonstrated, the development and installation of electricity in business and homes had a profound effect on how people related to their environments. Energy, rather than being located in plant and animal bodies that one engaged directly, was now

the growing dependence on market forms of exchange brokered by money, and the bureaucratization of several aspects of life. But if we turn our attention briefly to the migration of vast numbers of people to urban centers, several features of modern dis-ease and dis-orientation come clearly into view.³⁰

In a remarkable study entitled “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” published in 1903, the German sociologist and philosopher Georg Simmel described how new patterns in dwelling altered the ways people encountered their places and each other. Simmel was in the unique position of describing what was freshly felt, at the time, to be a radical shift from the paths and pacing of rural, village life, to their urban counterparts. In a metropolis, he argued, life is negotiated through the impersonality of a money economy, and in social spaces that are much more characterized by anonymity. Moving through cities, persons are continually bombarded by the messaging of advertisers and salespeople. The people they meet are most often unknown and unfamiliar. To negotiate this unrelenting, often quickly paced, stream of stimulation, many people were observed by Simmel to retreat into themselves and develop an intellectual, matter-of-fact attitude to the people and places they encounter. Emotional and affective engagement is too risky. As a coping strategy, people became more and more indifferent to their surroundings, and developed what Simmel called a “blasé outlook.” Others were reduced to numbers, and engaged primarily in terms of their ability to yield a personal advantage to oneself. According to Simmel,

transmitted through lines that were mostly hidden. Bodily exertion and engagement with land, water, and creatures, were now replaced with the turning and flipping of switches. See David S. Nye’s *Consuming Power: A Social History of American Energies* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999) and *Electrifying America: Social Meanings of a New Technology* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1992) for detailed examinations of the American experience with electricity.

³⁰ Johnson notes that though music rarely makes the city its explicit focus, “musical modernity explores within its own material the same multiplications that produce the city” (*OT*, 138).

“The essence of the blasé attitude is an indifference toward the distinctions between things. Not in the sense that they are not perceived, as is the case of mental dullness, but rather that the meaning and the value of the distinctions between things, and therewith of the things themselves, are experienced as meaningless. They appear to the blasé person in a homogeneous, flat and grey colour with no one of them worthy of being preferred to another. This psychic mood is the correct subjective reflection of a complete money economy to the extent that money takes the place of all the manifoldness of things and expresses all qualitative distinctions between them in the distinction of how much. To the extent that money, with its colourlessness and its indifferent quality, can become a common denominator of all values, it becomes the frightful leveler—it hollows out the core of things, their peculiarities, their specific values and their uniqueness and incomparability in a way which is beyond repair.”³¹

The anonymous, bureaucratic, disorienting character of modern urban life had the effect of creating in people a need to assert their individuality. Insofar as people feel themselves to be easily replaceable cogs in a vast, mostly unknown machine, they will also long for some recognition of their own value. In order to save some semblance of personal significance, Simmel argues,

³¹ Simmel’s text is available at http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/content/bpl_images/content_store/sample_chapter/0631225137/bridge.pdf. For further development of themes introduced by Simmel, see Louis Wirth’s influential essay “Urbanism as a Way of Life” (in *American Journal of Sociology*, 44:1 [July, 1938], 1-24). One should also consider the work of Walter Benjamin who, in his famous essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” argued that art works (one could argue that his analysis applied to other “things” as well) lost their “aura” and authority in an age of industrial, mechanical production. Benjamin’s essay can be found in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflection* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968). Things are just things or commodities, the effects of a loveless, profit-seeking intention. They have little or no sacred character.

“extremities and peculiarities and individualizations must be produced and they must be over-exaggerated merely to be brought into the awareness even of the individual himself. The atrophy of individual culture through the hypertrophy of objective culture lies at the root of the bitter hatred which the preachers of the most extreme individualism, in the footsteps of Nietzsche, directed against the metropolis. But it is also the explanation of why indeed they are so passionately loved in the metropolis and indeed appear to its residents as the saviours of their unsatisfied yearnings.”

Given a blasé outlook that compels people to withdraw from the world, and in this withdrawal lose a connection to a larger meaning-giving, life-and-place-affirming, order, we should not be surprised that self-assertion becomes the individual’s primary mechanism for expressing self-worth. In this lonely, often desperate, space, one of the primary tasks of music, as Johnson notes, “is to carve out spaces in which the particularity of subjective emotion enjoys a heightened freedom” (*OT*, 215). This musical path, however, ends in frustration: “The subject who is nowhere, who finds no place to make a dwelling, contracts within his or her own space toward a vanishing point. Musical modernity, which cultivates the space of interiority, also enacts its collapse” (*OT*, 207). Collapse is inevitable because the interiority that seeks to establish a person’s meaning and worth is itself groundless and adrift in an arbitrary, anonymous world.

What we can now see is that multiple features of modern life and thought make dwelling difficult and destructive. Though people continue to be located in places, they do not find their places to be hospitable or compelling, and thus worthy of their care and devotion. Not surprisingly, negligence, abandonment, and degradation become defining markers of modern ways of being in the world. Places are not so much occasions for praise as they are sites to mine and manipulate to satisfy the appetites and the anxieties of restless individuals. This place

sensibility is reflected in a musical sensibility in which musicians no longer render nature or try to imitate it, but instead create it anew. Musical composition is the artist's imposition of him or herself upon the world, and a reflection of the artist's sovereign will. As Jeremy Begbie has argued, an obsession with breaking free of natural and social constraints, finds its climax in the music of John Cage.³²

Can music play a role helping us to reimagine ways to dwell? In his essay "Music Language Dwelling," Johnson asks us to think of music as "embodied sound" rather than as "abstract structure and signification". "By this model, music does not say; it takes place. It puts its participants into *communion*, in the sense of partaking in something shared..." Understood this way, music is not primarily about expressing a self or communicating some specific content or idea. Nor is it constrained by a need to represent, and thus also delimit, what appears in sound. Johnson goes on to argue that when music is characterized as an "immersive environment," a space is created in which greater listening to the sensuous appearing of the world might be possible. "Music considered as landscape rather than speech, creates a dwelling place in which the subject is unconstrained by language and is correspondingly free to relate to the world in particular and embodied ways." Listening is the crucial posture, since listening presupposes one's openness to another in all its uniqueness, and a commitment to take seriously another as worthy of attention and respect. When this happens, something like a re-enchantment of the world becomes possible.

I find this way of characterizing music immensely helpful, because it enables us to re-imagine dwelling as a commitment to be in relationships with others in the modes of sympathy

³² Begbie quotes the exaggerated, though nonetheless telling, claim of Ernst Kris, who speaks of the modern composer this way: "He controls the world through his work...The unconscious meaning...is *control at the price of destruction*" (in *Music, Modernity, and God*, 102).

and care.³³ Put another way, when music is characterized as an immersive environment or landscape, we, as listeners and creators, have the opportunity to promote and extend the possibilities of harmonious life together. By harmony I do not mean to suggest that any of us are in a position to grasp in comprehensive fashion how everything “fits together” in a totalizing whole, and thus legislate how everything should be or to what end everything should move. The character of finite, creaturely life demands far more humility than that. Moreover, claims to establish a totalizing whole most often end up denying the integrity and freedom of creatures to develop in more improvisational ways.³⁴ Instead, I want to argue that the prospect of a renewed *harmonia mundi* resides in our resolve to come alongside others and be the presence that respects, welcomes, and nurtures others so that they might better realize the life that is uniquely theirs to achieve.³⁵ In other words, what I am talking about is a hospitable disposition toward

³³ I say “be in” rather than “enter into” relationships with others because sound does not come to us in a self-contained, packaged form from outside. Here I follow the work of Tim Ingold, who follows the musicologist Victor Zuckerkandl, in saying that sound is a constantly flowing movement that swirls in and around us without end. To be a listener is to open oneself to the flow, whereas to make a sound is to respond to the flows going on. We are never “outside” these flows, even in death, which is why it doesn’t make sense to suppose that we could “enter” or “exit” at some particular time. The only option is *how* we will listen and respond, *how* we will participate. “Like light, sound exists neither on the inner nor on the outer side of an interface between mind and world. It is rather generated as the experiential quality of an ongoing engagement between the perceiver and his or her environment. Sound is the underside of hearing just as light is the underside of vision; we hear in one as we see in the other” (Tim Ingold. *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* [London: Routledge, 2000], 268).

³⁴ Terence Fretheim has made the valuable argument that God’s relation to the world is not that of a puppeteer who controls creatures. Instead, God respects the freedom of creatures, and invites them to participate in a creative process that is constantly open to fresh possibilities and surprises. See *God and World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005).

³⁵ It should be stated at the outset that sometimes coming alongside others will require that we first learn to leave them alone. Far from being a kind of abandonment, this “letting-be” of others is grounded in a kind of availability or *disponibilité* (as described by Gabriel Marcel) that waits for the other to teach us what we must know so that we can come alongside in ways that do not presume or legislate beforehand how another should be. In other words, genuine coming

others that is founded upon the affirmation of their sacred worth. To dwell with others and in places that honor and cherish them, presupposes that we first find them praiseworthy.

The practical and political forms of modern life have made something like a sympathetic coming alongside others very difficult to achieve. In part, this is because the modern imaginary, as suggested by Roberto Esposito, is best characterized as an “immunitarian” project in which people separate and secure themselves from others: “the category of immunization is so important that it can be taken as the explicative key of the entire modern paradigm, not only in conjunction with but even more than other hermeneutic models, such as those we find in ‘secularization,’ ‘legitimation,’ and ‘rationalization’...”³⁶ *Immunitas* is opposed to *communitas* insofar as the former disavows deep co-existence, along with all the responsibility that co-existence necessarily entails, so as to make possible the emancipation of the individual.³⁷ The modern self, unable to receive another as gift and the life shared together as a blessed, even if difficult, task, is on a constant search for immunity.

The flight from *communitas*, what we can also describe as a *covenantal* relationship that abides with others through times of fun and fault, finds economic expression in *contractual* relationships that, while bringing people together (most often for purposes of personal

alongside others presupposes a training in love that has itself gone through the asceticism that winnows out false forms of love that seek self-promotion at another’s expense.

³⁶ Roberto Esposito. *Communitas: The Origin and Destiny of Community* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 12. Esposito continues: “Modern individuals truly become that, the perfectly individual, the ‘absolute’ individual, bordered in such a way that they are isolated and protected, but only if they are freed in advance from the ‘debt’ that binds them one to the other; if they are released from, exonerated, or relieved of that contact, which threatens their identity, exposing them to possible conflict with their neighbor, exposing them to the contagion of the relations with others” (13).

³⁷ In *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), Amitav Ghosh shows how the individualizing, emancipatory ideal of so much modern imaginative and political life has rendered societies incapable of addressing climate change, arguably the greatest challenge ever faced by civilizations.

advantage), immediately dissolves, even precludes, the forms of sympathy and cherishing that inspire and energize authentic community. The analysis of Marcel Hénaff is especially incisive on this matter:

“We may ask if the whole of the enormous movement of the modern economy—what is now a global production machine—might not be the last and most radical way to eliminate the gods, to do away with gift-giving and debt. It may be that we produce, exchange, and consume in order to reduce our relationship to the world and to each other to the management of visible and quantifiable good, to prevent anything from escaping the calculus of prices and control by the marketplace, so that the very concept of the priceless would disappear. Then nothing would remain outside the realm of commerce. Material innocence would finally have been achieved: no more faults, sin, gift-giving, or forgiveness, nothing other than mistakes in calculations, positive or negative balance sheets, and payments with agreed deadlines.”³⁸

Modern political and economic considerations placed briefly aside, it has never been easy to come alongside another. This is because experiments in relationship are always susceptible to being distorted or made destructive by personal fear, ambition, impatience, or simply sloth. In Christian traditions, few have explored the possibilities for distortion more carefully than the monks of the desert. Aware of how easily love can be degraded by passions like lust, gluttony, vanity, and acedia, they developed a variety of ascetic practices focused on the calming of

³⁸ Marcel Hénaff. *The Price of Truth: Gift, Money, and Philosophy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 20-21. In *The Dismal Science: How Thinking Like an Economist Undermines Community* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), the Harvard economist Stephen Marglin demonstrates how the development of modern economic institutions went hand in hand with the dissolution of communal structures of life. “By promoting market relationships, economics undermines reciprocity, altruism, and mutual obligation, and therewith the necessity of community” (27). The modern, economic person is a self-interested individual.

personal obsessions and the purification of desires. The central thrust of ascetic work, at its best, is not to disparage the body or denigrate materiality, but to cleanse the heart so that the other is hospitably engaged. These desert fathers and mothers understood that professions of love are often little more than masked forms of self-assertion or self-withdrawal. For them, stillness was essential, because stillness presupposes a non-anxious, non-restless disposition. For them silent attention was key, because without silence we cannot properly hear the other as other. The overall objective is not to flee the world, but to put one's own life and affections in proper order so that the world can be truly loved and sympathetically and responsibly inhabited.³⁹

What does dwelling look like, and what does it entail, when people give up the immunitarian project, refuse contractual modes of being, and reject the desire for other-worldly flight? In the remainder of this essay I will argue that a “call and response” characterization of life can serve us well as we attempt to make our lives and our places a hospitable home for fellow creatures.

The whole of the world, and all of its life, are constantly speaking or singing to us in the diverse modes of movement, vibration, attraction, and repulsion. The question is whether or not people are open to their song—in modalities as diverse as stillness, acceptance, embrace, restraint, wonder, delight, and celebration—and whether or not people will learn to practice the

³⁹ Douglas Christie has given us a magisterial treatment of how this monastic tradition, when put in conversation with a diverse tradition of nature writers, enables a deep, sympathetic coming alongside others in *The Blue Sapphire of the Mind: Notes for a Contemplative Ecology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013). He writes: “The practice of *hesychia* [stillness] was part of a larger, more encompassing project of ascetic relinquishment through which the contemplative's mind could be cleansed and freed from the attachments that prevented one from seeing the true character of things ... to the extent that one is attached to things through the passions, one's perception of these things and one's relationship to them will be distorted, leaving one unable to respond to them freely and openly” (202-203).

hospitality that listening fundamentally is.⁴⁰ It takes tremendous attention, patience, and sometimes courage, to hear the music of the earth, music that is always, owing to histories of violence and neglect, a mixture of praise and lament.⁴¹ And it takes humility, because when people open themselves to others, they discover that whatever response they make is not entirely their own, since the voices of others constantly circulate through them. As Chrétien has put it, “Between my voice as it speaks and my voice as I hear it vibrates the whole thickness of the world whose meaning my voice attempts to say, meaning that has gripped it and swallowed it up, as it were, from time immemorial.”⁴²

In *Music, Modernity, and God: Essays in Listening*, Begbie helps us appreciate how a musical characterization of the call and response structure of life enables a much richer account of coming alongside others. We can take our cue from Mozart, who noted that in a play, when more than one person speaks at the same time, the result is often confusion and noise. But when the scene is transformed into opera, their simultaneous sounds can be harmonious and beautiful. This is because spatial thinking often presupposes juxtaposition, competition, and mutual exclusion, whereas auditory experience opens us to prospects of life together in which interpenetration *and* distinctness are maintained at the same time. When two notes come together

⁴⁰ In *The Ark of Speech* Chrétien describes listening as “the first hospitality,” the act by which we offer our bodies and souls to others. The hospitality we show, however, does not find its origin in us, because before we are hospitable, places, others, and God have always already been hospitable to us, showing us the way. “No man has ever been the first to listen. We can offer it [hospitality] only because we have always already been received in it” (*The Ark of Speech*, 9).

⁴¹ Aldo Leopold and Henry David Thoreau, two of America’s best known writers on nature and place, spoke powerfully of the earth’s music. To them we should add the voice of Lauret Savoy, an African American geologist who, in listening to the beauty and the pain of creaturely life, helps us understand how lament is an essential response in a world saturated by the wounds of exploitation, slavery, and genocide. See her eloquent book *Trace: History, Race, and the American Landscape* (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Press, 2015).

⁴² Jean-Louis Chrétien. *The Call and the Response* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 1.

they do not simply come alongside, but enter into each other, all the while still being heard as two distinct notes. Music (rather than simply noise) happens because of the phenomenon of “sympathetic resonance.” Begbie describes resonant order this way:

“This is clearly not a case of mutual diminution: rather, the *more* the lower string sounds, the *more* the upper string sounds. The tones we hear are not in competition, nor do they simply allow each other room. The lower sound establishes the upper, frees it to be itself, enhances it, without compromising its own integrity. Moreover, when certain other strings are opened up alongside both these strings – for instance, to make an extended major chord – we will hear those other strings coming to life.”⁴³

Put in slightly different terms (here Begbie echoes the insight of Victor Zuckerkandl):

“When one tone is heard along with a different tone, it does not drive the first away, nor it is in a different place, nor does it merge with the first to create a new tone. Both are heard as full and distinct. They do not occupy discrete places ... The tones can ‘sound through’ one another, interpenetrate. They can be *in* one another, while being heard *as* two distinct tones.”⁴⁴

What does it take for people to position themselves in the world with others so that their presence enhances and frees others in their lives? My essay has argued that the prospect of sympathetic resonance depends on a prior appreciation of the world and its life as sacred and as

⁴³ *Music, Modernity, and God*, 161.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 159. Johann Sebastian Bach is taken by Begbie to be a paradigmatic musical example of the new kind of temporality and spatiality that is central to authentic dwelling, because in his music we find “addition without loss, expansion without diminution...utterly consistent, never arbitrary, always resisting static completeness.” Bach’s music testifies to the possibility of a peaceful, mutually enhancing coming together, in which “abundant musical lines, multiply superimposed and overlapping, tumbling over each other as the counterpoint expands,” results in “a multidimensional and ever-widening shalom” (69).

praiseworthy, and that this appreciation is best cultivated in the practices of hospitable love for others. Praise inspires dwelling as the art and skill by which people come alongside each other, and commit to each other's flourishing. Dwelling requires more than wonder. It presupposes and is continually inspired by the recognition that that the places within which we move, and the creatures we move with and depend upon, are good, beautiful, and sacred gifts. Apart from a commitment to self-offering love—love that is itself a response to a prior divine love that creates and sustains the world—the prospects of life-and-beauty-affirming dwelling are greatly diminished.