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Late voices, late movements: Beethoven and the cultural construction of genius

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LATE VOICES, LATE MOVEMENTS:
BEETHOVEN AND THE CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENIUS

by

RYAN BISHOP

A THESIS SUBMITTED
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ABSTRACT

Late Voices, Late Movements;

Beethoven and the Cultural Construction of Genius

by Ryan Bishop

The text represents an experimental work in the intersections of anthropology, history, and literature, particularly as they pertain to notions regarding cultural constructions of common-sense reality (hence, questions of epistemology and ontology). The object of inquiry is one within the Western tradition, an increasingly important concern of anthropology which establishes an Other that is both of us and not us. In this case, the Other is a heavily inscribed individual, Beethoven, and the notions regarding genius which have accrued around him. The Beethoven of the text both is and is not the Beethoven of the historical past; the Beethoven in the text is often, but not always or completely, the trope that Beethoven has become in our culture, the referent for various discursive practices which embody many Enlightenment ideals and aspects of our common-sense understanding of the world.

The experimentation of the text emerges in many
ways, most explicitly through the work's being a novel. Casting the work as a novel allows the writer to come clean with the fiction of this experiment, that is fiction in the sense as derived from its etymological ancestor figura: the human shaping and fashioning of materials employed. The experimentation also emerges via the explicit employment of inter-textuality as a means of constructing self, other, and community, as well as knowledge regarding all three. The rhetorical device of inter-textuality -- the incorporation of "real" documents whole, altered or doctored as suits the author's purposes -- leads to a polyphony which is actually only vox humana (the organ stop meant to mechanically reproduce the human voice). The illusion of polyphony, then, is filtered through the machinery of a single writer as the text moves between realist and metafictional narrative and textual devices. Thus, the text engages in the defamiliarization of textual strategies generally encountered in ethnography, history, or fiction, as well as the defamiliarization of the content found in these discursive practices.

The text does not pretend to represent or describe anything or anyone. Rather, it hopefully provides for readers of it a co-creative and interactive moment for considering the contingent and constructed aspects of what is often taken as given.
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Anything readers might find wonderful within the pages of this text is the result of those mentioned above; anything otherwise is solely my responsibility.
I was early and pale on my day of birth. Like three pounds of empty music paper waiting to be inscribed with scales, notes and harmonies, I arrived quiet and still. The priest rode for hours through the night, and amongst the subdued sobbing of relatives, my soul was secured. Nearly two decades later, this same priest told me that he had been certain I would survive the night. He said there was "a serene tenacity" in my countenance. And, now in my waning years, I understand this tenacity as a sort of a birthmark which I have carried throughout my life, one which has shaped my professional and personal life. While I am not without talent, I am certainly without "gift" in matters musical, but am better blessed in matters social and personal.

Thus begin the unpublished memoirs of Karl Holz. Karl Holz, certainly more substantial an individual than the footnote in musical history he is often accorded (one wonders about the numerous others buried in footnotes, or even pushed off the page into oblivion), and he is so for numerous reasons. He was a violinist of extraordinary talent, but one in an age and place innundated with such talent: Vienna of the early nineteenth century, where virtually every butcher could hold his own as easily in chamber music sessions as in debates over his allotment of the much in-demand Hungarian oxen. So, for what other reason might this Karl Holz be of import for us? Well, he eventually plays second violin in the Schuppanzigh quartet, the one which gave the premiere performances of four of the five late string quartets by Ludwig van Beethoven. Further, our Karl befriends the great composer and advises him on business matters at a point when
such matters consumed much of the time and energy unspent on composition or health concerns. In fact, he becomes the confidant, friend, personal secretary, and youthful foil for the composer during the composition of the late string quartets, the work which occupied him until his final days. Holz is also asked by Beethoven to become his biographer after Anton Schindler, the original bearer of this distinction, fell from favor with the composer. Holz, alas, never takes up the quill in this official capacity, but instead passes the biographical duties onto others, yet he stands as an important aid and friend to Beethoven during the latter's later years.

For Holz, words sat in his mouth like golden infants awaiting birth. They rolled off his tongue like the perfect pearls of everyone's desires. He had charm, wit, looks, social grace and business acumen. In effect, he possessed what Beethoven did not. It is no wonder that Beethoven found in him not only a winehouse companion but also an effective liaison to an outside world from which he was effectively excluded. The affectionate place Holz held in Beethoven's heart is revealed in the numerous puns the composer made employing the young violinist's name, which means "wood" in German. In his better moods, Beethoven greatly enjoyed such punning, and the frequency with which puns on Holz's name appear in correspondence reveals that the violinist had harmonious effects on the composer's day-to-day life.
Well, I think it is safe to say that Holz is no mere footnote. We also have him partaking in an impromptu quartet which performed Beethoven's great C sharp minor Op. 132 for Schubert, who lay immobile in his sickbed. Upon hearing the piece, so the story goes, the master of lieder fell into a swoon from which he never recovered, dying just a few days later, making this the last piece of music Schubert heard in his brief and brilliant span on earth. Apocryphal or not, it makes a good story.

We have just read Holz's account of his entrance into the world, in the year 1798 -- an account written just before his exit from this world -- and we find him entering Beethoven's world in 1825, a mere two years before Beethoven himself dies. Like the passing of a melodic line from instrument to instrument, life ebbs and flows and retreats into itself. Our Karl carries the tune while he can and must, and connects with Beethoven just before the latter's flame flickers and fades into night.

There are numerous accounts of Beethoven's death, and many are not without their own probably apocryphal elements. An interesting case in point concerns his last words, something supposedly revelatory in our culture, as if the mind clears for an instant and allows the soul to speak in tranquility, with resignation and understanding. While perhaps not his last words -- and perhaps not even his words at all -- Beethoven is reported to have said some time during
his last days of consciousness in March of 1827, "Plaudite amici, comoedia finita est" (Applaud friends, the comedy is finished). Many accounts document the great composer uttering this apt final phrase, a phrase filled with humor, pathos, insight and care, one intended to lessen the grief of others and reveal his acceptance of his fate. Yet, each account varies widely as to whom Beethoven was addressing when this jewel crossed his lips. Thus, either Beethoven said it on several different occasions (displaying a self-satisfaction not in keeping with the content of the statement), or people fiddled with accounts to better position themselves for posterity, or they have faulty memories, or perhaps they merely wished Beethoven had said it, and thus like ventriloquists tossed this phrase into the moribund's mouth. In any event, it seems the event has become subservient to the stories which have accrued around it. The statement's echo of John's reportage of Christ's last words on the cross, "It is finished," (John 19:30) may say something significant about the consciousness of the dying, or perhaps something about attempts to elevate the stature of a composer to transcendental cultural heights.

Another oft-recounted incident occurs exactly at the moment of death. On Monday, the 26th of March, 1827, Beethoven lay in a coma which had overtaken him two days earlier. Regardless of the accuracy of the meteorological instruments at the time, those instruments all seem to agree
there was some measure of upheaval in the vault of heaven. Few were present at three o'clock in the afternoon when a storm began outside the dying man's room. Few were present when he died, yet many have told how the storm and the death are intimately bound to one another. At around five o'clock, a huge flash of lightning carried by a tremendous peal of thunder insensitively illuminated and shook the moribund's room. At this very moment, so the many stories would have us believe, Beethoven's eyes opened; the composer rose up in his bed and shook his fist at the elements, as if "defying the hostile powers," as if he were "a general giving courage to his troops because victory was assured," as if "confirming that God was with him." He dropped back into bed without issuing another breath, the spirit flown. Into whose hands the breathless body dropped, if indeed anyone's, again depends on the account one reads. This story, I am troubled to admit dear readers, seems to me in conflict with the one detailing his last words. The former shows defiance and assertion of the will, while the latter displays tender consideration and resignation. Now, it may be that I ask for the impossible, i.e. consistency in actions. After all, the man was dying, and why ask of the dying what we never experience with the unthreatened living?

This tempest, regardless of its role, conjures up the various ways in which water influenced Beethoven's death. For thoughts on this, we can turn to Holz's memoirs:
In Homer's *The Odyssey*, Odysseus visits the land of the dead. He must speak to Teiresias, the blind seer on earth and sighted shade in the after-life, to get information which will aid him in his "sweet homecoming." The prophet informs the wanderer: "Death will come to you by sea." Though Beethoven never even so much as saw the sea, this line seems strangely appropriate to him as well, inasmuch as his body was so bloated with dropsy near the end that I thought it looked like an ocean hemmed in by skin.

In the latter part of 1826, Beethoven spent several months on his brother's farm in Gneixendorf, on the Danube. Anxious as always to move lodgings and ready to get back to business in Vienna, Beethoven dragged Carl [his nephew] from the comfortable country accommodations on the first of day of the last month of the year. The weather was unusually raw and frosty for early December. Despite there not being a regular coach available, Beethoven insisted on departing at that moment, and the two travellers rode in an open cart -- "the devil's vehicle" Beethoven called it -- exposed to the weather. They stopped for the night at a poorly kept tavern, which chilled him to the bone. That night, he ran a fever and developed a dry hacking cough. He was overtaken with incredible thirst and pain in the sides. Though it was unwise to do so, he drank large drafts of iced water.

When he finally made his lodgings in the Schwarzspanierhaus (after having to be lifted into the wagon for transport), his clothes were damp and his body swollen. He wrote me a short note after his return, addressing me as "Your Official Majesty," displaying good spirits, and said he had taken to his bed, betraying ill health. He would never truly rise from this bed again. I sent for a doctor.

Wet, damp, frosty, drizzly, misty . . . inside and out, the composer was tapped at least four times. The straw beneath his bedding molded and required regular changing due to moisture gathered from body drainage. After the coma overtook him, Beethoven's chest leapt and lurched like a steam enginge overfed with coal; it rose and fell like the sea swollen in storm. Death appeared as a sea-captain riding the grim dark waves, hugging the
rolling ocean's roof, and plunging the composer to its silent floor.

Whatever the truth regarding Beethoven's death, if ever such a notion could be gained without contention, general agreement remains about its date and time, as well as the meteorological disturbances which played antiphon to it. Just a few months prior to his death, Beethoven wrote from Gneixendorf to Franz Wegler, physician and friend, "if I allow my Muse to slumber, it is only that she may awake with a fresh vigor. I hope yet to usher great works into the world, and then to close my earthly career like an old child among good people." His poor health -- "the jealous demon" as he called it -- refused him these desires. Years of chronic bowel, intestinal and liver trouble ensured that his Muse remained asleep and his earthly career closed quickly.

Though his mode of living bordered (in some respects) on the ascetic and was imbued with invectives against the sensual and the carnal as indulged in daily Viennese life, the placing in state of, the removal of, and the transport of Beethoven's remains glaringly displayed the Viennese taste for opulence. It was indeed a schöne Leich ("a beautiful corpse"), the expression employed in Vienna for an elaborate funeral. Beethoven once told our dear Holz that he greatly admired Cherubini's Requiem (the first one) -- a piece sung in B.'s honor just days after the interment of his remains -- for its restraint. Holz vaguely remembers
Beethoven saying, "A Requiem should be a melancholy remembering of the dead; the Last Judgement should be given a miss . . . a tranquil music, no need for the last trump; remembering the dead doesn't need a great racket (Getöse)."

0, how out of step Beethoven was with those who marched behind his coffin, and indeed with all of Vienna, which clustered about the conveying of the casket; Vienna, which so loves funerals that it has devoted an entire museum to Death. Even in death, as in most other areas of life, Beethoven swam against the aesthetic tides of his cosmopolitan locale.

Who knows when the Viennese fascination with, indeed fixation on, death began? Perhaps as long ago as the days when the ancient city on that site was called Vindobona, where Marcus Aurelius defended the Roman territories against Germanic tribes. It may be that there is something in the river running through the hills there, something about the green swaths of woods cloaking the hills, that led to the Stoicism of Aurelius' *Meditations*, written by the Danube, where the writer's bones were returned to earth . . . something in the endless flow of Slavs, Avars, Teutons, Turks, Magyars, Huns, and countless other ethnic groups, that shaped the Stoic sense of one's death bearing no shame -- of the vast anonymity of death -- into the Viennese necrophilial veneration of the corpse, fetishization of the paraphernalia surrounding the ceremony of interment, and glorification of the pompous and theatrical turns funerals have taken there.
Perhaps this shift resulted from a looking back to the Greeks and their massive celebrations of death. Perhaps, as in many cultures, the Viennese sense that the soul will be unable to be translated into the afterlife unless the body is treated and buried appropriately. Who knows when or how it began, but it continues to this day in this macabre and strange city. One writer claims the Viennese harbor a general hostility towards change, and thus have enshrined this disdain in ceremony and monuments, "as if music and stone could abort the future," as if the sweeping of the Danube, the flow of peoples, the sweep and transfiguration of individual life, and the flux of space and time, could be held in check, and the present moment rendered eternal and unchanging. Whatever the situation's sources or explanations (as if origins and logic could explain this fascination with the funerary), Vienna in the early nineteenth century demanded good theater from the deaths of its most celebrated citizens.

The provincial cosmopolitanism of Wien was made manifest at Beethoven's funeral. Wien exemplified its hubris by expecting Beethoven to perform in a way not unlike an exhibit at one of the numerous menageries that lined the Jaegerzeile (which was reserved for them). Beethoven, for his part, played the misanthropic genius and displayed his own hubris by expecting Wien to bend to his will, to take him only on his terms. This battle of egos ended with
Beethoven's funeral, resulting in each side getting what it wanted, but on the other's terms: Wien got its beautiful corpse, but only over Beethoven's dead body.

I, for my part, will try my hand at "a melancholy remembering of the dead." Not with music, no, with pitiful words, words better for being not my own but of those present at the funeral, those who loved the man whose clay was returned to earth that day. To piece together, to weave, to re-construct, to materialize the funeral, we will hear what I will call "The Torchbearers' Tales," that is a culling of information, impressions and reportages by some of the carriers of torches in the funeral procession. Exactly how many of these there were depends on which account one reads. We will listen to five, namely those who composed the Schuppanzigh quartet -- Ignaz Schuppanzigh (the great violinist), our Holz, Franz Weiss (viola) and Joseph Linke (cello) -- plus one, Franz Grillparzer, the renowned dramatic poet and author of the funeral oration. From the writings, notes, letters, reminiscences, conversations, journals, etc. of these five has been forged an alloy narrative of 29 March 1827, a narrative filled with first-person polyphony and the fragmented re-collections of the same events filtered through different consciousnesses: The Torchbearers' Tales.

(Grillparzer): After Dr. Wagner completed the autopsy, the body was placed in an oak coffin. (Holz): The coffin was well-polished, and oak seemed a suitable wood,
perhaps the perfect wood, to convey the great composer to the afterlife. The multiple puns Beethoven had made about my name echoed in my heart. I thought about wood and stringed instruments and vessels as conveyors of sounds and souls. (Linke): Roses, white roses wreathed the master's head, itself wreathed by his own white hair. (Schuppanzigh): The whole effect seemed to be one of quite unnatural whiteness and comfort: roses and hair on a silk pillow. None of this struck me as fitting Beethoven's sensibilities or indicative of the person I knew. (G.): The waxy pallor of the dead found reflection in the wax cross and large waxy-petalled white lily thrust into the folded, immobile hands. His broad-tipped fingers had fallen silent; his hands, as had those of the clock, had fallen. The bier was in the room in which the composer died, a room which faced the "composition room," though I am not certain he composed anything in this room so designated. [Otto Weininger, the philosopher, shot himself in this room after renting it some seventy-five years later specifically for this grisly, self-destructive purpose.] Despite its being quite a sunny day, the only light seemed to emanate from the sixteen candles (eight on either side of the casket) whose flames stood straight and lean. (W): Though there seemed to be no draft, and the death room was sealed, the candles flickered madly, causing a wide array of expressions to pass over Beethoven's countenance -- very unsettling, as if the composer were still alive and flying
through various emotional states as he was wont to do.

(S): Only those with tickets were permitted into the courtyard and beyond. Dr. von Breuning had done an admirable job of dispensing these — no easy task to be sure — and I hear they were in great demand, the good doctor even having to refuse tickets to several citizens of good standing. (W): The whole crowd gaped and gawked at the corpse. Few knew, or cared to know, what to do with the holy water and the crucifixion which, together with two ears of corn, lay on a table at the foot of the coffin. Instead, they made straight for the dead man to get a good look in the tossing candlelight, to gather content for conversations which would arise the rest of their lifetimes, to be able to say "I saw the body of the deceased Beethoven" and then launch into baroquely detailed description complete with bangles, ornamentations and societal scapulas. Few had genuine interest, few genuine care for the dead, few consciousness of staring directly at their own destiny. (G): The viewers of the body in state comported themselves in a way appropriate to their stations in society. (S): They all seemed to want to get it over with, to get back to their wine or coffee or current love interest, even though they had clamored for tickets, had lived for this moment. A truly beautiful corpse loomed before them.

(G): Nine priests from Schüttenstifte blessed his soul. "Death hurries on with hasty stride/ No respite Man
from him may gain/ He cuts down, when life's full tide/ Is throbbing in every vein./ Prepared or not the call to hear,/ He must before his Judge appear." The singers intoned the words from Schiller's Wilhelm Tell after the coffin was closed, and these same singers were to carry the coffin to the church [the Trinity Church of the Minorites in the Alerstrasse and the first of three churches the procession would visit that day].

(S): What a crush of people once the door was opened! We torchbearers were pressed against the coffin and jostled about. The lilies sewn to my shoulder, which had earlier tickled my ear and threatened to take out an eye, lost all of their teasing and threatening capabilities. (H): People got tossed every which way as the crowd pushed toward the coffin. The entire order of the procession was jumbled in an instant. As I fell behind, I thought of the inevitable press of life towards death, the unaccountable pull of death for life. The coffin seemed a buoy tossed about on a great sea of humanity. I, much to the contrary of what might be expected, felt an overwhelming sense of calm. The coffin-buoy seemed something to cling to in the great tidal pulls of being, something to render sharks harmless, to sheath the beaks of savage sea-birds [I would swear that these are allusions to Melville's Moby Dick, but Holz could not have read it in either German or English at the time of this document], to stay the flux of Protean waves. Here was the
true gathering of shades: the mourners, whose evanescence flickered like the torch I bore and whose existence paled in the face of the permanence of death, the immortal sea.

(L): Candles wrapped in crepe, torches wound in flowers, lilies on our sleeves, we fought the crowds, tried to keep order in the chaos. (G): The carriers of the cross, which was decorated with flowers, of course, came first. In turn, they were followed by members of the welfare institutions. Next came the trombonists and the choir [singing *Miserere*, a piece Beethoven had composed in 1812 in Linz for All Soul's Day]. Next the parish crucifer followed by the nine priests. Finally, the coffin, and in its wake, family and friends. (S): A very ceremonial carriage pulled by four horses sealed off the procession, such as it was. I have seen more order in a group of ants assaulting a picnic. The carriage, though regal and fully adorned, was a bit unstable. When going up Währing toward the cemetary, it threatened to topple into the brook on more than occasion, causing great distress and alarm. (W): The procession reached the Alsergasse, and at least, 10,000 . . .

(H): 15, 000 . . . (S): 20,000 . . . (L): 17,000 . . . (G): 12,000 . . (W) people had turned out. The bells tolled, and the schools closed. St. Stephan's drew a crowd any theater manager would have truly envied. After the corpse had gone in, soldiers refused entry to others. The doors were shut, and a solemn (G): -- almost solely liturgical ceremony
ensued. Several in the crowd had fainted and had required being taken to the hospital. (L): The quick ceremony, a dash out the back and we had the coffin loaded and ready for the long haul to the final resting-place in the country, a place where Beethoven would have in life loved to have lay down to rest and stare at the sky: a grassy cushion under his head so that he could easily watch the birds dart and swoop. (H): The impression of the ceremony that I seem unable to shake is that of wax. Wax seemed to be dripping from all directions; candles cascaded and imploded without cessation. The main altars glowed as if they, and not the candles, had been set aflame. Of what was said inside St. Stefan's, I have little recollection; my mind goes dark. However, of the graveside ceremony, I remember much of what I thought, or at least, what I think I thought and felt.

(W): The procession and what was left of the crowd followed the hospital street and crossed the Alserbach. When we came to Wahring brook, we followed it to the village parish at Friedhof. (G): As the day began to wane and sink into itself, the crowd thinned, just as one discards what is not necessary for the soul to flourish as one goes through life. The spectacle had tapered off and lapsed into duty infused with desire to perform duty, so the crowd went off to their various diversions. As we passed the hospital with its wailings and cries unchecked by tolling bells (even after death, pain and death go on), as we passed the almshouse with
its shutters clasped tight, as we passed the brick-kiln with its firing of earth scenting the air and breaking hard and metallic on my soft palate, as we left the muck-riddled thoroughfares of the city, I wondered who among us might be the cause of the next such gathering. Little did I imagine that another torch-bearer, lilies adorning shoulder, another composer ignored by his city, another setter of songs infused with the divine fire found in Beethoven would be doused. Of course, I refer to Schubert. Fate cast us as mortal and fleeting, but gave humankind long-suffering courage [allusion to Homer]. (W): We eased into a more leisurely, natural pace as the city fell away. All in the procession, even the horses, breathed easier in the open air. The open sky became our sublime roof with no tawdry ceilings to block our view and no noise to confuse our senses. The sun slanting close to the earth threw a golden hue which seemed to ignite the latent colors hiding in all of nature. (L): The brook on the right, the slope on the left, the sun hugging close to where the two joined in an apex in the distance, we moved towards the cemetery fields. It all seemed a far cry from the mad press and crush of the day's activities, or more accurately, festivities: the funeral turned carnival had now turned funeral again.

(S): A very small group gathered at graveside. Though I felt hunger pangs and awareness of my corpulence was acute, nausea and disgust went in waves over my being as I
thought about those in the crowd and those in the death room
who would be at that moment holding forth at winehouses or
beer taverns or coffeehouses about the fine display of death
they'd seen that day, that death had taken Beethoven the
eccentric, the genius, in fine fashion. Still the reporters
of the paper were present, and they'd see to making a
stupendous event (if in reportages only) of even this smaller
gathering, this remembrance. I felt -- perhaps all there did
alone with this difficult man. (H): The scene was tranquil,
and my soul seemed at ease, but my mind leapt and roved like
candles only partially sheltered from a draft. The coffin
rested on the ground by the gaping grave, open and blank like
the eyes of the dead. Beethoven had once written Carl [his
nephew] about his desire for someone to be present to close
his eyes when he died. I wondered who had performed that
duty after the "final, wretched empty moment." [Faust 11590]
"Time conquers, old he lies on the soil." [Faust 11824] Is
one ever older, or younger, than when spread out on the soil?
Why did my mind fix on such thoughts, ones so antithetical to
Beethoven's? Perhaps because funerals are not for the dead,
but for the living -- the living who too shall die.
Beethoven spoke to me on more than one occasion of the
metaphysics of recirculation, of life flowing ever out of and
back into creation. In reference to the stars, to the sowing
of seeds, to music, he spoke of this flow and our duty to
revere it, to make the most of and from it. In this way, he
believed, we did honor to creation. For everything rises and falls, and our beauty lies in the shallow breath between. "Breathe, spirit, soar!" [Faust 11824] "Freed from the stress of earth/ their circle comes near,/ Full of joys/ of the new spring and birth." [Faust 11973-11976] "The sinews no longer hold the flesh and bones together,/ and once the spirit has left the white bones, all the rest/ of the body is made subject to the fire's strong fury,/ but the soul flitters out like a dream and flies away." [The Odyssey XI: 219-221] I watched the leaves of the surrounding trees flutter on the breath of a passing breeze. The birth of life is the birth of death. The end is constituted in the beginning. [Heraclitus] "All things are always changing, but nothing dies. The spirit comes and goes, is housed wherever it wills." [Ovid Metamorphoses XV: 122-124] Evergreen, the laurel wreathes -- three of them -- were placed by Hummel on the grave. Apollo in pursuit of Daphne, through the dust and pollen not of ancient Greece but along the banks of the Währing brook, the beauty pleads for help. She cries to be changed, to be saved, and begs her father the river to aid her. She slows, begins metamorphosis, feet and legs ebb into roots, and is changed into a laurel tree. The god of Music can still feel her heart beating beneath the bark. I place my hand on the oak coffin. I feel only the gentle breeze and hear the cries of birds swooping upward into a sky filled with clouds of flame, ignited by the setting sun.
(G): I admit nervousness when the actor Heinrich Anschütz stepped forward to deliver the oration I'd written. I only hoped my words could do his fine voice justice. Certainly they would pale in the sublimity of the moment, in the unslakable thirst of our need. When Schindler had arrived at my apartment to commission the oration, I was shattered by the news he bore and the deed set me. I hadn't even known the composer was ill. Scarcely had I begun to work on the second half when Schindler came back on the following day to collect what he had ordered, for Beethoven had died. (S): In fine style, not overdone nor too subtle for inflections not to be heard by all, Anschütz recited the oration: "As we stand here at the grave of this departed, we are, as it were, the representatives of a whole nation, of the German people, mourning the fall of the one highly celebrated half of what remained to us of the vanished splendor of native art, the flower of our country's spirit. True, the hero of poetry in the German language [Goethe] is still with us ... But the last Master of resounding song, the sweet lips that gave expression to the art of tones, the heir and successor of Handel's and Bach's, of Haydn's and Mozart's immortal fame, has ended his life, and we stand weeping beside the tattered strings of the silent instrument ... From the cooing of doves to the rolling of thunder, from the most subtle interweaving of the self-determined media of his art to the awe-inspiring point where the
consciously formed merges in the lawless violence of the
striving forces of Nature, all these he exhausted, all these
he took in stride." Stride on, composer! Stride into the
depths of that fearful, wonderful night. (L): Broken strings
score and scrape the sky turning turquoise above us! Rend it
to let light seep through! (W): Sing again silent
instrument! (H): Sing again the song of the font of
creation, unstemmed, unchecked, only abetted by any human
life or death! Godspeed dear Beethoven. (G): The coffin was
lowered. We grabbed a handful earth each and tossed it in.
The torches were extinguished as was the day.

Well, now we've heard from the torchbearers, the
Torchbearers' Tales, as I've called them earlier. Thus, a
birth and a death already frame our project, as indeed they
do life. The birth of our Karl Holz, on whom we will much
rely, and the death of the composer, the genius we call
Beethoven (or the Beethoven we call genius), and this
narrative trajectory drawn from the flux of daily existence
the text of our daily lives -- has been spent, and has been
spent so early on in the project that it seems to desire
cessation now. Our hero (Beethoven) already dead?! Wasn't
he, though, already dead -- always already dead -- when we
took up this story? Yes . . . and no. Physically, yes;
imaginatively, spiritually, musically, culturally, no -- no,
Beethoven is/was very much alive, as you dear readers in the
suspension of your disbelief proved.

[Alas, Carrol, you were physically alive when this project got under way, but now, you are not. You had this text -- this project -- moulded, sculpted and cast in your mind before I found you slumped over your desk -- drawers bulging with papers, fax machine incessantly whirring, pockets brimming over with notes and scraps of paper -- with your fist clenched at the portable tape player which had neglected, or refused, to automatically click off when the leader had played out. What do I do? What can one say after a mentor's death? especially so early on in a project of such reach left in such an inchoate state? What can I do besides splice it together as best a student, hopefully too a friend, can and send forth a collage, a Frankenstein's monster of fragments?

Perhaps I need to step back a bit here, not indulge myself -- my fears and qualms -- and explain this intrusion. The words above, other than those taken from the wide array of historical documents and various other texts (an endless number of sources, how can I ever be sure?) and most of the words below flowed from the pen of the renowned and now deceased musical and cultural historian and critic Carrol House: my teacher, mentor, and perhaps, friend, whom I found in the position described above on the 6th of June in the year 19--, when upon not having my knock answered, I entered only to find the house as empty as the slam of the
screendoor. Dr. House, on sabbatical to finish this book, left us, as well as this text, far too early. The lingering complications caused by a poor liver, lower intestinal distress, and water retention spirited the scholar away.

The best I can do is construct, or reconstruct, what Carroll might have had planned (which undoubtedly was in the process of springing forth fully grown like some textual Athena) as best I can, given the horribly vague sketches (swarming with arrows and numbers and crossouts) and keep my interruptions -- bracketed, out of respect for Carroll and the text -- to a minimum. All that has gone before was as Carroll left it, sequentially numbered and neatly stacked in the sole uncluttered space on the floor by the desk, hence my not intruding until now. I will try to allow Carroll's words to come forth as Carroll had allowed others' to do as this ... this ... melange may verify. Hopefully, cries of Carroll's pedantry will be buried along with the person, within and due to this text, and hopefully too, Carroll's reputation, which has recently waned, will be resurrected. Godspeed Carroll. I lapse again into silence.]

Those of you who have read my critical essays before know of my proclivity to cluster such works around certain themes, particularly ones which cut across genres, or which cross-pollinate thoughts and topics not usually planted in the same bed. I am thinking as an example particularly of my last book, Putting the Best Foot Forward, which wedded
anatomy and music in the examination of keyboard compositions by composers with one leg shorter than the other to show how this lent a sort of list to, or betrayed a certain leaning in, the music. Thus, I attempted to place the body back into the tradition of the production of culture; I placed the body back into the cultural corpus.

The theme, or rather themes, for this current piece pose a more formidable challenge than the one just mentioned. The influences, tides, currents, and affairs swirling around the fulcrum we will call Beethoven in the tumultuous time of our focus (the years of composing the late string quartets, 1822-1825) must of necessity be pruned, else this text would bulge like Beethoven's over-stuffed pockets and break the bulkiest of bindings. The emotionally debilitating relationship with his nephew/son Carl must become peripheral for our needs though others consider the relationship central. Who can say what is central or peripheral from such a vantage point as mine (ours)? Events certainly occurred of this there is no doubt. Yet they -- and our knowledge of them -- swim to us through a murky tide of texts, hearsay, innuendo, dissonance: the very flotsam of existence, especially that which has poured through the narrow and evanescent moment we call the present and into the opaque past. The past stands on the shifting sands of stories, books, disreputable writers, untrustworthy publishers, poor copyists, deranged editors, and circumspect critics, to name
but a few. (I have heard that the Chinese say they face the
past and the future stands behind them, for the latter is
unseeable, unknown. We English speakers, of course, face the
future, which is just as well, for the past stands just as
vaguely, just as peripherally glimpsed, as the bookshelf
behind you, dear readers.)

So we turn, or return, to selected remnants from the
past and piece them together to give tongue to our tale,
leaving readers such as yourself to fill in the missing bits,
the unspoken and the unheard emanating from a person
beatified in our cultural culture for his creation of sound,
a person entombed in a physical body devoid of external
sound, but with a soul imbued with it.

[Here the passage ends; the page goes blank, but
leaves in its wake not a void bereft of opportunity, but
rather a veritable cornucopia of possibilities, a maddening
maze of hinted at, yet always deferred and open-ended,
choices — a space as open and as possible as Carrol's mouth
when the scholar was found slumped over the desk. Obviously
the project was monumental, but its remains are vague,
contradictory and contingent.

What tale did you want told, Carrol? Perhaps the
cultural construction of Beethoven as a "Genius," the work of
Enlightenment and humanist projects? Perhaps clues to the
genesis of the late string quartets (the move to a smaller
form after massive works, such as the Symphony no. 9 and the
Missa Solemnis)? Perhaps the reasons for changing the ending of the B flat major quartet (the removal of the Grosse Fugue)? Perhaps support for the veracity of Holz over Schindler (a kind of salvage operation of a reputation, the resurrection of one buried by history)? Perhaps an evocation of Vienna as an early example of a post-modern urban site magnetically pulling diaspora from the far corners of the globe, only to result in a superficial embracing of baseness and frivolity? Perhaps a critique of history, the social sciences and academia in general, a community which had recently turned its back on you just at the time the public at large had begun to embrace you? Perhaps an argument for the evocation of music over the representation of texts and language? I stare into your mouth, Carrol, and await an answer. Your tongue lolls, flaccid and slightly blue, to one side. You, as did Beethoven, left mostly notes behind. I rifle through your notes, and note that all of these and numerous others remain viable possibilities and not easily separable ones. Perhaps you had no tale to tell because the fragments forbade the telling of a tale.}

To whom can we turn, to what sources, to evoke the fulcrum, or better yet, the void, around which swirl the wreckage of time and tales? How might we get at Beethoven: this giant of musical "Genius," this Titan amongst composers, this ruffian once arrested for vagrancy, this disaster at dinner parties, this breaker of fine furniture? We shall
turn to our dear Karl Holz, our Karl who could not write the biography of his dear friend, for, as he states in the unpublished and unfinished memoirs, in attempting such a work he felt "like the human hiding inside Malzel's chess-playing automaton." [Carrol's note about Malzel follows:] The inventor of the metronome, Malzel, created many automata which captured the Viennese imagination in the early part of the 19th century. Amongst these was a chess-playing Turk about which much speculation circulated: mechanical masterpiece or impostor? The robes of the Turk, which also did much to fuel the flirtatious fire of Orientalism which occasionally sparked on the Danube, could easily have concealed a human, hence Holz's allusion. E. T. A. Hoffmann, in his "The Automaton," describes the creation as being "alive and dead at the same time," which, along with the aforementioned sense of deception, gives further resonance to the comparison Holz makes. Malzel's metronome was much admired by Beethoven as the numerous references to it in letters to publishers, as well as his unshakable faith in technology, attest.

But why Holz? Didn't he drink and carouse and lead Beethoven into an inn-frequenting society? Yes, but the sensitivity of the above reference regarding his inability to become the official biographer, his shying away from the ghoulish Beethoven industry which sprang up so rapidly after the composer's death, the intimacy with which Holz interacted
with Beethoven, the desire to lend word to memory late in his life despite the distance of time, and the fact that these memoirs remain untranslated and unpublished, make Holz a wonderful aid. Others though, many others, will be heard from as well.

[Others and others and yet more others! Others ad infinitum! There's nothing for it: I've read and sweared and fretted and sweated, without any fruition other than the realization that I'll simply have to organize this piece under general rubrics -- large and slightly malleble categories -- which I hope will allow all of Carroll's material intended for inclusion to find its way into the text. Further, this may provide a structure for the sort of "cross-pollinating" of which Carroll was so fond. Again, I will attempt to remain as unobtrusive as possible, to allow Carroll to speak, and to allow Carroll to allow others to speak -- a desire so explicitly stated in the earlier passages and the never-ending notes. How successful I will be, how wide of or close to the mark my editorial shaft sails in regard to Carroll's intentions, will remain a mystery forever. Yet, such is the fate of texts, as Carroll also bemoaned earlier. They are inevitably left to others to do with as they please, as they desire, for whatever purposes: knowledge, truth, pleasure, persuasion, power (as if these were clearly divisible categories!), and therefore, they
become objects subjected to subjugation, categorization, manipulation and falsification by the very people to whom they silently offer themselves. No wonder you died, Carroll. Authorial intention went with you, too, as it does even if the author should still have the (mis)fortune of being alive. It leads me to wonder: does an author ever survive a text?}
Reminiscences

[Carroll had isolated numerous examples of what might best be called Reminiscences about Beethoven: documents detailing meetings, discussions, friendships, outings, etc. left by people generally of only cursory relation to the composer. Thus, I doubt any portion of the Holz memoirs fits this category, and I am yet to find any marks or symbols on passages of the memoirs corresponding to those found on the selections so designated as Reminiscences. While the arcane and slightly contradictory symbolic system Dr. House left has yet to have its Rosetta Stone unearthed, it is not without its devoted code-crackers, and I remain ever vigilant in this semiotic pursuit driven by intellectual and emotional determination and desire. Carroll left a patchy comment on these pieces:]

These documents intrigue me for many reasons. They provide, shall we say, snippets or snapshots or sound-bites, glimpses behind closed doors, whispers from secret hallways, of Beethoven's daily life and his reactions to, as well as differences from, the world around him. Besides, they offer us unusual access to the individual temprements, needs, wishes and concerns of the various writers. These bagatelles
also betray an elliptical and anecdotal quality quite evocative of the day (and certainly rhetorically appropriate, I might add), very different from the narrative styles we find, and indeed expect, today, lending these slivers of stylizing an endearing aura unique to a time and a place and a culture passed. Wistful? perhaps, but certainly most pleasurable.

[This fragmentary quality alluded to by Carroll provides some of the justification I have for starting with this particular category, given the untellable tale posited in the initial section of the text. Please, readers, bear with me here, for I promise that I do not intend to justify each of my editorial decisions throughout the concatenation of collocations comprising this book. I am simply trying to support my first infant-like steps into the labyrinth seemingly without core that is this project, trying to sort out the chaos left and sift through the rubble, as well as trying to do justice to a scholar of merit. Thus, I may be writing, or rather editing, aloud for a bit yet, until I get my sealogs, as it were. Without absolutely running the gamut of metaphors for limbed stability and mobility, I will come to a halt now. Anyway, I feel relatively sure that Carroll would approve of the placement of this particular category.]

We have left to us numerous such reminiscences from which to choose, it being quite the fashion in the nineteenth century to document for posterity (as well as for one's
relative position in posterity) brushes with the famous, the near-famous, and those who-seemed-certain-to-be-famous-but-fell-short-of-the-mark. So, there is no lack. Let us now hear from one of these, one fortunate to have hit on the then-famous and the now-forever-famous, one destined for nearly unequalled cultural status in the lofty realms of genius. This fortunate fellow is Heinrich Friedrich Ludwig Rellstab, the poet from Berlin who, despite being burdened with virtually every stereotypical Germanic given name besides Joseph, established himself as a music critic of insight and influence. We glean this excerpt detailing his introduction to Beethoven from the second volume of his autobiography. Though given to fits of prolix hyperbole and Romantic angst of the Germanic ilk, Rellstab's writing of this meeting in 1825 [a year which falls within the focus of the writing of the late string quartets, a period Carroll seems to have been emphasizing] elicits the ambiance not only of B.'s chambers and the man himself, but also the perception of the composer held by younger contemporaries, namely the awe-struck who bestowed upon Art its capital "A," Genius its capital "G," wedded the two and worshipped at their exalted altar. We read:

Beethoven was residing at 767 Krugerstrasse on the fourth floor, which I approached with great trepidation. The blood coursed through my body and brain with such rapidity that I was quite giddy when I reached the door. As I
knocked, I felt as if my skin contained a great river swollen with spring rains. Such a degree of inner turmoil has unfortunately robbed my memory of the moments surrounding the opening of the door. The impressions on the wax tablet of my soul now lack depth and legibility. I may, in fact, have lost consciousness as smelling salts olfactorily haunt the earliest seconds I can recall inside the apartment. I finally managed to ask if this was where Mr. Beethoven lived. The very name of this great Genius would barely leave my tongue, sounding it somehow tainting the ideals it represented. The very name loomed gigantically and, while incapable of passage between my pursed lips, seemed capable of smashing normal actions of decorum; the daily conventions used to reify petty vanity were rendered exposed, replete in all their base and grubbing reality by the mere mention of the name of one who had soared beyond them.

Still, one must accommodate those who do not understand such things, as the cretin of a servant quivering before me obviously did not. I presented a letter of introduction and stood to wait in the ante-room. The room seemed a mirror of my internal confusion. An extraordinary number of bottles, completely or partially empty, were strewn across the floor containing (or having contained) medicinal powders or liquids of some sort. On a table stood a glass half-emptied. "Might this glass have been left by Beethoven?" I queried the Muses. The desire to seize the
glass and drain it seized me since such a move would enable me to make the sort of clandestine theft which can join two souls in eternal fraternity, as German superstition leads us to believe. I held the tumbler aloft and was about to seal this secret pact when my arm was stilled by the sight and smell of the brackish liquid which seemed to have been festering for some time in the glass. What if I should die from this concoction? Better to have tasted the dregs of Art, the backwash of Genius, the bittersweetness of Truth and to die, than to live forever hugging close to the muckball of daily drudgery and imbecility. Before I could sip from the tidepool of the musical Titan, I was summoned to enter the interior chambers. In some ways, I am thankful the drinking was stemmed. How forlorn a soul I would have been should I by chance not have been transported into poetic bliss and subsequently collapse in a swoon.

I was timid and shaken, and I trembled at the prospect of crossing that sacred threshold, a passageway to another world, one of spiritual soarings and transcendence. I have met great people before, Goethe amongst them, but nothing I have experienced shall rival the expectation and then the reality I lived through at this moment and the subsequent ones. With the others, their being artists in the realm of language, there held a common ground, an artistic territory of the soul, which we traversed together. As a result, the webbing which wove us to one another provided
connections which lessened the impertinence of my entering into discussion with them. No such ground could be found underfoot for this meeting with Beethoven. Indeed, at every turn in the maze of my heart, I could only find barriers to separate my soul from his: his deafness to the world of physical sounds and my deafness to the spiritual world of musical composition being foremost amongst them. Though I dearly loved the medium with every fiber of my being, I could not sully it with my less than mediocre talents. Yet, what at first seemed to distance, proved in the end to conjoin. The magnimity of this rare spirit shabbily wrapped in a tawdry housecoat shone through. Had I been a snivelling low-talent composer, I doubt he would have given me the time of day. As I was a poet (of what I know to be less talent than desire and appreciation), I ranged a topography closed to the composer, but a landscape important to his Art, and his Art was him. He valued my Muse, but did not know her.

Because of this, he graciously allowed me entry and brief, though painful and jagged, conversation. As I entered, I quickly scanned the room in search of him. I spied him turned away at an angle away from his writing desk, holding my letter of introduction at arm's length. Suddenly sensing someone in the room, he turned towards me with a slight start. Under a puff of smoke-colored hair, his face spread into a smile of greeting. "Your letter from Zelter is a fine one. He knows true art and does his best to protect
it when and where he can. He speaks highly of you. Please come in and talk with me for a moment." I came towards him and took his outstretched hand in mine. What I said, whether I said anything at all -- language denying me all potency of expression at that moment -- is blurred beyond distinction. I repeatedly pressed his hand and pumped his arm to tactiley atone for what was vocally missing. "You must forgive me if I am dull. I have been quite sick lately, not at all well. I am also deaf. Perhaps we should keep our meeting brief so that you will not leave with too poor an impression of me," he answered my madly grinning face and incessant hand-shaking. I believe I was delirious. Still, he was able to lead me to a chair from which I might have still flailed the air with my empty palm. I am not at all sure.

Glancing about the room, I noticed an enormous amount of clutter, yet the overall effect of the chamber was that it seemed the home of an ascetic. Beethoven, in his worn robe, sat in a chair beside the bed. Next to the bed was a table covered with objects of personal value. A portrait of his grandfather hung between two large windows. Beneath these windows stood the grand piano. The furniture sat sparse, sturdy, dusty and plain. What care did Beethoven have for opulent mirrors, ornate bronzes, divans, overstuffed chairs, silk drapes, gold or silver? He, to whom all the material rewards of the world, all of that by which people measure their success and import in life, simply represented
the ashes of vanity and the laying waste of all our precious powers, he rose like a plume of pure flame -- a true and divine light -- above the darkness of everyday grabbing and getting. Beethoven knew what the spirit needed in order to soar, as his did, and what would keep it weighted down.

We talked, or rather I wrote in his Conversation Books, and he talked in response to my queries on paper, briefly about a variety of topics, every possible **topos** seemingly a viable one. He made magnificent leaps of association, often leaving me as bewildered as exhilarated. Regarding opera, he informed me that he could not abide frivolous stories, with which I could only concur. He also told me that Grillparzer was to have written a libretto for him, but they could not come to any terms of agreement. Then, he asked what I would write for an opera. These words sounded far away, as if they were hurtling toward me from the depths of a dream, a deep dream which transports the soul. I immediately became giddy again, and the hand which scratched a response in the Conversation Book seemed not my own, but rather the medium for another. Beethoven appeared pleased with my suggestions, particularly one based on part of **The Odyssey**, which I knew he held in much admiration. I had thought the book in which Odysseus journeys to the underworld and queries the shades eternally fluttering about would make an excellent venue for the operatic stage. The meeting drew quickly to a close as he became increasingly distracted by a
bit of music on which he must of have been working. In fact, he hardly noticed my leave taking. I gathered myself together and stepped from the room with the great composer transported in thought and I feeling more mortal than at any other time in my life. I had met Genius and spoken with it. I had stood wavering in the presence of Transcendence and drunk of it. It left me in awe and cowering in an introspective corner of my soul, for I knew how rare such Genius was, certainly how scarce a commodity in myself. Though we were to exchange brief correspondence a few times, and I was able to attend a rehearsal of the string quartet Op. 127 in E flat major, I never met the Master again.

Our Hellstabb is suprisingly self-deprecating in this final paragraph. Much of his autobiography is filled with a bravado that is touchingly absent in most of this account. Perhaps this bespeaks the power of Beethoven's personality, or the effect his presence commanded. Or perhaps this reveals the way in which the Romantic youth, the progenitors of sacred Art, revelled in the aura of their self-constructed gods, of which Beethoven held the most exalted spot in the pantheon. Such a condition was something the post-Romantics were not immune to either, as the gushy novella *A Pilgrimage to Beethoven* by Richard Wagner (yes, the Richard Wagner) amply illustrates.

The swooning narrator of this tale likens his trek
to Wien as being akin to a Muslim's trip to Mecca, even going so far as to fast and pray for days in the dive of a hotel he stays in across from Beethoven's flat. Most of the book seems pure propaganda for establishing Beethoven as a demi-god, if not a full one, and for the purity of the German soul (an Übergeist?). This second aspect comes via the xenophobic bashing of a rich Englishman also journeying to pay tribute to Beethoven. The narrator lords his supposed spiritual superiority over the Englishman by disdaining the latter's material wealth and refusing to ride in his fine carriage, preferring instead to make the pilgrimage on foot. Wagner's choice of the English as examples of quintessential national snobbery and boorishness seems odd given Beethoven's much-documented admiration for these people and their nation, the sort of naive and unblemished admiration possible only through imaginative projection untempered by empirical experience. This effusively overblown novella drips with self-righteous piety and is filled with feigned spiritual yearning which is unable to mask Wagner's true desire: a German national opera company. All of this is provided to assure the reader that Rellstab's generation merely initiated this trend of unchecked flattery that has unfortunately continued for many years, and of which indeed strands and fibers can be found today.

Anyway, for a more "staid," "level-headed" account of meeting Beethoven, we can turn briefly to that documented
by Dr. Karl von Bursy, a product of the Enlightenment medical schools: rational, logical, and largely unemotional. He also meets Beethoven in the Classical Age, 1816, and though it is only a mere nine years prior to the account we have just read, there is a quantum leap in the generations represented via the synecdoches of von Bursy and Rellstab. This was a time, as von Bursy might have stated it, before the Romantic generation of Rellstab and others had gotten out of its intellectual and emotional short pants, if in his view it ever did. A different age, a different person, a different world-view, a different interpretation of Beethoven (himself possibly a very different person if we accept change and growth as integral aspects of what we call the individual), all of these can be found in our excerpts of the reminiscences penned by the good doctor's unflinching hand.

Wien, 1 June 1816

How could I fail but to comment upon my making the acquaintance of Beethoven? Such an omission would seriously injure the quality of the narrative of my days. It was on the date heading this sheet that I set out to meet the great man. I had spent the previous day looking for what proved to be the wrong address. Madame Streicher intended to write down 1052 in the Seilerstrasse, but it managed to come out as 1056, something having been confused in the conveyance of the address. Since she has never been good with numbers and numbers never lie, I was not surprised to find the error lay
with her. Armed on the 1st with the correct address, I embarked on my mission yet again.

I had been quite convinced that someone of Beethoven's fame and stature must reside at one of the palaces of the aristocracy under the tutelage of some benevolent and decrepit wastrel whose sole claim to fortune was heredity. The number and street address surprisingly disabused me of such whimsy. Even more startling was the herring merchant who turned out to be a neighbor, his gnarled digit pointing me the way: "I am fairly sure Herr von Beethoven lives just there, sir. I've seen one who looks quite like him and who mutters to himself come and go from that building over there." I thanked the man. Once again, to my dismay and astonishment, I found that Beethoven occupied a mere couple of rooms on the third floor. Three flights of narrow, dark stairs had to be ascended or descended each time entry or exit was desired! The place hardly seemed adequate for a herring merchant, much less one of the finest practitioners of musical composition to live in many an age. Democracy is supposed to elevate the station of those deserving of such elevation, not keep them down-trodden in squalid conditions, not that Beethoven dwelt in a Democratic state but merely in a Democratic Age. A small hall led to a small door behind which Beethoven lived and worked. I rang the bell, and a manservant bade me enter. He wished to admit me immediately! Still, I remained
nonplussed. Surely Beethoven had no idea how his help treated visitors: without decorum or manners. I truly believe this man took advantage of the notion of Fraternity as practiced by civilized individuals. I offered the ignorant clod my letter of introduction from Amenda and waited for reply with no small amount of apprehension. Finally, a call for me to come forward came from behind a thick, woolly curtain. I parted it and stepped into Beethoven's quarters. Beethoven himself came forward to greet me. Once again, I was knocked off center. I was at a complete loss as to how to greet the great composer. I had felt an intimacy with him long before this moment and only then did I suddenly realize this intimacy stemmed solely from his music. Regardless, I felt I had some insight into his true self. I should have liked to grasp his hand and imprint it with a kiss of the utmost and truest appreciation for the delight and enlightenment he had given me. And I am rarely given over to such unbridled displays of emotion. In the end, we settled for rather stiff handshaking and polite greetings.

Beethoven appeared just as I imagined he would: neat, stout, ruddy-complexioned, and energetic. His was a powerful gaze filled with passionate intensity beneath a great shock of already graying hair swept back. He was not the least ostentatious in comportment or accommodations: refined and restrained. His dress, though, revealed a slight
taste for the luxurious which the rest of his being negated. When he laughed, he bore a striking similarity to Amenda, about whom we conversed as he served as the conduit for our meeting. This led rather quickly into a list of his various ailments followed by a diatribe against Vienna. He informed me that he was quite hard of hearing, which indeed he was, and this put great strain on the conversation, for I had to yell in his ear, and he concentrated intensely on what I was saying. This made me feel rather ill at ease, as one is not accustomed to having one's speech so completely scrutinized. It is my understanding that Beethoven often relied on his interlocutors' writing down what they wished to convey, but such was not the case on this visit.

When he picked up the refrain of his perpetual dissatisfaction with his situation in Vienna -- with the people, with everything having to do with Austria as an empire, state, or a concept -- he would become quickly agitated, almost violent. At such moments, he would leap from his chair (more often than not unsettling a piece of furniture or some other object in the process) and strike a most terrifying chord on the piano. The entire room would shudder with the blow, especially as it was struck with no concern for dissonance at all. I have never seen bile rise and subside as quickly in anyone as with him. He hopped about the room and cursed everything which he considered wrong with the world and the universe, virtually all of which
could be found beyond the walls of his cell within the walls of Vienna. It was a most amazing display. I was astonished at his openness, his honesty, his frankness, especially in light of the political climate in Vienna at the time. Such proclamations against the crown could have easily landed someone in jail.

"Why do you remain here," I entreated, "especially when virtually any foreign ruler would gladly adorn his court with the likes of you?" "Because, sir, I am not an ornament or a trained monkey. Besides, they would never pay me my due if they bothered to pay me at all" came his reply. The question did nothing to derail or even slow the diatribe. "Everyone here is a scoundrel of the lowest form. They know nothing of Honor. Trust vanishes in the mist. Virtue would die in this city due to loneliness. They expect work on beggars' wages. Agreements may as well be written in the sand. A handshake and a word lose out to their evanescence and only serve as a signal to some shyster, some Shylock, that here is a sheep for the fleecing, or rather, the flaying. You know a society is doomed whenever it demands that for everything to be anything it must be written. Paper serves as the word of God here. Look at all the bureaucrats! Look at all the hucksters! Paper words, paper deals, paper notes; no spoken words, no trust, no coin, nothing solid left from the days of old. Sometimes I wonder if it is just this city, just this country, or if there really are changes
underway everywhere. Of course, there are! Hal! There are always changes everywhere! Even in our vaunted, valued and static past! So there you have it!" he pounded out a chord as punctuation.

Beethoven seems inordinately interested in money, something which I actually found endearing, as it makes him seem more human, more mortal, more like the rest of us.

His apartment was bright, cheerful and clean. Every aspect revealed the workings of an orderly mind. Several small oil portraits hang on the wall, of whom I couldn't tell. A few scraps of paper with scratchings of musical notes upon them lay about.

He dressed quite nicely, seemingly concerned about his sartorial impression despite the rather unattractive features of his face and build. His deafness I believe to be quite advanced as he hardly heard a word I said. I do not think him mad as some have claimed. Herr Reidl assures me that he is not and that he only suffers from "artist's spleen," a humour I think most sane people to be occasionally affected by. Perhaps questions regarding the composer's sanity emerge from his passionate nature, or maybe from the prices he charges for his work. I understand he is very expensive and most difficult for publishers to deal with. All in all, I found him quite engaging and affable, and our brief meeting most civilized and enjoyable.

I had the opportunity to perform a brief errand for
Beethoven almost two months later, on the 27th of July to be precise. He sent me a note asking if I would be kind enough to purchase a copy of his Trio Variations in E major at the publishing house run by Mollo. I did so and brought it to him at once. He seized it and sized it up immediately. His face betrayed mixed emotions. "The rogue!" he shouted. "I had heard Mollo had turned on me and now it is confirmed. You see, my von Bursy, Mollo did not pay me for this, and taking a page from the King's book on information gathering, I sent you as a spy to verify the rumor I had heard. It was an errand you performed admirably and one which I obviously could not do myself. I thank you, but am sorry to have placed you in such a position." I was quickly dismissed, and I was not entirely displeased about it either, for I could hear more than the usual amount of breaking of furniture as I departed. Such practice really is base, a vulgar sort of duping. The book trade here seems absolutely bereft of morals. Each publisher makes others appear as saints when compared to the nasty deeds he performs. I am glad not to have need for any prolonged dealings with them.

Well, certainly quite different takes, to be sure. How can we account for these variations of accounts of initial meetings? And there are, I can assure you, numerous others which would provide even further divergence from what might be called consensus.
[I remember well when I first met Carroll, a mere two years before the scholar's untimely demise (an event the complete impact of which on me remains unrealized by myself and the realization of which is staved off by my immersion in this project). I had sought out Carroll to pursue the sorts of endeavors for which this innovative scholar was just then becoming more widely known: interdisciplinary approaches to musical and cultural history. My letter of introduction allowed my entry to the very room from which Carroll exited this world, as described above. To this day, it remains a meeting which reverberates in my mind and soul.

Carroll looked much older than the years should have allowed, the diseases and chronic disorders which would eventually spirit the scholar away already held Carroll in their terrible, slowly squeezing grip. The room which unfurled around the prematurely aged inhabitant of it revealed what initially appeared as studied disarray -- that is, everything a mess with everything in its place. On further study, the study proved to be in utter chaos. Dust lay thickly folded in several places. The remains of partially ignored meals clung encrusted on plates stacked on chairs. A large pitcher of water and a basin placidly rested on a table near the desk. Moisture stains sprawled across ceiling and carpet alike, and a pen could be had at arm's length from virtually any spot in the room. A portable
cassette deck blared music (Carroll's hearing having steadily deterioriated since the age of thirty or so, due probably to prolonged exposure to loud music) from the top of the desk. Sheet music wove its way through the amorphous mounds of paper and other bits of Housania which populated virtually every square inch of surface space. Amongst the splintered scores were Handel's Messiah and Mozart's Don Giovanni. The ever-present cigarette smouldered between the writer's perpetually nicotine-stained fingertips, smoke rising up in a straight line to join the cloud-cover hovering in the top third of the room. I ran my eyes over the titles of the multitude of books and was surprised to find several seemingly incongruous titles in their number: Plutarch's Lives, Homer (both The Iliad and The Odyssey), the collected poems of Schiller, Macbeth, King Lear, The Tempest, and Goethe's Faust, all of these in one stack and bearing no direct relation to any of the other works scattered about the place.

Carroll, after some time of silent reading, glanced up and was startled to see someone standing there. Carroll's ability to concentrate deeply and to forget something just said (e.g. "admit this person to my study," in this particular situation) has been commented upon by many. Carroll leapt up and shut off the tape deck when it became apparent that I was having to scream my name in response to the who-the-hell-was-I question hurled at me by the scholar.
The Handel trio sonata crashed into frighteningly naked silence just as I screamed my name once again. Carroll greeted me kindly after remembering who I was. Though cordial, the scholar let it be made clear that I was not to dally. This was but the first of many instances which displayed Carroll's extreme desire for hoarding and guarding time. Given the sorts of quacks who daily tried to make contact with the writer (and burgeoning media personality), given the scant time available for writing, given an acute awareness of Carroll's day drawing nigh, this jealousy of time seems more than reasonable. (Of this last reason, I am certain. I vividly remember the scholar early in our friendship saying, "The bony hand is poised, ready to knock at any moment. I feel the clay-breathed reaper exhaling on my neck every time I sit to write.") I got straight to the point of my visit, and the scholar seemed flattered at having someone stand in that very study to declaim intentions of following the same new path, a path barely discernible through the thick underbrush of opaque academic inquiry and blotted out by bushes of myopic minutia, but a path nonetheless which originated in that jumbled jungle of a study. After being asked to return the next day with some of my work, I departed. Carroll had the music on again and was once more wholly swallowed by the book before I could shut the study door.

I returned the next day, my meager articles sweatily
warping in my hands. Carroll's housekeeper said my manuscripts were expected. No, I could not see Dr. House, as the good doctor was away. I was to leave an address and wait to be contacted. Days passed. Weeks passed. Almost two months passed before a note arrived. It read simply: "See me tomorrow, Carroll House." Carroll was never one to be too prolix in daily activities, a quality often commented on by those who ventured into this interesting, but difficult, person's orbit.

I came as early as possible but late enough to allow for a late sleeper's routine, not knowing when this person worked, slept, ate or performed any other activity. I was admitted and led to the study. The room seemed completely unchanged, except for an oil painting I hadn't seen the first time (I found out later it was a portrait of Carroll's grandfather, for whom the writer and lover of music held the greatest admiration). That Carroll was again engrossed in reading, had evidently forgotten the summons, and of course had the music at near distortion level (Handel again, one of the concerti grossi) afforded me the time to notice the painting as well as what I am sure was the same plate of forlorn food precariously teetering on top of the others. After a virtual repetition of the initial scenario and sequence of surprise, inquiry, silencing of said music and general reserved friendliness, Carroll produced my articles, quickly proclaimed them as good, hurriedly mumbled I could
aid and/or study with the writer in any way that might be profitable to myself, and hastily shoved the works into an already over-flowing drawer only to replace them with a stack of contracts the scholar was currently considering. They had to do with the syndication of the radio show which was beginning to attract much attention. Of course, I am referring to "Culture in Your Ear," that now lost-to-the-void-of-death treasure trove of insights into the subtle and complex connections between music and culture. With cigarette clenched between teeth, Carroll spread the documents before me, and asked "Which do you think is going to yield the best gain? Remember, money is not the ultimate criterion, but it's pretty damned close." Having worked many a summer with my aunt who is a contract attorney, I gave them a quick but fairly thorough going over and without hesitation shoved one out of the stack and pronounced it best. A smile spread over the budding personality's slightly greenish face, "I'm not very good with numbers, but that one looked very appealing to me, as well."

That bit of business done, and Carroll obviously pleased with my financial acumen, talk (not really discussion, since the writer's poor hearing and tendency to monologue laced with not terribly subtle lists toward diatribe made conversation very difficult) turned to matters of health. Carroll made a sweeping gesture of dismissal regarding all the doctors who had ventured advice. As I have
subsequently discovered from my dealings with many of Carroll's circle, this topic signalled entry into the inner sanctum of Carroll's confidence, an entree not lightly given. Of course, I had no way of knowing this at the time, and would have preferred a multitude of topics to the one initiated -- possible cures for chronic diarrhea and their various side effects. Still, I felt immense pleasure sitting in the study and listening to the scholar use this topic as an initial platform from which to rail against everything from the medical profession to academic institutions, from the maintenance of power in hegemonic discourses to rogue dealings with publishers, from financial restraints imposed upon scholars to the suppression of Japanese pressure point healing -- to name but a few. The monologue leapt from topic to topic with little or no transition or even logical relation. It pulsed along via the suggestiveness of association, not unlike the late string quartets of Beethoven. Certain assertions were made all the more vibrantly by Carroll's punctuating the air with a wildly jabbing arm, which almost without exception unsettled something: the more valuable an object, the more likely a candidate it became for emphasis by toppling or breakage.

From that day until the fateful one in June so painfully described above, I became Carroll House's financial advisor, student, lackey, watcher of housekeepers, occasional handler of correspondence, drinking companion, and medium to
much of the tedious world which lay outside the study -- to name but a few of my roles. But, again, I digress, not to mention interrupt.]

Beethoven's ability to make enemies seems to have been one which he had developed into a fine art. While a very cordial individual and stalwart friend, the composer for whatever reason -- deafness, paranoia, wariness of deceptive individuals -- remained suspicious of most he met. Lest we think that this habit of making enemies more readily than friends always pockmarked his life, we now turn to a document which transports us to Beethoven's early days in Wien -- precisely 1798, a time which we will not much consider in this particular work but which is not without its influence on our focus. The document to which I refer is concisely summarized in the superscription borne in its heading: "Brief Document of the Friendly Relations between L. v. Beethoven and Karl Friedrich Amenda, later to be Provost at Talsen in Courland, a written version of the account told in the oral tradition," and it reads as follows:

K. F. Amenda completes his studies in theology and goes off to Wien, where he several times meets Beethoven at soirées and such, attempts to engage him in conversation, but without success, since B. remains very distant (or reservé). Thinking B. a boorish oaf with a reputation unwarranted, A. continues to move in the musical circles and salons of Wien and becomes music-teacher at the home of Mozart's widow.
Such a fine position leads all to speculate how A. can put up with M.'s widow, and this is an example of A.'s saintly demeanor. A. receives an invitation from a friendly family to play first violin in an evening of quartet music. While he is playing, someone turns the pages, and when he turns about at the finish, he is not at all surprised to see it is B. because B.'s already approaching deafness had caused him to turn the pages a bit behind the pace, and he almost knocked the music stand over several times (B.'s clumsiness with all objects is well acknowledged). B. bows slightly and backs off without uttering a word. A. is sure he didn't hear him warn about the Countess L., whom B. immediately backs into. The next day, the extremely amiable host of the party appears at the White Swan, the coffeehouse A. frequented, and cries out at A.: "What have you done? You have won Beethoven's heart! Beethoven requests you rejoice him with your company this evening." A., much pleased, hurries to B.'s room and is immediately implored to play. The two spend the day together, playing music for several hours, eating and drinking wine and coffee, and walking the streets engaged in conversation. From that time on, mutual initiations of visits become increasingly frequent, and the two are together so often that when people in the street see only one of them, they immediately shout: "Where is the other one?" Such constant shouting of this question strains the friendship as often such interruptions serve to push musical ideas out of
B.'s mind. That B. often worked on aires when walking has been oft-noted. A. introduces B. to Mylich, with whom he had come to Wien, and B. introduces A. to his musical circle. Hearing Mylich has a beautiful sister in Courland, B. hands M. a small manuscript rolled up and tied with a silk ribbon. The sonata is for violin and piano and bears the inscription: "To the sister of my Friend A.'s Friend Mylich." B. complains that he can never get by on the violin. A. begs him to try nonetheless; B. plays so fearfully that A. has to beg him: "Please, stop! Have mercy, man -- quit!" B. ceases playing with A. laughing so hard that he is convulsed on the floor. By all accounts, the incident almost came to blows with B. scattering sheet music in a scramble over the piano-forte when attempting to run A. through with the bow (as if it were a rapier!). B.'s sensitivity on such matters is well acknowledged. One evening the two were improvising and B., in particular, plays marvellously. At the close of play, A. says: "What a pity. Such glorious music is born and, in a moment, is lost like mortal men into the void of evanescence. The brilliance of the light flashes but a moment and is gone, as if giving birth astride a grave." Whereupon B. replies: "There you are wrong, dear A." He immediately sits down and repeats every note of the extemporization. B.'s disdain for the mortal in him has been spoken about by many others.

[The next section of this account could well fit into other categories which divide this work, namely the
section on finances or the one of travels not taken, tentatively entitled "somewhere I never travelled, gladly beyond." However, since Carroll kept this account intact, the only separation being one of paragraphing and paragraphing being something peculiar to an age and its typographic fashion, I will keep the reminiscence united and allow this next part to serve as foreshadowing for forthcoming categories, as indeed much of the material in this section does. In fact, I am again finding it increasingly difficult, as mentioned above, to clearly delineate categories, documents and information. The overlaps, echoes, resonances, allusions, and associations grow increasingly apparent and manifold. Truly, Carroll's project, the aborted Athena, would cause my portmanteau attempt to pale and quake in comparison. I return to the document at hand.

Once B. complains to A. that he has no money and the rent is due. What is more, B. cannot figure a way to raise the figure required to readily dispatch the problem. "That is easily remedied," says A. and gives him a theme ("Freudvoll und Leidvoll") and locks him in his room. Before turning the key, A. tells B. to choose one [a key] and vary away. Three hours pass before the key turns again. When A. re-enters, he finds B. there but very cross. To the question whether or not he has begun, B. hands over a stack of paper with the quip: "Here is your herring!" (Da ist der Fisch!)
This is yet another example of B.'s love of fish as a main course and his affection for puns. A. wraps the stack in newspaper and joyfully takes it to B.'s landlord, who is unhappy about all the racket coming from B.'s apartment and is about to throw him out on his ear. B.'s landlord changes his tune slightly when A. tells him to take the stack to a certain publisher (B. and H.), who will pay handsomely for the contents. B.'s landlord is off after initially hesitating to perform the errand, and upon returning casually asks if other such bits of paper might be lying about, thus proving the success of the venture. In order to put a more satisfactory end to such financial woes, A. advises B. to tour Italy. B. willingly agrees on the condition that A. accompany him. A. gladly consents and maps are rustled about and the plans almost completed when bad news reaches A. His brother D. has been eaten on a hunt, and A. must return to C. to oversee the funeral and the family. With a doubly oppressed heart, A. takes leave of B. to travel to C. to oversee the F.'s. There he receives a letter from B. saying: "Since you are indisposed and unable to accompany me, I shall not go to I., for what is a B. without an A. except alone?" The friends correspond infrequently and never meet again. The sporadic correspondence ends with the death of B. in 18--.

[Prior to my next brief account, or rather Carrol's next brief account, or even more accurately, someone else's
brief account, or rather accounts in the plural, I wish to interject yet another anecdote (making this indeed my account) regarding the person whose work this is. Surely, fine readers, you won't begrudge me these short peregrinations, especially since we have no predetermined destination, and these do ever so much to assuage my fears and doubts. Can you feel my confidence growing? As patterns emerge commensurately with my own assuredness, vague imperatives which would have sent me spinning into an abyss of self-doubt suddenly emerge crystalline in the light of their obviousness. Hence, something such as the following demand to his personal Mnemosyne "Put the three composers together in a block" now confirms the aptness of my choosing these Reminiscences as a category rather than sending me into that dark night of constant questioning mentioned above, for the command can only refer to the brief but illuminating gems of prose left by Liszt, Spohr and Weber, marked curiously but not incongruously in three separate texts in different inks with equally divergent cryptograms. And it is indeed the Liszt document which reminded me of the daguerreotype of my association with Dr. House so long suspended in paragraphical limbo and which serves as catalyst for this thyroidally-extended bracketed note.

I was rather unfair in my documentation of the off-handed way in which Dr. House dismissed my own work submitted upon the scholar's request. Or, rather, I was remiss in
cutting the account off with this initial dismissal. That part was painfully true. However, several months later, I was astonished by this great academic's memory for admired ideas and connections and for the subtle way in which such admiration was expressed. As it happened, I miraculously found large sections of one of my papers emanating from the tinny tweeter of my partially blown radio speaker one evening during the broadcast of Carroll's, by then, immensely popular radio program. (Humility prevents me from giving out either the particular program number or the subject, though I will say that I am currently working on expanding the notion that harmonic differences in the music of J.S. Bach, Beethoven and Brahms had more to do with beards (contemporary fashions in facial hair) than in any so-called "evolution" of harmony.) Imagine, if you can, the immense flattery felt by my own tentative soul to hear Carroll extolling ideas generated by myself in so public a forum. Imagine the sly warmth of acceptance I experienced when, true to this scholar's sense of intellectual insider's joking -- the invisible secret elbow nudging the ribs of academic accomplishment -- nary a word about me was heard in the broadcast. Imagine the smug sense of self-satisfaction infusing my being when the broadcaster feigned ignorance of my allusion to the usage of my work. This event will exemplify Carroll's very personal and secretive way of expressing delight with a colleague's work and that my earlier casting of the good doctor's
treatments of my writings may have left incorrect formations of this person's character lurking in the minds and hearts of readers, incorrect formations due to the incompleteness of the form I presented. Further, this short side-road feeds directly into the highway charted by Dr. House which leads us to understand Beethoven as both gruff and kind, as exemplified in the previous and the next reminiscences. On to Liszt and Carroll's notes smudgingly marginalized but now lifted to the light of centered, crisply typed prose:

In the month of April in 1823, the ever-scheming Anton Schindler finally arranged a meeting between the eleven-year-old prodigy Franz Liszt and the master. Beethoven, besides having more than enough good reasons to doubt any suggestion proffered by Schindler, had always maintained more than a modicum of skepticism of prodigies and found it better for him to keep his distance from them. Yet, he succumbed, this due no doubt more to the fact that Carl Czerny was the tike's keyboard teacher than to any of Schindler's maneuverings. The account given here was communicated to one of Liszt's students, one Ilka Horowitz-Barnay, some fifty-plus years after the actual event. Thus, again, discourse-filters, like philters meant to disperse a disease called history, muddy more than clean the waters in our ever-vigilant swim to actuality. We read the pupil giving a first-person supposedly recounted account by the teacher.
My good teacher Czerny took me to the Schwarzspanier house, where we found Beethoven in his rooms and working at a long table. After grunting and expressions of discontent, Beethoven left his work and glared at me. Already slightly cowed by his presence, I found his visage did little to alleviate my shyness. Czerny encouraged me to play, and I did so, a short piece by Ries. When I had finished, Beethoven asked me to play a Bach fugue, and I accommodated with one from the Well-Tempered Clavichord. The final notes were gently dying off the quivering wires when he asked me to transpose the fugue to another key, which, as Fate would have it, I was able to do. The gloomy gaze still fell on me as I finished the transposition, but this dissipated as a smile slowly spread over his countenance. "What a plucky devil you are!" he cried. He walked toward me and stroked my head several times as he complimented me. This gave me an insane kind of courage, perhaps the sort of bravery felt by soldiers upon tasting brief success in battle. "May I play something of yours?" I asked. After receiving a nod of assurance, I played the first movement of the C-minor concerto [the third piano concerto]. When I drew the piece to a close, Beethoven took hold of my hands and proclaimed me "one of the fortunate" because, he said, my playing would bring pleasure to others just as it had to him. "The Gods rarely grant such gifts. Distribute your one wealth to the many. There is
nothing rarer, nothing finer, nothing more pleasing to the soul nor to the spirit of Life than the circumambulation of pleasure." These last words he intoned *sotto voce* directly into my eyes and heart. I rarely tell anyone this story. It stands as the highest achievement of my artistic career.

[... as does the moment your voice, Carroll, robbed of its lower register resonance by the vagaries of electronic media, put forward my words and my ideas. Yet, my friend, I feel the need to depart from your command of placing the three composers together. The account by Spohr and your comments on it fit here, but alas might find snugger home elsewhere. This indeed is the case for many of your sections, as I have often mentioned and bemoaned. It is a wretched fate to intuit the possible paths and not to be able to feel certainty regarding the one upon which one eventually lights. No, I shall honor your command.]

Robbings! Thefts! How often highwaymen appear on the dusty road of life! All supported by, goaded and abetted by, the most malevolent and consistent thief of them all: Time. Yes, to quote Thomas Hardy: "Time to make me grieve,/ Part steals, lets part abide." O! indeed it does and did and will. In all its tenses, time took, takes, will take like a multi-armed burglar, a veritable Vishnu of thievery. For Beethoven, the stolen part: his hearing; the abided part: his art, that is to say his soul. Much has been made of this, and written of it, much romanticized and much made traumatic.
From the autobiography of Ludwig Spohr, we get tragicomedy:

Disappointed as I was at learning that Beethoven's deafness was so acute as to absent him from many of the musical gatherings, my efforts to make his acquaintance did not flag . . . Thus thrust together in this inn, with all the newspaper notices carrying information about performances of my work, it would have been much outside the bounds of social decorum for him not to introduce himself to me, which he did. Making him hear me proved a most undesirable task, especially since it caused diners not only in the immediate room but in most of the adjacent ones as well to turn and stare at our voluminous exchange. Yet it came to pass that our paths often crossed at this inn, and the place became the fulcrum for our activities. Rarely, if ever did he speak of music; his favorite topics (carried on at the top of his voice, for all to hear) revolved around the poor theater management of Prince Lobkowitz and Count Palffy. The latter was a favorite target of Beethoven's, even within the walls of his own theater and at a volume which the Count himself could hear the counsel offered by the great composer on the subtleties of running a theater. I was greatly embarrassed by this topic, especially in that place under the watchful ear of that particular person (patron), and I would try, to little avail I'm afraid, to divert him from the topic. In fact, he railed on as if he never even heard me . . . His repulsive manners and appearance, I truly believe, stemmed much from
his deafness. His inability to find good house-help did not aid the situation nor did his ever-dire financial conditions. That he was uncouth at times may also be attributed to his living in a completely isolated state ...

It was after the success of the revised *Fidelio* that a benefit concert for Beethoven was organized. This seemed the perfect time, for in as fickle a city as Vienna, one must take advantage of being the center of attention. The bill featured most of his recent compositions and was to be performed at the great Redouten Saal. This gave me my first chance to watch his most eccentric means of conducting. Of course, I had heard a great deal of his leading mannerisms, but I'd never been a witness of them. Beethoven had taken on the custom of communicating modes of expressive qualities he desired from the musicians via the most extraordinary body movements, as if his inability to hear the results of commands could be compensated for, or even ameliorated by, exaggerated kinetics, of which he had a dazzling array. To indicate *sforzando* [the sudden and strong accentuation of a note or chord], he would tear his arms, previously crossed in embrace of his chest, from their position and spread them like a falcon at glide or our Lord on the Tree of Redemption; as his head often lolled to one side when performing this movement, the latter similarity continually crept, I hope not sacrilegiously, into my mind. If the score demanded *piano*, he would fold himself over. The lower he bent, the quieter
he wished it. I feared one particular pianissimo would render the conductor unconscious. On other occasions, I've heard he would implode like a bladder relieved of air when expressing a decrescendo. With a crescendo, he incrementally arose, and when the forte struck, he would leap straight up into the air, occasionally furthering the forte with a yelp in aid of the orchestra. To add to the bizarreness of the whole effect, such leaps would be accompanied by a miniature blizzard of paper scraps flying from Beethoven's constantly brimming pockets. What rendered this all the more excruciating was that due to his horrible hearing, these gesticulations would often be slightly off the pace of orchestral play, rendering an effect of the conductor either foreshadowing or responding to the orchestra. The scene created was like a mechanical orchestra with one spring sprung, or a dream musical ensemble curiously out of synch. Numerous jokes passed through the coffee-houses calling Beethoven leading the orchestra a perfect mirror of the head of state leading the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

When I conveyed my utter disbelief regarding this manner of conducting to Seyfried, he told me a tale both hilarious and heart-rendingly sad at the same instant, as is life. At a recent early performance of a new piano-forte concerto, Beethoven had assumed the roles of conductor and soloist. The constraints placed on the latter role by the obligations of the former did not restrain the movements
employed in the capacity of carrying out said obligations. Thus, he conducted as usual. When the first *sforzando* appeared, he flung his arms out in his typical manner knocking both lights off the piano. The sniggers from the audience caused Beethoven to grow angry and start the piece over. Seyfried, concerned that repetition of the accident would occur in the same passage, commissioned two boys from the chorus to anchor the lights by holding them. One of the lads became preoccupied with the music and had involuntarily ventured close to the instrument to better follow the score. When the fateful *sforzando* recurred, he took a blow from Beethoven square in the face causing body and light to fly backward. The other boy also had been following the score but had been sharp enough to anticipate the movement and countered it with a quick crouch, thus eluding the fate of his counterpart. If raucous laughter had been subdued in sniggers earlier, this time the audience let go in gale force. Beethoven's anger mounted to such a pitch that he broke a half dozen wires or so when striking the first chords of his solo. The entire allegro movement was lost to the public that evening with every attempt at restoring order only fuelling the fire of anarchy ....

I heard Beethoven play but once, at his house, and it was not in the least a pleasurable experience. So utterly encased by the shell of deafness was he that he had no control of the dynamics he so expressively conveyed when
conducting. Whole groups of notes were swallowed in blurred atonal clusters. Deepest sorrow filled my soul as I listened to this painful dis-play. The riddle of this poor soul's behavior became instantly clear. How could a musician endure the despair of this condition, to have music beckon so alluringly and unattainably from a distant shore, only to have its melody lost to the yawning gulf in-between?

[I feel a slight twinge of pain shared with the composer Carl Maria von Weber, the third of our block of three composers. The bond that ties, the common cord stretching over space and time, is that we both have been stung by the accusation of being imitators: Weber, of Beethoven, and myself, of Carroll House. How cruel the sniping press can be, how horrible the envy thinly-veiled in the platitude of "critique." I shall not even deign to answer the base and baseless accusations that have appeared about my work. You, readers, know that I had struck out on my own and forged the trails Carroll had only pointed the way to, but never did I imitate style or content, as I think this text adequately displays. Unlike Weber, I won't consider the charges nor will I attempt to distance myself (again as Weber did) from my mentor by labelling the later work of the supposed original being imitated as "confused chaos" and "incomprehensible nonsense." Despite this move on the part of Weber that I find lacking in courage and character, I can
well understand how the pain inflicted by jealous accusers could cause one to react this way.

Often, I think, the castigation of my work has actually resulted from indirect assaults upon my mentor's, and as this production was of such scope and imagination, it did not leave itself open to direct confrontation. Oh, Carroll, how misunderstood you were. No, perhaps, only too well understood, and thus, you became the object of petty academic turf-protecting. This, as I mentioned, increasingly was the case as your work found receptive audience outside the hallowed halls of academia. One "colleague," who was so swollen with spleen that he resembled an overloaded bratwurst, called you "not inter-disciplinary but a-disciplinary" (as if it were an insult!). Another toadying pedagogue accused you of "not being an expert of any subject." An accusation to which you steelily replied, "You are right. I am no ex-pert. I am still very pert, especially about interesting areas of inquiry." The entire faculty lounge erupted with laughter in admiration of your skills at repartee.

Yet, this is not why we have the Weber reminiscence. To get an idea of this we turn to Carroll's original notes, penned in a slightly drunken scrawl.]

Weber -- good for late description of B.'s appearance, planned but never taken trips, descrip. of writing tablet activities -- much of it like his music, gushy
tripe -- include? I dou--[the rest of the word flattens out into an illegible line which burrows off the page. The Weber passage, ever so faintly marked in the text, follows:]

Though I was very tired, we set off late in the evening to visit Beethoven. The rain was thick and the going treacherous. He greeted me enthusiastically, embracing me several times and saying things like "You really are a devil of a fellow!" and "How kind of you to come all this way!"

Haslinger, the music publisher, who had been in our number that day, remarked that Beethoven looked like Lear or one of the Ossianic bards, to which I agreed. He had a huge plume of ash-colored hair rising above his high forehead. The whole skull was very broad, his nose like a lion's snout. His face was exceptionally pockmarked, like the face of the moon. Though not a tall man, his squared-off body stood a good two or three inches taller than mine, but I was by far the shortest of the group. The worn house coat complete with torn sleeves seemed out of keeping with his status but much in harmony with the disarray of the rest of his room. Music and money strewn about; old dishes still containing crusty scraps of food; piles of dust-covered paper; the unmade bed; stacks of books -- Shakespeare, Goethe, Schiller, and Homer stand out; a writing table completely hidden beneath letters, notes, and music paper; all of these remain vividly in my mind's eye.

He thrust a writing tablet into my hands and a most
unusual conversation ensued. The speed with which he could anticipate words written on the tablet was amazing, making it unnecessary to finish most sentences and even some words. He told me I would not need to write out everything I wished to say as he had become adept at filling in information by using context. Beethoven swore bitterly about the state of virtually everything: theater management, the Viennese love of frivolous Italian music, their being enamored with fashion, his nephew, the government's censorship policies, and numerous other targets of ire. All of this discontent flowed from one single source, one from which I too had more than my share of irritation, the very thing so casually cast about the room, namely money. To place Beethoven in a better pecuniary position I suggested he do a tour. I felt certain that removing himself from the discouraging conditions of life in Vienna would do wonders for both his heart and his bank account. The first place I thought of his going was Germany. "I know that in Berlin your music is much admired. A concert tour there would be most profitable." Beethoven ran his fingers through the air as if a piano hovered invisibly before him and shook his head. He then pointed to his ear, formed an "0" with his mouth, and made a hideous dry scraping noise. I took this to mean that his deafness made the idea of a concert trip impossible. "What about England then? You wouldn't need to play or conduct. Your appearance alone at concerts of your works there would be enough to pry
open London purses." Beethoven only hung his head for a moment, totally immobile. Quite suddenly, he leapt to his feet, took my arm and led me off to an inn to eat. During dinner, he continued his assault on the degrading tribulations of living in Vienna. I thought it must bring him more pleasure to vent his spleen than to eliminate the source of irritation ever would.

[Found below what I promise to be a most brief intrusion are what can not exactly be called Reminiscences in the sense in which we have established the genre here. They are instead fragments, brief moments, of telling details about the composer. Numerous hours have gone into my scouring copious notes, eyes honed for the slightest sign of a sign indicating something which had captured Carroll's fancy, that a passage, or even a word, had found sympathetic response in the scholar. Such indications would have slipped by unnoticed when first I took up the charge of this text, but now they spring from the page with neon-bright self-evidence. I will merely say from whom the fragment comes and supply it no comment by myself for none could be found from our Carroll, with one exception.]

Gerhard von Breuning: When swept up in conversation with my father, Beethoven would pace like a caged beast. As the discussion grew increasingly heated, the pace quickened. Often in such situations, Beethoven would get so carried away that he would expectorate on the mirror thinking it the
window.

Tobias Haslinger: As the composer was ever shifting accommodations, his possessions fell prey to attrition. However, he always expressed concern that his bells and bell-pulls be recovered. Since he was deaf and thus unable to hear these household items functioning, many of us wondered why he would so concern himself with items symbolizing his frustration: sound and the call to company, both of which were banished from the composer's realm by this ailment.

Franz Wegler: Once when discussing the great luck a common acquaintance of ours had experienced, Beethoven said "Fortune is round as a bell, not necessarily falling on the best or the most deserving. In fact, I think you could say that Fortune does not even smile on the most fortunate."

Nikolaus Simrock: Received a letter today from Beethoven in which he lamented the losses incurred in the exchange of currencies. Last line about the state of things in Vienna reads: "As long as the Viennese have brown beer and sausage, they will never revolt."

Beethoven, in a letter to the publishers Breitkopf and Hartel: As to the prefatory note for the variations, in which and in how many languages I leave to your discretion. We Germans are forced to use every tongue and should accept our Fate as such. [Carroll has a marginal reaction to this. The elongation and deflation, not to mention the obfuscation, of many of the letters signals that alcohol fueled the
academic's pen. It reads: J B. certainly did not take into account Hitler, the Austrian who tried to force every mouth on the Continent to accommodate the German tongue!

Beethoven, in yet another letter to Breitkopf and Hartel: One should be glad to find that music and words are one and the same thing: both aurally echo the soul and circulate life.

Edward Schulz: We walked for miles, Beethoven loudly humming and hopelessly oblivious to anything but Nature and his thoughts. After a time, I was able to wrest his attention away from his self-absorptions and asked him about programme music. He scowled and made a disgusting sound. I asked about his sixth symphony, the Pastoral symphony. He retaliated with: "The Pastoral symphony is not a painting of Nature. Rather it is an expression of the sentiments evoked in me by the enjoyment of Nature. No description occurs. I do not write out what is what and where it can be found or try to have the oboe represent a sparrow on the wing or some ludicrous one-to-one correspondance such as that. All I hope for is that the sounds which evoke moments for me may also to do the same for others, and of course these moments will be as different as individual sensibilities." We continued our walk, and Beethoven became increasingly expressive in his humming and stamping, so much so that he scared numerous beasts of labor feeding in the neighboring fields.
Ignaz von Gleichenstein: At a ball, Beethoven longed to dance with a particular woman. He said, "I cannot love anything that is not beautiful, or I would be able to love myself."

Johann Nepomuk Malzel: Beethoven held grand and vague ideas about the future. Early in his life, he tied "a liberal future" in very tenuous ways to technological progress, democratic ideals and the rise of capitalism. Nearer the end of his life, he played quite a different melody. He spoke of Resignation, which he said he had learned from Plutarch and Aurelius. The differences between the Beethoven of the Third Symphony and the one of the late string quartets seemed as marked, and as shaped by the same forces, as the Faust in Goethe's telling of the tale. He always preferred Kant to Hegel. He remarked to me once, "Whenever one overcomes, dusty footprints are often left on the pates of others."

Xaver Schnyder von Wartensee: That Beethoven consistently suffered from financial woes was well known by everyone in all of Vienna. Once while I was visiting his home and yet again sitting through an extended, though disjointed, assault on the various forces conspiring to keep him in such miserable conditions, two peasant women came in bearing a document from the authorities. It read that a peasant's home had burned down and that they were allowed to collect alms for the family. Beethoven complained about such
interruptions occurring all the time -- every day of the month, every month of the year -- even in the countryside where he went for peace and to get work done. All the time, he muttered invectives against all the various and infinite tribulations of daily life. Yet, he also went to a desk and pulled out a very large sum of money and gave it to the astonished women. Never once did the diatribe desist. They excused themselves with great expressions of gratitude and numerous bows while the flow of bile continued unchecked. It was a most amazing summation of what I held the character of the composer to be.

Beethoven, in a letter to Count Franz von Brunswick: As for me, good heavens, my realm is the air; as often as the wind whirls, so do the sounds whirl and so, too, does it whirl in my soul. Each time I breathe, I am a new person, and it is a new world in which I live. I change it and it changes me. We move in the never-ending circulation of the celebration of life and beauty which has always been and always will be.

[Though I said at the outset of this rather unwieldy section that I would probably not include any of Holz's memoirs, I have just been reading and rereading a passage, almost an aside, that I believe nicely rounds off what has been included here. Carrol had it marked for inclusion somewhere, or so the curling cryptic margin decoration would
lead one to believe. Thus, let's hear "our Karl" speak;
Carrol's comment on it follows:]

One evening in the winehouse ---------, Beethoven mentioned a newspaper advertisement which had struck his fancy. It was for a swimming belt equipped with inflatable bladders. After several cups of wine, Beethoven summoned the bladdered belt to resurface. "Imagine!" he said quite loudly, as usual, "My strapping on this marvellous belt and floating down the Danube."
Seeing the laughter and fueled by it and the wine, he continued "What an amazing contraption! Better yet, I could aid the journey by exposing my buttocks to the bastions and propulsing myself along with farts. I could blow right by the palace! An assault which even the Turks would envy! Bladder aiding bladder! Technology aiding humanity to give the aristocracy their due! The winds of change would blow! True Democracy on the Danube! By Jove, I know Diogenes would join me in such a venture." Much of the last few lines were drowned in hysterical laughter. Much mirth followed, and I am certain the spies had their pens busy scribbling away that night.

For several weeks after Beethoven's death, this image, the one he invoked of himself floating and farting through the city and over the horizon, would creep without provocation into my mind and make me smile.

In a letter to the publishers B. Schott's Sons, dated in Wien 5 Dec. 1824, Beethoven wrote: "Let us thank God for the expected steam cannons and for the already present use of steamships. What distant swimmers will there be to give us air and freedom?" What distant swimmers indeed, Herr Beethoven, what distant swimmers?
[In my paltry reconstruction of Carroll House's unrealized final project, I have found the following notes to be of both incalcuble aid and unending confusion: insight wedded with befuddlement. Whenever I feel I have met their challenge, they metamorphose into something wholly alien. Whenever they loom phantom-like and frighten me with their ghostly garb of suprising and shocking newness, they regroup in friendly familiarity. For any readers of my monstrous remaking of what would have been -- should have been, but never will be -- a most well-crafted text, I offer these notes, left by my dear departed mentor, which have caused me such internal dissension, tension, comfort and ambivalence.]

**poli** Greek: backwards, in opposition, yields **palilogia**, a rhetorical device of repetition -- the metempsychosis of this move manifests in parable/parabola: the squashed closed circle of the text (here we hear **parole** as in French; the collapse of the pernicious linguistic dualism in I long [**langue**] to be paroled [**parole**]) -- parables: the reverse of synecdoche, the whole resides/is manifest in every part, thus we eliminate progress -- Is this a raiding of the Ren. notion of the macrocosom immanent in the microcosom? -- metonymy: while no part or attribute can stand for the whole, no whole can stand for the whole either
-- Islands invisibly connected beneath the water: seen from the surface, apparently self-contained, isolated, but underneath, secretly linked in shifting sands of a coastal shelf: viewed in one way as wounds in the water, viewed in another as the beginning of healing, of land being wrested from the sea, all of it like memory or history -- writing, the attempt to represent any phenomenon, seems to me like trying to pin down a globule of mercury with a pen; it sluices away, splits, splays, and oozes and winds up looking something like what you had in mind but not exactly what you had in mind, like . . .? -- stem progress, sever development; let it sluice and pulse and flow associatively -- the rhythm of stories remains, the telling creates, invents, fiddles with the melody, adds voices for harmony and dissonance, but the addressee bears the burden -- the addressee's burden is to retell (which is also the teller's burden, Hermes: the conduit) the tales, the telling is in the telling and that's the truth, and the narrator is narrated in the narrative narrated by the narrator, autonomous authorship vanishes in recurrent embedding, always already told, telling the stories we find ourselves a part of, in and being told even (especially) as we tell them; our Universal rondo: stories telling people telling stories creating people creating stories . . . -- Benjamin claims that death is the sanction of everything a storyteller can tell, that the authority of the storyteller is borrowed from death; further, he claims
that the diminishment of death as a public process, something to which everyone is a witness, has resulted in the diminishment of the storyteller, I say push it out in the square again and look it squarely in the eye so that we can repeat the stories it tells us -- to change again into what we already were, the paradox of our metamorphoses -- turn away, apostrophe, an address to the dead or the absent, bridging the gulf between the living and the dead, also marking holes in words, circumscribing possession, a turning away from the trajectory of the argument or narrative --
A Poem (in Fragments)

[Earlier, we read Rellstab's reminiscence of his meeting with Beethoven. The long-tongued poet claimed to have turned disadvantage to advantage through the casting of poetry and music as disparate arts. As a result, so he boasted, Rellstab and Beethoven were able to appreciate one another's art without actually practicing it. There is much to be said for the line of reasoning Rellstab employs, except for a few small matters, not the least of which being that poetry and music are kindred arts, both flowing from the same Muse's mouth, as it were. Also, another small item unknown to Rellstab was that Beethoven did write poetry.

Carroll, the ever-diligent researcher, unearthed from the dusty and forlorn files of some god-forsaken archival purgatory fragments of a poem written by the great composer. The poem, as can be ascertained from the title, is addressed to Beethoven's brother Ludwig Maria. This brother, who bears the Christian name with which the composer himself would be christened, preceded Ludwig by one in the procession of progeny birthed by Johann and Maria Magdelena van Beethoven and died while a baby. To name a child after a deceased infant may surely create uncanny and possibly
disturbing echoes in the child who survives. However, such does not seem to be the case if one examines this poem. Rather than having a morbid and pathological fixation on the deceased sibling, Beethoven seems to have made the dead boy a source of solace and secret confidence.

No notes, explanations, or other information on the poem exist. Dr. House does not say how this startling document found the light of academic day or from whence it emerged. Asterisks are employed in the body of the poem to denote apparent sectional breaks. As this is a fragment, much discretion as to structure and other editorial decisions was left to the translator of the piece, Dr. House, who is, alas, unable to be challenged on these matters in any sort of face-to-face situation.]

An Unsent Poem to my Dead Brother Ludwig Maria
in His Death and Ever-present Absence

(I've lost my tale, song, and tongue.
I've lost them ere my time's begun --
erred before I've begun
erred with my aire ere I've begun:
tale, tongue, and song -- gone.)

Come with me my little Doppelgänger
and take me by the hand, echo of all
my life, resonance of all I've known,
0 soundboard for my soul and mind, reminder of
the unsaid
and the silent
and the ever-present absent,
come with me and I will show you
cataracts discharging themselves
into abysses ripe with promise.
This is where I drink, brother, where
I wet my lips when I thirst, where I wet
the lips of my soul -- the mouth of my self.
* * * * * * * * * * * * *
And, dear gone one ever by my side,
I will show you a place I've found,
a farm,
or rather the memory of a farm . . .
the trace of a farm,
its tops lost to time and indifference,
wrecked in the wake of people fleeing farms,
it stands in desolation.
So, brother, stands Europe,
narry a ploughman or a wife under the sun,
fields waiting to be unfurled
calm as an evening lake and as unnatural
as a crib-death.
0, brother, I know you understand me
when I cry to you
that the candle-flame flickers
over this farm,
over the heart of life
on this continent,
and candle-flames forever flicker everywhere over the
flux of all
pulsating and germinating life.
The shrieks of the soil are swallowed
by the great soul-less lungs of
clanging and banging factories
with pistoned intestines
which leap like demonic imps
in the bloating cities,
dim as night even in day,
they dance so fervidly, brother,
so seductively, brother,
with pockets clinking with coins,
that people hear nought else,
here they hear not
the beseeching sod beneath their feet
or the wheat bent weeping in the wind
or the pollen plumping the fauna,
and they chafe
at any words which could bestow solace,
for they too dance the demonic dervishes,
the impish dances,
losing their souls to wasteful, fruitless toil,
bodies more mechanical than the engines they drive
hearts merely fleshy turbines
and they care not, brother,
for Progress is God here and Nature is Dead to them,
Dead in a way you could never be.

* * * * * * * * * * * *

My brother, how we complement one another, doing
for each what the other cannot, you
live my death for me, and
I die your life for you -- infuse
your name with thought and breath and pray it makes you
smile . . . .

Have you heard the Sirens, brother?
Can you hear them for me? O, brother, when
I sail across my soul, lashed to the mast of my desires,
I long for your ears, yes, yours, for they have heard
sea-songs . . . .

I dreamed of dying in the ocean
once, I am ashamed to tell you, for
it shook me to my core. It did.
I shudder still. My shame fills me. You are dead.
Hold your hands aloft and block my eyes
from the glare of the sun, when my lips
crack with dust, wet them,
when I swallow fear and it fills me with dread,
shove your fist down
my gorge

The gorges spew foaming water through the blinding
light of the sun, brother. There is no death
in these mountains, only cool hidden lakes.

Set forth, we will, to scale mountains
Mountains scaled as mountains, not as tools or toys, and
we can read the pattern of Life in them,
hear in their musical scales the voice of Nature.
We can shake our heads, brother, scoff and
laugh at man-made scales which invert Man and mountain.
(the gods have always dreaded this gall)
How much I believed once in Progress, believed
it capable of such inversions; I once believed, too,
that I could grab Fate by the throat to throttle it.
Now, I shake my head with you at this folly:
this constant vanity of humanity.
Resignation now holds me by the hand,
wraps comforting arms about me.

Set forth, and make for the ever ice-capped tops, we
will,
to place ourselves in perspective.
If aires there be there, they be there not for me,
for sounds fall innocuous on my ears dead to the world,
my ear a conch: a hole for ocean swirl,
a black hole of noise, of crackling noise.
And from that vantage point, brother,
I must be contented most by what contents me least:
sight.
So you can see,
like Tiresias from the land of the dead,
you who are always absent with me,
see with the eyes of the soul,
why Resignation reigns in my heart, sings seductively to
the ears of my soul.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

Listen to me, brother, and
I will sing of a body changed,
of a body forever changing.
At night, when darkness encloses me
and the waxy smell of a candle-flame spent
hovers about my nose like a forlorn shade haunting a
cave's mouth
I can feel Aurelius' meditations and bones
dust the banks of the Danube
And I know the path that leads to and from there.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

Help me, brother, to still the stirrings of
the lyre in my breast,
taut within its bony shell,
when the wires are struck by the iron hammer of Fate
and quiver in recoil, aid my tangent,
dampen the blow,
quiet it,
Help Me Endure!
(to quiet the quivering)

Still those passions for me, O brother,
so I do not become the plaything of Chance:
a kite casually tossed about by the wind.
Help me in my Becoming.
The Divine Fire which Flames through all of Nature
flames through us, eh brother?
Steady the strings, hold the cord, still the wire
wait for the Fire.
A certain distance -- say, the length of a dusty bank --
let us maintain from the web of the world . . .
* * * * * * * * * * * *
Look over there!
Can you make it out? through the thicket?
There, sloping sharp and high, that's our path.
Ignore these others, gentle and inviting though they may be.
Ours dives through these dark woods
spiked with brambles, thistles and thorns
which scrape and tear, which we must endure;
shackled to our lives though we may be
we can push on, further, brother, further.
Rising through the woods on this motley-shadowed path
hear the harmony of our ringing footsteps
echo in the tops of trees,
each in tune with each
the path, the way,
virtually alone, virtue alone: a guide without a
guide.

The ball of my foot
rolls over the orb of the globe
which spins in the dark and the light
leaping from the ball of my foot
rolling over the spinning earth.
O Nature! Everything which sings in me sings in thee!
O Nature! O God! O Mind! O Soul! O Brother! O Zeus!
O many-named One,
ever-pervasive, ever-expansive,
source and receptacle
all flow from and ebb into thee,
Nature.

The rip in my pupil, the tear in my eye
jaggedly opens and allows chilling vision to pour
into my heart, I
feel it scrape my stomach, hollowing out a longing --
the yearning which lingers.
0 it is the rivulet of sorrow,
the smallest burn, the trickliest spring, it
pours into my internals and out again
feeds the streams' current
collects speed over silky-smooth river rocks
foams into a multitude of sparkling rivers
joining slippery fingers aching and pulling for
that dreaded foamy fall
which scatters the fish in my insides
which cups my azure waves in incessant writhing
I rise and fall
with the limp resignation of seaweed
and take no solace
in the river's race to the sea
my heart has run.
* * * * * * * * * * * * *
Tell me a tale of deluge, brother,
the one that ends in fire though,
if end indeed it may be called.
Surely you know this Stoic tale. No?
Relax then and listen, O sibling void.
It's as old as Alpha and Omega, as old as you and I,
the tale will ping quickly off my palate --
The One into the many
Fire into the four, elementary work,
and all fall back to One:
an endless repetition of flickering divinity
a tale of the licking tongue of flame that
is our soul.
You smile, brother,
how many times have you heard it?
Beethoven's Kosmos: Fate and Resignation

[The Malzel fragment which helps to round out the section entitled "Reminiscences" eloquently foreshadows areas found in Carroll's notes and writings regarding Beethoven's system of beliefs and its various metamorphoses, as does the preceding poem. However, the occasional grandiose ebullience of the poem often undermines the poet's message, which may serve as proof of its being composed by Beethoven in the liminal stage in his movement from destiny and triumph to quiet and bemused resignation.]

What do we know of Beethoven's cosmology? Well, we know that like many others of the day, for Beethoven, Enlightenment (Aufklärung) ideals which highlighted secular and human achievements for the most part replaced orthodoxy. There emerged, though, a clear discontent on Beethoven's part with these ideals; thus, a turn similar to that found in the Shakespearean sonnets so loved by the composer occurred in his world-view. We know that with this turn Beethoven never completely abandoned the Enlightenment ideals of Reason, Democracy, Technology, Science, Capitalism and Progress, but that he did increasingly concern himself with an internal and individual metaphysical life. We know, too, that this interest was contemporaneous with his diminishing capacity to
hear and his increasingly difficult financial position, and that the turn intensified during the composition of his late string quartets, indeed his last works. We also know that, again not unlike many of the others who populated the city on the Danube, Beethoven's metaphysical system resulted from the selective desires of a particular individual (faced with personal concerns in a particular historical and cultural context) who synthesized what personally attracted him and discarded what did not.

Well, who and what populated this eclectic universe constructed by the composer? We know that it was a far-flung concatenation, in terms of both time and space: a collage of Ancient and Contemporary (for the early nineteenth century) and the "exotic" and the indigenous. The "wisdom of the Ancients" was very much in vogue in nineteenth century Wien, as indeed was anything which bespoke the "allure," the "seduction," or the "sublime" of the Orient. Beethoven, a serious student of the ancient tradition of the West, often quoted Homer, Plutarch, Hesiod, the Stoics, Ovid and Greco-Roman mythology. From the East, he found Egyptian and Hindu writings particularly appealing, but in this his taste varied greatly from that of the general Viennese population, for he was drawn to works which emphasized asceticism, detachment, self-denial, and sublimation of all passions. Certainly not the sort of titillating stuff most Viennese sought from the silky East. Also from the West, he relied on the early
writings of Kant in more contemporary philosophy, and Herder, Schiller, Goethe and Shakespeare (amongst many others) from the world of belles lettres. Further, the current intellectual climate exposed Beethoven to Deism, Pantheism, Primitivism, Orientalism, as well as other -isms, all of which served as unsettling substrata for Progress and Reason.

We also have two examples of bizarre syntheses of these various areas of secular and spiritual inquiry. And Beethoven found something kindred in these works of the realm of neither fish nor fowl, these mongrel products of metaphysical combinings, these hybrids of phenomenal investigation. These texts may serve as physical manifestations of Beethoven's metaphysical meanderings, if we choose to consider them as such. The two examples of which I am thinking are The Asiatic Miscellany, Consisting of Traditions, Imitations, and Fugitive Pieces, published in Calcutta in 1775 and "written" by Sir William Jones (the famed Orientalist and "discoverer" of proto-Indo-European) and others, and Reflections on the Works of God in Nature by Christian Strüm, a copy of the 1811 edition of which contains copious marginal notes in Beethoven's hand. The title of the former is fairly self-explanatory. Numerous such works, in which Europe pillaged, filtered and rearranged Eastern traditions, circulated on the Continent in the 18th and 19th centuries, as Empires spread and deepened into institutional hegemony over the entire globe. The text by Strum attempted
to wed technology, science, and progress with traditional dogmatic notions regarding God, a notion very attractive to Beethoven. Strum asked Enlightenment thinkers to leave a place for God in their "religion of Reason." God in this tableau becomes the great Engineer -- not Author -- of the universe.

It seems there was something -- how should I put this -- peculiar to Vienna at this time which made it conducive to the kind of cosmological collage assembled by Beethoven. The capital of the empire not only attracted the diversity that empires inevitably accumulate and subsume, it virtually manufactured it. Indeed, a kind of Viennese Ur-frame contextualized anything which entered the city walls. As a result, what was co-opted by the capital became something uniquely Viennese: neither "exotic" nor indigenous, neither other nor us, neither what it was nor what it would have become elsewhere.

To get an inkling of what caught Beethoven's fancy, we can turn to our Holz, his keen observations and his honest recounting of them. Let's pluck a moment from the flow of Holz's memoirs:

A group of us gathered at Beethoven's summer accommodations in Baden, and we waited anxiously that evening for the arrival of Malzel, the inventor, who had promised a surprise or two. Beethoven was in exceptionally high spirits, laughing loudly at the slightest quip scratched in his conversation book. He
ordered the cook to continue opening and pouring wine. My memory fails me as to some of the faces present. Schuppanzigh, Linke, and Haslinger were undoubtedly there, but the other six or seven fade into the fog of years and the bottom of wineglasses. Beethoven obviously hoped for a new hearing horn and had expressed his desire for the ingenious inventor to design different ones for different acoustical conditions. Malzel had thus far (and I think always) provided the most successful of these listening contraptions, no small number of which littered every place Beethoven inhabited, their tubular contortions embodying hollow promises of return to the aural life-world so painfully removed from the composer.

After much fun was made of Schuppanzigh's expanding girth (Beethoven had by this time begun calling the most famous Viennese violinist "Falstaff" and referring to our chamber ensemble as "the Corpulent Quartet"), Malzel arrived with automata in tow. Besides bringing the popular chess-playing Turk, the wonders of which we'd already witnessed, he also conveyed a prophesying Pharisee. This uttered elliptical epigrams sounding like mechanized mixtures of the Psalms, the Kabbala, Gnostic sayings, Egyptian hieroglyphic incantations, Zen koans, Muslim hadith, and Hindu poetry . . . that is to say, like the pre-Socratics. And Beethoven found this clockwork cleric an inexhaustible font of inscrutable metaphysical insights. So delighted was he by its murmuring (his horn pointed at its metallic lips -- sound travelling from metal to metal to virtual stone) that he shouted out its sayings so that we could write them down. I still have some of these, and they are as follow: "I am that which is, was, and always will be. No mortal has lifted my veil nor gazed into my gaze./ Be alone and aloof from all worldly doings/ and you may join the all-encompassing mystery which I am." Another went: "Virtue is the will to be in harmony with Nature." A third: "I am the One,/ that which cannot be transformed or transcended/ and that which is transformed and transcended by you is I." Another: "Order is God./ God is Nature./ Nature is God's Order;/ to know God is to read His Logic and Order in Nature." Yet another: "Reason not this reason, question not this question./ Ask your ear to
speak, your mouth to hear,/ your eye to touch, your finger to see." Finally: "He punishes man's sacrilegious audacity/ In trying to emulate Him and casts him into the void./ Remember the tower of Babylon and put down your tools./ Remember Lyacon's table of flesh for the gods and break your self-importance./ Remember Oedipus and blind yourself to the world of māyā found in personal power./ Remember Vico's Age of Men and dismantle democracies./ Remember the wheel of the Jains and the four ages of the Hindus/ and learn your place in the cosmos./ Remember that each element alone has been used to destroy the earth/ more times than a human can count and be humble."

Beethoven begged Malzel to fire the Pharisee up again each time it sputtered to a stop. The inventor obliged until smoke began to waft from the wraps in its turban. Scared of its over-heating or combusting, Malzel shut down the oracle, and Beethoven collapsed -- drained and elated -- into a large chair. After blankly staring off, he called Malzel over to discuss something in private. The rest of us gathered around the piano-forte where Linke played. Beethoven whispered several times into Malzel's ear (the only time I ever remember him whispering) and the inventor each time shook his head. Beethoven, resigned to the situation unknown to the rest of us, went out for air. Malzel re-joined the party and casually said to me, "Beethoven offered me the full payment of his next work for the Pharisee. Of course, I had to say no. This is my livelihood, not selling other people's music. Besides, who knows what I can rake in with this one when I journey to America. More than what a skin-flint publisher would give for the work of a true genius; that much is certain. Thank the masses and their purses," he lifted his glass in toast. "Without ignorance and income, where would one the likes of me be? Most assuredly scrounging for some financial haven like our deaf friend here." I nodded in sad agreement and wandered over to the window. As Linke played beautifully on, I saw Beethoven -- suspended in a silent sphere in the garden, separated by space and sound from the party in his own house -- gazing at the sky.
Of all the ideas, all the tags, and all the abstractions which wafted through Beethoven's kosmos, two reigned supreme: Fate and Resignation. Fate takes several shapes in this universe, but primarily appears as Destiny, Fortune, or Death, each of which the young Beethoven would resist with every atom of his being. That Fate and Resignation should be interrelated does not strike us as terribly unusual. As Beethoven aged, though, Resignation seems to have usurped Fate as the primary guiding force in his metaphysics and approach to life. It further seems that this shift in influence had external as well as internal promptingss. The youthful exuberance (and we could replace this noun with others: vanity and myopia spring readily to mind) which compelled Beethoven to attempt to overcome Fate was roughly contemporaneous with the great eighteenth century Revolutions and their various repercussions, which helped institutionalize the master tropes of Democracy, Reason, Technology, Science, Capitalism, and Progress grown in European soil. As Beethoven watched the soil being fertilized with an alarming number of corpses and the seed of Revolution being watered with blood, as heads rolled in the name of Fraternity; and as Beethoven's hearing increasingly isolated him from communal life, Fate ebbed into the background of the universe as painted by Beethoven. Beethoven, as did Goethe, held grave doubts regarding these ideas of human emancipation as the negatives inherent within
them emerged when applied in institutional, societal, and personal arenas. To get a sense of Beethoven's metamorphesing kosmos, and especially the shifting roles of Fate and Resignation within it, we can turn to a variety of documents: primarily Beethoven's letters and his journal, in which he copied and generated quotes and sayings with resonance for him. We can hear how Beethoven, to paraphrase Baudelaire, attempted to unite the local and the ephemeral with the universal and the immutable within his own soul.

[Carroll marked passages in these sources referencing Fate with a squiggly sign which resembles a human shaking a massive fist -- roughly the same size as the individual -- at the heavens. Those referring to Resignation are tagged by a similar symbol, the difference being the fist is reversed, that is shaking at the humanoid wielding the prodigious clenched hand. Also, a slight smile plays on the anonymous anthropoid's face.]

"The early Stoics, as did Heraclitus, believed the soul was composed of fire." (Beethoven's journal)

"A human is partly divine fire, partly lowly clay. Are you a vase, a vessel, fired by Nature? A vessel to transport your own licking flames of Divinity?" (journal)

"Aurelius: 'Thou art a little body bearing about a
corpse.'" (journal)

"Strength is the morality of those who distinguish themselves from the rest, and it is mine, too . . . I shall seize Fate by the throat, it shall never wholly subdue me. Oh, it is good to live one's life a thousand times. As for a quiet life, I feel I am no longer made for it . . . My determination to hold out until it pleases the inexorable Fates to cut the thread shall be a lasting one, I sincerely hope. Perhaps there will be an improvement [in his hearing], perhaps not. I am prepared. Already in my twenty-eighth year I have been compelled to become a philosopher; this is no easy matter, more difficult for an artist than anyone else." (from the Heiligenstadt Testament addressed to Beethoven's brothers)

"So it's all vanity! Friendship, Monarchy, Empire, all mere fog which any gust of wind can transform or blow away!! I have always found Heraclitus to speak the truth, painful though it may be." (letter to Kanka, Wien 8 April 1815)

"Submission, deepest submission to your fate, only this can give you the sacrifices . . . O hard struggle! Do everything that still has to be done to arrange what is necessary for the long journey . . . for you there is no
longer any happiness except within yourself, in your art."

(journal)

"Only the strings of a weakling are torn
by the iron finger of Fate;
the hero bravely presents to Fate the harp
which the Creator placed in his bosom." (journal, quote from Zacharias Werner's Die Templar auf Cypren)

"A farm, then you escape your misery. If farms you can find anymore, then peace in Nature you can find."

(journal)

"but as for Fate, I think no man has yet escaped it"

(journal -- from The Iliad VI: 488)

"I have no theme but a religious one, while you ask me for a heroic one; I have no objection, but believe that to mix in some religious ingredients would have an excellent effect on such a crowd . . . Now farewell, dearest Hauschkerl, I wish you regular movement of the bowels and the most beautiful of privies." (letter to Vinzenz Hauschka, June 1818)

"You must have capital; in other words, acquire --"

(journal)
"There are works of architecture, the pagodas from mountains in India, the age of which are estimated at 9000 years... Indian scale and notes: sa, ri, ga, ma, na, da, ni, scha. Such scales! Europe measure thyself! Architecture, mountains, music, soul! Remember the true scales!" (journal)

"From The Iliad, VI: 146-150

'As is the generation of leaves, so is that of humanity.
The wind scatters the leaves on the ground, but the live timber burgeons with leaves again in the season of spring returning.
So generations of men will grow awhile while another dies." (journal -- from The Iliad)

"If possible, bring the ear trumpets to perfection and then travel." (journal)

"The frailties of Nature have been given to us by Nature herself, and Reason, the ruler, should be able to guide and diminish them by applying her strength." (journal)
"What is body without spirit? Earth or muck, isn't it? The spirit must rise from the earth, in which for a time a divine spark is confined, and much like the field to which the ploughman entrusts precious seed, it must flower and bear many fruits, and, thus multiplied, rise again towards the source from which it has flown. For only persistent toil of the faculties granted to them do created things revere the creator and preserver of infinite Nature . . ." (journal)

"Hektor in The Iliad Book XXII: "But now Fate catches me!/ Let me not sink into dust unresisting and inglorious,/ But first accomplish great things of which future generations too shall hear!" (journal)

"Next to the --, Malzel's ear trumpet is the strongest. One should have different ones in the room for music, speech, and also for halls of various sizes." (journal)

"Do you want to taste honey without suffering bee-stings?

Do you desire the wreaths of victory without the hunger of battle?

Shall the diver win the pearl from the ocean bottom if, fearing the crocodile, he
tarries on shore?
Risk everything, then! What God has granted to
you, no one can rob you of.
Indeed, he granted it to you, to you, brave man."
(journal, quote from Herder's Muh'und Belohnung)

"Sometimes I imagine my hearing being pared as
analogous to a Buddhist priesthood initiate being slowly
shorn of his hair. In each case, there is a trimming away of
the physical resulting in a separation from the body's
desires. The body always wants more. Its thirst can never
be slaked. The cutting back leads me to an internal temple
where the music of my soul resides." (journal)

"Lines from The Iliad -- Book IX: 79-81: 'the
darkened water is gathered/ to crests, and far across the
saltwater scatters the seaweed;/ so the heart in the breast
of each Achaian was troubled.' Book XXIV: 549-50: 'For there
is not/ anything to be gained from your grief for your . . .
" (journal)

"O harsh Fate, O cruel destiny, no, no, my miserable
state will never end." (journal)

"Live only in your art, for you are so limited by
your senses. This is nevertheless the only existence for
you. Zeno trusted in the senses when others doubted. Common-sense of the senses reigned. But you, your sense of hearing is being reined in. How can you, unfortunate and wretched one, enter the common world which is without one sense and you without another?" (journal)

"Spirit of Spirits, who, through ev'ry part
Of space expanded and of endless time,
Beyond the stretch of the laboring thought sublime,
Badst uproar into beauteous order start,
Before Heaven was, thou art:
Ere spheres beneath us roll'd or spheres above.
Ere earth in firmamental ether hung,
Thou sta'lst alone; till through thy Love,
Things unexisting to existence sprung,
And grateful descant sung.
What first impelled thee to exert thy might?
Goodness unlimited. What glorious light
Thy pow'r directed? Wisdom without bound.
What prov'd it first? Oh! guide my fancy right,
Oh raise from cumberous ground
My soul in rapture drown'd,
That fearless it may soar on wings of fire,
For thou, who only know'st, thou only canst inspire." (journal, quote from Sir William Jones' "Hymn to Narayana" in Jones and others The Asiatic Miscellany.)
Consisting of Translations, Imitations, and Fugitive Pieces)

"Beware the passions! Lingam subside!" (journal)

"Blessed is the one, who, having subdued all passions, performeth with his active faculties all the functions of life, unconcerned about the event." (journal, quoted from the Bhagavad-Gita)

"Vice walks many paths. 'But virtue leads on to a steep path and cannot attract man as easily and swiftly, especially if elsewhere are those who call them to a sloping and pleasant road.'" (journal -- gloss on Hesiod's Works and Lives)

"Endurance. Resignation. Resignation. Thus, we profit even by the deepest misery and make ourselves worthy, so that God our mistakes --" (journal)

"Sacrifice once and for all the trivialities of social life to your art, O God above all! For eternal Providence in its omniscience and wisdom directs the happiness and unhappiness of mortal men. The scales are not yours to tip. Sacrifice: wash yourself of the defilement of vanity and toss the washings to the salt-sea, wrap yourself as the choicest piece of flesh about the spit, perform the
perfect hecatombs for Apollo and Zeus and Hera, let the savory smoke circle and swirl to the golden sky." (journal – first sentence from Beethoven; 2nd The Odyssey XX: 75-76; the rest apparently an imitation of Homer)

"Therefore, calmly will I submit myself to all inconstancy and will place all my trust in thy unchangable goodness, O God! My soul rejoice in thee, immutable Being. Be my rock, my light, my trust forever!" (journal, quoted from Strum's Betrachtungen über die Werke Gottes im Reiche der Natur und der Vorsehung auf alle Tag des Jahres)
Dreams

[Three dreams of Beethoven's were recorded by the composer's hand. Carrol seemed to have some plans for them as they were clipped together in the stacks of notes. In addition, I ran across a few other snippets which might serve as a means for splicing -- in some way -- these bits together.]

The dreams of a Genius. What does a Genius dream? What does a Genius dream when asleep might be a more pertinent question. The Genius dreamer lay sleeping, whiling away the hours until the Genius could take over again. The Genius sleeper lay moaning in death's half-brother, yearning for consciousness; he was not a genius at dreaming but merely a dreaming Genius. "He's got dreamy eyes this one, and dreamy ears," the women whispered at the ball. "But he's stout and ugly and boorish and ill-mannered. I don't give a damn if he is a genius" came the retort. Ta la, ta loo, ta la, to lose: to lose at love, ta la, to lose yourself into the Protean throes of dreamthought, Freud's landscape, Jung's store of cultural images -- to chase one's rabbit down the dreamhole, to chase one's demons and desires through the nightscape of the dreamsoul. Here we go:

Beethoven writes of a dream of the sea in 1824: [I
have absolutely no idea where Carroll got this or the next of these dream accounts. The third, which will be identified at the proper time, comes from a famous letter to Tobias Haslinger; more anon.]

Beethoven records a dream of the sea in 1824: I am journeying far in a carriage open to the air but mostly closed to sights. The driver is a cloaked and bent figure whose face remains ever-constant on the road twisting and turning ahead. I notice the ground rolling beneath the rolling wheels of the vehicle. The trees recede rapidly in the periphery of the window, of my clouded sight, and the carriage's plunging through the night is slowed. The wheels slow, then stop, stuck in a bog. Under my foot, the bog has become sand: fine and yellow and hot and stretching for miles and miles. The carriage falls into itself, collapses into a ball dragging driver and horses into its vortex. I am alone on the beach. Only the sound of the whistling wind can be heard. I feel waves gently lapping, gently tugging at my trouser legs. I try to walk, but my legs are as numb and immobile as tree stumps. The waves leap and yell with war whoops and blood-curdling shrieks which I can feel on the back of my eyeballs. Then, silence; then, wind; then, silence as I am plunged into the mucous slippery depths of the sea. I gasp and fill my lungs with water, which somehow doesn't panic me, but instead comforts. My tail flips slightly, and I can dart about with ease and precision. I
merge into a school of fish, and we swim as if we were one large fish composed of a multitude of separate yet connected entities. 0, how we flowed! 0, how effortless it was! The swimming! The joining! The being! Suddenly, we, the gleaming silvery fish, are ensnared, being dragged to the surface in nets. (Our unity had given us away.) Fractured shafts of sunlight emanate from the impossible surface above, above where watery life yields to the suffocation of oxygen, where lungless death palpitates and waits. The ghoulish irony of my metamorphosis was not lost on me and served to make the situation all the more cruel. We squirm in a writhing dance of suffering and death. Then, I am above water watching the calm, glassy surface of the sea, but it is not I who watch; it is only my eye. The surface begins to boil and is shattered by a bloated corpse which bursts into the air, bobbing like a frightful blue-green buoy. I, the eye, gasp with the pupil. There is no sound at all, for I have no ears to hear. My body bobs and settles into a mound stuck into the mirrored surface of the sea. As the gruesome buoy bobbed to stillness, I heard, whole, Goethe's *Meersstille* ("A Calm Sea").

Deep and tranquil are the waters,
Not a stir now moves the sea,
And with worried look the seaman
Sees but smoothest waves around.
Not a breath from any angle!
Deathly silence, horrible!
In the vast expanse and surface
Not a ripple moves nor a wave.
[Beethoven set this poem for solo chorus, Op. 112.]
When I awoke, I gasped for air and was raging with thirst. I grabbed the pitcher of water by my bed; not knowing whether to drink from it or pour it over my head, I did both.

[Carroll writes, apparently in reference to this next dream:] *The Tempest* held special appeal for Beethoven. We know that the Bard was a tremendous influence on the composer and that the copy of this play found in Beethoven's library was particularly weighted with commentary in the composer's hand, with Beethoven's monologues weaving with Prospero's in an eerie palimpsest which frightfully confuses reality and fiction. As Prospero is often read as a persona of the aging Shakespeare, one that unflinchingly reveals negative as well as positive aspects of his character and his power, we might glean some understanding of the allure this *dramatis persona* held for the composer.

[Beethoven writes:] I dreamt I was Prospero, and Caliban slit my throat. Had he done so because I had taught him language? or because I thought I had taught him language when he had had it -- had possessed it fully and beautifully and harrowingly, had lived and breathed all its most daunting airs, imprisoning perfumes and empowering attributes -- all
the time already, he had been (had always been) wrapped in language, wrapped in a web of words? He had slit my throat, in my dream, without a word and had drug me through the underbrush: the desert island's thick skin, simultaneously repugnant and seductive to Continental sensibilities. I saw pass before me and vanish into the periphery of my vision and vast fecund foilage of the isle, the fate of Europe. What cared this place, or any, for Fraternity, Equality, or Liberty? Futility, yes, delusions of overcoming Fate, as Napoleon showed us. Ban, banned, banned by Caliban, my blood spilt by his hand, spilled in clots upon his native land, soaked into the skin of the golden island. I knew as he went forth to rape Miranda, and my glazed unseeing orbs gazed blankly at the reclamation of what was his -- indeed by his birth! -- that I had ruled by trickery and deception, by fraud and force, an island not mine. I was the rapist. This island, isolated, untouched by other land, only lapped by the ceaseless tide and struck by sea-storm had had sea-wrack as its ruler, the ruling spume of the slimy depths.

There was no chance now for an autumnal epilogue of forgiving. Imagine, me, Prospero, giving forgiveness. I could only remember love, not experience it; the word 'love,' which had never flourished on the island, was somehow restored. The hollowed hulk of my body felt love pulsating in a place far from where it lay slumped in the sand, where it had been unceremoniously dumped behind the dunes. Love
had not flourished here, or in Europe, or anywhere I had ever been, and I felt this is what had islanded me as overlord; I'd lorded without love, wanting its sweep and its offer of understanding someone beyond the ken of my own skin, without having it myself to give. Reason and Logic and Truth and Democracy and Technology and Progress and Evolution had usurped what I needed most: they had been claimed as not synonyms nor substitutes for love, but as things much better, so much so that I would not need or desire or even remember love. I believed Caliban had come around to slit my throat every day so that I could remember my trickery, the self-deception I had so long practiced: the feigning of love.

All these words and thoughts rode the tides of my dream. I remember very few images, but the slit throat emerged from the murky abstractions of words: a crimson smile some distance below my mouth, and its image swarmed large in my mind. It soon gushed gold; the wealth of the earth issued forth from that jagged grin. Then, skin -- dark, the color of rich soil -- flowed from the mocking wound. I began to hear myself speak in tongues unkown to me, fluttering doves of vowels and consonants emerging from my mouth. My split throat spilled ground from its darkness. My eyes rolled back into my head as if to see my seat of logic, or maybe the remnant of a soul hovering about my crown. I remember no more.
The letter written to Tobias Haslinger by Beethoven on the 10th of September, 1821 from Baden seems to reveal that the composer's peregrinations through his dreamscape were also travels through the spiritual melange of his soul. The stops along the way of this dream-trip prove to be various centers of religious learning in various metamorphoses. The dreaming Genius journeys mostly from East to West, which is also the direction Beethoven's universe moved as it began to shape form from nothingess. We can read here the ways in which Beethoven's psyche attempted to integrate dissonant aspects of his soul's yearnings, and we can hear the ways in which the everyday wideawake world enters, and is transformed by, dreams.

Beethoven writes: When I was in my carriage yesterday, on the way to Wien, sleep overpowered me . . . Now, as I was slumbering, I dreamed that I was travelling far away, no less far than Syria, no less far than India and back again, to Arabia, too, and at last I came even to Jerusalem.

During the dream, a canon based on Haslinger's given name came to Beethoven. When he awoke, the canon was lost to the silty bottom of the river Lethe during the crossing to consciousness. The next day, he travelled in his carriage again: And I] continued my dream journey, though now awake, and lo and behold, in accordance with the law of the association of ideas, the same canon occurred to
me; now, waking, I held it fast, as once Menelaos held
Proteus, and only granted it one last favor, that of allowing
it to transform itself into three voices.

Protean indeed! Three voices change into three dreams in
which death, Europe, empire, love, soul and religion
metamorphose into one another and variations on themes which
played within and on the composer's life.
Deafness

Such garbage! What a mess of muck, misinformation, and romantic projection a critic must wade through! Glancing at a review of a book on the topic of "solitude" featured in a popular monthly book club, I found the following line (one of many such atrocities which littered the page):

"Beethoven's deafness tormented him but shut out the ubiquitous noise of civilization and allowed him to write immortal sonatas." Are you, dear readers, as astounded — nay, appalled — as I am? The assumptions, the leaps. As if the co-ordinating "but" phrase obliterated the pain embodied in the introductory independent clause! As if a simple cause-effect relation existed: all one needs to do to achieve immortality through artistic expression is to stop one's ears! As if this deafness were the peace and quiet of the deep, thick, and woolly woods in which Beethoven loved to wander! However, Beethoven himself reports this was not the case. Indeed, the rabid seeker of solitude penning this wretched review should be subjected to the buzzing, ringing, clanging cannonade — the onslaught of the entire onomatopoeic store — which roared, belched, yelped, whined, and ground without cessation in this condition bereft of "the ubiquitous noise of civilization." Such an aural chasm
Beethoven had to endure! Yes, reviewer, endure! Not revel in. Not raise thanks to the gods for their kind removal of a faculty, but endure: the isolation, the separation, the solitude.

[These lines are difficult for me to read. I again beg my readers' patience here. Pain and sorrow well up within me as these scrawled lines fraught with anger loom before my eyes. Why these feelings on my part? Perhaps a poet can aid me, for I am reminded of lines from a poem by the Irish writer Seamus Heaney. The poetic persona in the poem is suddenly reminded of his isolation and solitude when a voice "swims" to him from outside the window. The persona likens himself to a fish and says: "I felt like some old pike all badged with sores/ Wanting to swim in touch with soft-mouthed life."

Towards the end of the scholar's life, four in the morning often found Carroll with fingers stained by cigarettes, lamp turned to the ceiling, breath haunted by vodka, eyes rimmed red with exhaustion and sorrow, and Handel trumpeting from the portable tape deck perched above the towering piles of papers: "Comfort ye, comfort ye . . . and the ears of the deaf un-stopped . . . and the tongue of the dumb shall sing." Never had Carroll had such an audience as when death drew nigh. The success of "Culture in Your Ear" remains unparalleled in classical radio programming, carried continentally on cable and worldwide on various networks.
Never had Carroll been so isolated. Academia had cast the scholar as an untouchable. As the radio program's audience swelled in almost unchecked growth, Carroll eluded the derision of the ivy-covered halls and found respite in travel. Dr. House travelled the world over, was feted in every major city. These tours were not without their financial advantages. In fact, quite a load of loot was amassed before the journeying ceased. Onward and upward, the future seemed ripe with promise; success and good fortune, travel and the good life were the heirs apparent to the toil-work of daily teaching, to committee meetings, departmental politics and insulting wages. Yet, the discontent of peers weighed heavily on the scholar's soul, and foul refrains lingered in Carroll's ears. This and illness drove the writer inside. The study became the scholar's universe comprised of the elements: fire (cigarettes), air (music), earth (paper mountains) and water (drink).

Beethoven wrote in his journal: "Your solitary life is like poison to you in your deaf condition: a base person will always harbor suspicions of you." But what were the alternatives to this solitary life? Despite the lack of choice, the knuckling under to Fate, poison it indeed was, for it bred in Beethoven a suspicion of others bordering on paranoia. Within the borders of the empire, spies proved the bulk of the clientele of coffee houses. Beethoven and the government felt plots and spies everywhere. However,
Metternich's police had Beethoven pegged as an enemy of the state and had him constantly under surveillance. Beethoven's suspicions, while well-founded were unfortunately ill-placed; thus he drove away friends, a fact which plunged him deeper into isolation. Wien reinforced the coursing of the poison through his veins. Here Beethoven felt that he was a castaway, an exile in the capital of the empire, prey to conniving publishers and scheming "friends," and that he was followed by real spies -- all due to deafness -- a condition seated in his bowels, according to his doctors. (Note: Sir George Smart, on his visit to Beethoven in 1825, claims Schuppanzigh recounted to him a story in which Beethoven's deafness resulted from composing outside in the rain; B. was so engrossed in the act of composition that he did not even notice the precipitation until his paper became too soggy to write on. Imagine that, the inky running away of musical thought -- paper too plump with moisture to absorb the notes he penned: a bulbous welling up of the textus unable to rein in the inspiration.)

Holz writes: Beethoven rarely spoke to me about the onset of the retardation of his hearing, and it was quite gone when I first met him. Dr. von Breuning, though, told me it came on when Beethoven was a fixture at most elite entertainments. Social intercourse was something so foreign, so alien, to the Beethoven I knew that I was taken aback by the good doctor's words. For days, as I watched the isolated composer going about his undistracted daily activities -- drinking coffee (exactly 60 beans per cup), writing music, checking copyists' work, reading -- I tried to see through the compression
his world had undergone, to glimpse its very large margins and perceive what might have slipped into their void. I attempted to picture him at gatherings, formal dinners, dances, balls. True, he often had company, but rarely was he ever company. I must admit my powers of imagination failed me. There Beethoven stood, dingly clothed and hair in a maelstrom, gathering up a walking stick to go outside into the only company I could ever imagine him keeping.

Yet, the parades of people continued unabated. Beethoven was inundated with visitors from all parts of the globe as he sank further into his disability, as his fame grew. They were shocked if ever he played, so out of tune, so unconsciously dissonant, with blows so horrible that the pianoforte rocked perilously on its thin pins. The visitors would depart moved: embarrassed, altered, depressed, frightened, confused, elated. Each leaving left Beethoven profoundly silent, silently slipping back into his delimited universe. His desire to join the company of people was of necessity sublimated. The conversation books seemed to mock their purpose, as evidenced by their very title. The pen and eye can never replace the human warmth of the ear and the voice. Could I pity him?

In (for?) another sense, I was reminded of Odysseus' journey to the underworld as recounted by Homer. Here, he met Tiresias, who though blind on earth was sighted in the after-life, while the other shades blew blindly about. Beethoven, fond of inversion, seemed to me a manifestation not unlike Tiresias, except with hearing rather than sight. Having his aural faculties blocked in daily, mortal life, as he approached death and lived with it, Beethoven could hear what the rest of us (corporal shades) are deaf to.

Our Holz. Always so sensitive and insightful. And always drawing on allusions dear to the composer. There are, alas, few in life so acutely aware of the needs of others, few who can ascertain the pain of separation endured by the famous or the sought-after.
"Wanting to swim in touch with soft-mouthed life."

Carroll was ever wanting life to be soft-mouthed: giving kind words and occasional kisses. Unfortunately, it was not to be so, despite the writer's success, and often life greeted this kindly scholar with steely lips, cold and hard. From the doctor's notes:

Note the recurrence of disability turned to advantage in hagiography and biography of saints, geniuses, and artists. Indeed, such disability becomes a virtual cause of celebration, a conduit to their true condition. Saints, Geniuses, and Artists suffer alike, are wounded alike, in virtually all of our accounts. In the difference, in the pain, in the pain resultant from difference, from the wound, they find their "calling," if the accounts are to be believed. I must admit I hold it all as sheer chicanery, a narrative device as old as the quills and as molted. (note: molt is derived from the Latin mutare; to change) Perhaps I collapse the genealogy somewhat. This lineage, though, seems to me to be as old as the quills in the Medieval monastaries, and the category of saints/geniuses/artists swells as Europe hurtles through the Enlightenment. The hagiography begins with saints, picks up artists (suffering ones) and finally embraces geniuses of any ilk, including scientists. Strange company, to be sure: saints and scientists. But we have clear concepts of Genius: say Genius in Science, and we all retrieve Einstein (tongue in or out) from our collective
cultural memory. Whenever there is a film about struggling to attain one's highest potential — despite odds, despite being ostracized, despite suffering — who is on the soundtrack? Beethoven, probably symphonic and usually from the middle period, or perhaps the ninth. If it's playful genius we need, or effortless genius, Mozart is our man, or man-child, being the paradigm of prodigies. In the plastic arts, covering both the suffering and the playful, Picasso. We can all tick off this line as if it were commonplace.

[I thank readers for bearing with this digression and should they choose to do so, they may puruse an extended discussion of this topic in the section entitled "Genius." From Beethoven's journal, a passage marked by Carroll:]

I imagine Marcus Aurelius amongst the reeds, islands, marshes and mists of this very Danube writing his Meditations to himself, dipping the reed into the ink and plying his thoughts. Alone, isolated, despite his being the Emperor of the greatest empire on the face of the earth and the commander of its army. He keeps company with Epictetus, Hesiod and Homer, constructing his life from his synthesis of books. He pulls words and ideas from these texts and draws them across his shoulders to keep out the cold, but the blanket is thin, the weaving unravelling, and he shakes as he considers how his soul and body ought to be when death overtakes him. He relies on the three tenets of Stoicism: materialism, monism, and mutation, but finds little comfort
in them. Fire, how it flames. Fire, how flames it in the breast of one alone? The Emperor alone knows that soon enough he "must become a vagrant thing of nothingness," realizes the ineffable state of all humans: solitude. Can I endure? he asks. Can he endure? I ask. Can I endure? I ask, endure this sealing off of my life? Wrapped in the cloak of acclaim, can I endure this isolation and pen my meditations in notes?

Imagine the lonely composer -- hugging his beloved Handel sheet-music -- entombed in a silent body entombed in a silent room entombed in a silent house entombed in a silent city entombed in a silent empire entombed in a silent universe entombed in .... A veritable Chinese box of entombments. Imagine the isolated composer imagining his being in the last box before the last box. Imagine the composer trying to sort it all out in music, especially in the late string quartets. "How were it?" (Carlyle)
"The more do I look upwards; but for his own sake, and that of others, man is obliged to turn his eyes earthwards, for this, too, is part of the destiny of humanity." -- Beethoven, in a letter to Karl Friedrich Zelter, 8 Feb. 1823
Residences in Vienna

[The following is a partial list of Beethoven's residences in and around Wien, beginning in the last year of the 18th century, when the composer took up permanent residence in the city. Carroll had this list pinned on the wall above the desk, only slightly obscured by one of the speakers of the tape deck. Some notes apparently related to this list, which the good doctor faced those last few days, follow.]

1799 Peterplatz
1799 (fall) Tiefen Garben
1800 (summer) Unterdobling
1801 (spring) Wasserkunstbastei, Salierstatte, Hamberger house
1801 (summer) Hetzendorf
1802 (fall) Peterplatz
1802 (summer) Heiligenstadt
1803-04 Theater-an-der-Wien
1803 (summer) Oberdobling
1804 (summer) Hetzendorf; Baden
1804 Glacis No. 173, "das Rothe haus"
1804 (fall) Molkerbastei: Pasqualit House
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td></td>
<td>Theater-an-der-Wien</td>
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<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td>(summer)</td>
<td>Dobling</td>
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<td>1806</td>
<td>(summer)</td>
<td>Hetzendorf</td>
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<td>1807</td>
<td>(summer)</td>
<td>Troppau; Baden</td>
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<td>1808</td>
<td>(summer)</td>
<td>Heiligenstadt</td>
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<td>1808</td>
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<td>1074 Krugerstrasser</td>
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<td>1809</td>
<td>(spring)</td>
<td>Walfischgasse</td>
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<td>1809</td>
<td>(summer)</td>
<td>Klepperstall; Baden; Korompa (in Hungary)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>(spring)</td>
<td>Molkerbastei; Pasqualati House</td>
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<td>1810</td>
<td>(summer)</td>
<td>Baden</td>
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<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>(summer)</td>
<td>Teplitz</td>
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<tr>
<td>1812</td>
<td>(summer)</td>
<td>Karlsbad; Franzenbrunn</td>
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<td>1813</td>
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<td>Baden</td>
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<td>1814</td>
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<td>Molkerbastei; Bartenstein House</td>
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<td>1815</td>
<td>(spring)</td>
<td>Sailerstatte; Lamberti House</td>
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<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>(summer)</td>
<td>Baden; Modling</td>
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<td>1816-17</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hotel &quot;zum Romischen kaiser&quot;</td>
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<td>1816</td>
<td>(summer)</td>
<td>Baden</td>
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<tr>
<td>1817</td>
<td>(spring)</td>
<td>Glacis 268, Landstrasse</td>
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<td>1817</td>
<td>(summer)</td>
<td>Heiligenstadt; Nussdorf</td>
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<td>1818</td>
<td>(summer)</td>
<td>Modling</td>
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<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>(fall)</td>
<td>Gartnergasse, &quot;zum grunen baum&quot;</td>
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<td>1819</td>
<td>(summer)</td>
<td>Modling</td>
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<tr>
<td>1819</td>
<td>(fall)</td>
<td>Josephstadt, &quot;zur goldenen Birne&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>1819</td>
<td>(fall)</td>
<td>Ballgasse, &quot;zum alten Blumenstock&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>(summer)</td>
<td>Modling</td>
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1820 (fall) Haupstrasse 244, Landstrasse
1821 (summer) Unterdobling; Baden
1822 (summer) Oberdobling; Baden
1822 (fall) Oberpfarrgasse 60, Kothgasse
1822 (summer) Hetzendorf; Baden
1823 (fall) Landstrasse 323, corner Bockgasse und Ungargasse
1824 (summer) Penzing; Baden
1824 (fall) 969 Johanesgasse, Kletschka house;

Krugerstrasse
1825 (summer) Baden
1825 (fall) Alsergrund Glacis 200, "Schwarzspanierhaus"
1826 (late September) Gneixendorf
1826 (late fall) "Schwarzspanierhaus"

Why this multitude of miniature trips while residing in an empire? an empire perched on the edge of the Danube and sweeping down to the Sava and out toward the Asiatic Steppes and back again to embrace Bavaria? Why these concentric circles in an age of unprecedented mobility, especially when the individual admits a yearning to move and experience? Was it the disdain of the bureaucratic inconveniences, the imposition on the person of passports? Was it a fear of crossing physical borders (despite the ease of traversing musical and psychological borders)? I am intrigued by these seemingly aimless, and small,
peregrinations not crossing nations. I am interested, too, in Beethoven's justification of such extravagant moves when faced with perpetual financial instability. The lodgings could not have come cheap, particularly to one who disdained court positions and was thus forced to address a popular audience, to earn his keep and coin from public concerts and publications, delivering himself into the disreputable hands of the much-despised publishers. An endless restlessness drove him from door to door and out of doors. What was the search for, and why so safe?
Finances

I first visited Beethoven in his quarters in 1825, in the fall on a sharp and cloudless day. Beethoven had sent me a note requesting I call on him "to discuss divers matters of import." As I, at that time, had only had a cursory introduction to him, I could not in the least imagine what these matters might be . . . Led into the composer's chamber, I found him stretched out on the bed completely absorbed in reading. He wore a soiled robe, and one leg was draped casually over the side of the bed. Since he did not seem to notice my entering, I took the occasion to glance about the room. Amongst the clutter of papers, letters, music pages and other miscellany, there towered a stack of books, for which I could find no shelves. Shakespeare, Schiller, Goethe, Plutarch, Aurelius, Homer, and Strüm fortified the precarious pillar. Plates of food in various states of decay huddled in one corner. The piano appeared to have several broken strings, which protruded like vines seeking the sun. A chamber pot in need of attention was thrust beneath the keyboard. My gaze returned to the composer, and I noticed a small oil portrait above the bed. It was the only painting to decorate the room.

Beethoven eventually noticed me, and, with a slight start, he leapt to his feet to greet me. His ruddy face broadened into a wide smile as he clasped both my hands strongly. He bade me sit down in one of the two wooden chairs beside the writing table, and he made an effort to order the clutter and clear a space. He offered me a coffee, which I accepted. I am glad I did so as the aroma from the beverage helped clear the dank, stale smell of the chamber from my nose. Beethoven began by apologizing for his poor hearing and offered me the conversation book. "I know this is an inadequate substitute, but I have had to resign myself to worse than
this. I am sorry if it is disagreeable to you," he told me. I assured him that it was not. He then began a rather nervous and lengthy monologue which ran the gamut of topics. A center about which the various topics swirled was his ill health. Time and again, he returned to the refrain of the various vagaries that plagued his body: bowels too loose or too tight, earaches, ringing of the ears "like a constant wind through a cataract," a bout of gout, swelling of the belly (indicating intestinal disorder), edematous regions around the waist, blurring of his vision, and the side-effects of the various powders, medicines, philters, and phlebotomies which seemed to maul as much as mend.

After some time of this, his meandering speech traversed the topic of money, something which was to occasionally consume almost his entire being. His illnesses robbed him of much-needed time generally allotted to composition. Thus, he needed to be more precise than ever in the placement of works with publishers. That is, he desired to make as much as possible from each work, a reasonable desire to be sure, especially when considering the inadequacy of his living conditions relative to his fame and talent. "There is no lack of requests for my work," he waved a stack of papers before my face as verification of his assertion. "But they all want big works: symphonies, masses, operas. I cannot express to you the dread I feel, the apprehension which fills my heart, when now I approach such massive works. Oh, to be sure, in my youth, I attacked the large forms as a mountaineer attacks a challenging mountain. But now, to explore smaller, more intimate, venues would be my greatest desire. Yet, Beethoven must write for money, and thank God, Beethoven, if nothing else, can write. These," he shoved an array of publishing contracts toward me, "are not for poor devils such as I. Any time I touch such matters, I quickly convert profits to debts, gold converts to copper. Beethoven: the reverse alchemist!" he joked. Thus, I discovered the reason for my visit. He had heard that I was conversant in the ways of matters both financial and musical, and he was seeking my advice. After granting my request to take the various offers for a set of variations with me, Beethoven bade me
farewell. I left with my violin case as clasped as it had been when I entered.

I returned a few days later. Beethoven was much pleased with my choice of offers, and even moreso for my justifications, these being the currency in which he would be paid, the speed with which the work would appear, and the certainty that I could eke out a higher price and larger percentage of sales (I had asked around and found the price offered to be about that of any decent crafter of tunes, and Beethoven could provide much better sales than most others). I do not believe I would be mistaken in stating that this one financial decision on my part served to seal the brief but deep friendship between the famous composer and myself. Surprising as it may sound, he had no head for figures.

[In examining the notes Carroll left attempting explanation of the annuity bequeathed to Beethoven by royalty interested in keeping the composer inside the walls of Vienna, I found the scholar had made a complete hash of the whole situation -- even to the point of erring in simple addition of figures. Thus, it is incumbent upon me to bail out the good doctor in this matter, as I am sure I would have been consulted on this section had death not so abruptly prevented the consultation from occurring. Though Carroll's explanation of this financial arrangement would try the patience of Job, the scholar did a fine job of setting the context in which the annuity issue arose. Thus, before we pick up the details, and I assure readers there will only be a few, we can linger momentarily over the context for the pretext of this particular section. Dr. House writes:]

As 1809 dawned over the Danube, Napolean's armies
lay in wait to take the city at their convenience. The city itself was in the process of full-blown metamorphosis as it sculpted farmers and common laborers into factory workers. Enlightenment ideals of growth, prosperity, self-determination, and the technological boon were poised for head-on conflict with situations not conducive to their furtherance. Prosperity seemingly beckoned from every pastry shop, yet the economic reality would find the middle class taking to beggary in the streets when the French siege finally swallowed the capital. By the end of 1810, two-thirds of the 10,000 looms in Vienna had been stilled. Money-lenders proliferated with army officers, civil servants, and soldiers being among the best clientele. The Jews who had been forced into the unthankful role of usury (public denunciation of private demand) could not convert their gain into property as they were not allowed to own buildings. Child labor laws had only recently been passed, and these still allowed for workshop scenes which could rival Dante's Inferno. Few were free to marry freely. The protruding ribs of unemployment and famine poked through every well-tailored shirt. The number of beggers was limited, and their "trade" restricted to certain parts of the city, which caused over-crowding in the churches. Even the earliest industries of paper manufacturing, silk production, weaving of linen and woollen products, and brewing found factories shut as tight as a stuck glottal stop in 1809, and
Beethoven perched on the possibility of taking a court position in Westphalia, a move he disdained as much as he disdained the trumped up pomp of courtly life and the flaccid and bloated inhabitants.

Beethoven's friends and admirers feared his departure as much for the wrench it would probably throw into the works of his composition as for the disgrace which would befall Vienna for having lost one of its prized possessions. Thus, in the music circles, 1809 dawned in a flurry of notes, letters, contracts, and dispatches: the kind of paper blizzard Beethoven dearly loved, especially when he was the eye of the storm.

[From the grand sweep of the large picture to the minutia of the mundane, such is my lot, dear readers: to be the tidier up of the leavings of the great. I promise to minimize my intervention here.

The offer from Westphalia was, for the most part, a promising one: annual wage of 600 ducats in gold, 150 for travelling, in exchange for conducting a few short concerts for the King. Besides this, he would have an orchestra at his disposal. As Carroll mentioned, the paper flew. Beethoven wrote to publishers crowing over the handsome offer and castigating the treatment he had received in Vienna. Word got around, as Beethoven knew it would, and several of Beethoven's wealthiest friends attempted to organize an annuity to keep the composer within the city walls.
The charge was led by Beethoven's long-time friend and only regular pupil, Archduke Rudolph, who also enlisted the aid of Prince Lobkowitz and Prince Ferdinand Kinsky. This triumvirate drew up a contract which committed them to the following annual sums payable to Herr Beethoven: 1,500 Florins from His Imperial Highness Archduke Rudolph, 700 Florins from The Highborn Prince Lobkowitz, and 1,800 Florins from The Highborn Prince Ferdinand Kinsky. The sum total was 4,000 Florins (Carroll inexplicably came up with 4,200), which seemed adequate to keep the composer from fleeing. The agreement reads: "In consideration of this [the receiving of said stipends] Herr Ludwig van Beethoven pledges to make his domicile in Vienna, where the makers of this document live, or in a city of the other hereditary countries of His Austrian Imperial Majesty, and to depart from this domicile only for such set times as may be called for by his business or the interests of art, touching which, however, the high contributors must be consulted and to which they must give their consent." Residency in a city not particularly of his liking and restraint of movement, as far as prior consent from on high was required, proved amenable to the composer as these restrictions did little other than to verify his value to the city. Now we can return to Dr. House's writing as this affair unfolds. I will, however, need to leap in whenever figures arise."

Well, circumstances seemed to be smiling on
Beethoven. He had successfully avoided being a drone of the court and had emerged with the security he had always desired. Alas, not to be, not to be. The financial crisis of the second French occupation would dash these dreams of independence, with the role of the villain being played by the Finanz Patent of 1811. What this did, dear readers, was introduce Redemption Bonds as substitutes for bank-notes at an exchange rate of one to five. Paper money was devalued to one-fifth its worth. [The toll on Beethoven's annuity was a slippage from 4,000 Florins to roughly 1,618 Florins, in the new paper currency.] Beethoven's stipend shrank before his very eyes, melted before it had even entered his hands. Paper money had failed him, had lost its currency. Holz writes:

The devaluation thereafter haunted the expression in his eyes any time a financial proposition arose. The ghost of paper money lost to the chasm of currency instability prowled the composer's mind. Gold had siphoned off paper and copper and other bi-and tri-metallurgic mockeries of money, and Beethoven never issued his trust in any sort of paper again. He remarked to me, "There has been betrayal for silver; now, I've been betrayed by silver." Another time, as we attempted to get more for a piece than a publisher was willing to pay, he told me, "Write the devil and refer to him as Ahab. Tell him my vineyard will not fall to his greedy talons. Warn him of the peril in which his children are placed by his actions, and sign it Naboth." To say that Beethoven imbued financial deals with moral parameters is not to say that anyone other than himself sat in judgement. I am sure he thought his actions beyond reproach; however, those publishers unwittingly led into bidding wars over pieces promised exclusively to them may
beg to differ with this self-portrait of the composer as business saint. Beethoven even questioned the role of God in such matters. "What is the moral of the tale of Job?" he asked me rhetorically. Not waiting for an answer, he continued: "A man becomes the butt of a metaphysical wager between God and Satan. When he loses all of his wealth, his acquaintances gather about him, some to console, some to condemn. When the Accuser claims that Job must have offended God and that here can be found the cause of his calamity, Job -- correctly, in my opinion -- rebuffs the accusation, saying that wealth on earth is no indication of a person's faith or standing in God's eyes. Now, my wooden one, would you not think that this is the moral? I would, but how do we account for that final verse, the one which says that after winning the wager for the Lord by not waver in his faith, Job was rewarded two-fold for his losses? Does this not undermine the supposed moral? I tell you, Holz, I am confused by this, especially in regards to how someone can be repaid twice as much for the loss of children and a wife. I have lost many a night of sleep trying to understand this story."

Thus, at just the moment Beethoven thought security was his, freedom was his, time was his, the French army snagged the city, and in so doing, gutted the monetary system. Into the gaping and bloody mandibles of the historic moment went the Austrian capital and Beethoven's capital, the capital of money and time he thought he had accrued and which would have allowed him what he needed to compose.

Oh, there was a scramble, readers, a scramble too long, too detailed, too trying to elucidate. Let us say that, despite protests by Beethoven to the contrary, the noblemen acted, for the most part, nobly. We must bear in
mind that they suffered from the devaluation as well, but not as greatly, for they had gold on which they could rely. Beethoven requested that his contract reflect the true value of the original agreement, that is in notes of redemption worth 4,200 [sic!] Florins. Archduke Rudolph found the request fair and concurred with it in writing, which did little to ameliorate Beethoven's unease. Lobkowitz suspended his payments in the September of 1811, his financial woes due in no small part to his mismanagement of the theaters under his tutelage. Kinsky made his quarterly payments, but the one issued in July 1811 read, "450 bank-notes or 90 florins," the Highborn Prince taking the low road of pecuniary responsibility but the high road of admitting such was the case. I am afraid this noble baring of the noble position on payment did not please Beethoven. Add to this, the Court Decree of September 1811, which further devalued the Florin [1,800 Florins became the equivalent of 726] and we have an increasingly desperate situation emerging from an initially promising one. Through a mediary, Beethoven's case for adjusted payment to recoup the initial promise was pled before the Prince, who eventually agreed in June of 1812. Alas, again, ill fate spread its grim cloak over Beethoven's purse. Prince Kinsky was riding at Weldus, near Prague, in the first week of November, when a saddle-girth broke. The prince cracked his skull and lived less than ten hours after the fall. The payments ceased with his heartbeat. Beethoven
wrote in a letter: "A snap of a leather belt, and I am, once more, saddled with the burden of poverty which spans and demeans my girth like a denouncement from Heaven itself."

[The notes left by Carroll break off here, only to resume later on a tangentially related area. I will attempt here a brief account of the end of the annuity affair. A final resolution occurred in 1815, which included a compromise with the Kinsky heirs. From the Kinsky estate, to cover the time between the Prince's untimely demise and the resolution, Beethoven received 2,479 Florins in Wiener Währung, that is Vienna Standard, or notes of redemption, not bank notes. The same currency was employed in the resolution which recast the annuity as follows: Archduke Rudolph 1,500 Florins, Kinsky 1,200 Florins, and Lobkowitz 700 Florins. The annual yield was 3,400 Florins in notes of redemption, which equals 1,360 Florins in Conventions Minze (silver), which equals 952 Prussian Thalers. Lobkowitz died in 1816, leaving Rudolph to pick up that share of the share. Beethoven received most of the annuity for the rest of his days.]

Why, we may ask, dear readers, did Beethoven -- the greatest musical composer the world has known -- worry so about money? We can legitimately ask why he did not accept a court appointment. The answers to these questions are both simple and complex. Pride, indeed, played an operative role. The worst of the Seven Deadly Sins did not always manifest
itself in a flattering manner in our composer. However, Beethoven lived in that slim transitional period between the Medieval and the Modern life-worlds, in the great sweep of Europe from the sacred to the secular, the period in which much of what we today take for granted was instituted, and a rugged individualism, a belief in the self over insitutional dictates -- in other words, Pride -- was an appealing aspect of this transition to one such as Beethoven, particularly the younger man. And his pride in himself was an appealing aspect for a culture increasingly looking to human, secular examples of Freedom and Progress.

Beethoven, in essence, became the first composer to live outside the bounds of court patronship, the first to rely on the publishing of his works and concerts of his music to support himself. In some ways, then, he is the first democratic composer, the first to reach beyond the lofty and limited realms of the aristocracy. He pioneered a mode of production which, shall we say, depended upon modes of reproduction, that is, the printing press. Paper money, paper music, paper notes. The proliferation of paper played meaningful melodies at this time. Beethoven's exacting notes were exactly and precisely placed on staves to be exactly reproduced in numberless replications of the original to be more or less exactly reproduced in performance. (I say more or less because an essential element of art rests in variability, doesn't it?) All of this helped Beethoven break
the mould of the court composer. He aided the creation of a new audience; he rode the bourgeois expansion and used it as a means for charting a new path of artistic options. Beethoven delivered music into the ears of those outside the domain of the aristocracy and was able to turn a decent profit from it at the same time.

One critic has suggested, in keeping with Freudian psychoanalytic theory, that Beethoven's overt concern of money may have been seated in his intestinal traumas, his bowel condition. While such a theory may possess an initial appeal, we should remember that Beethoven's problem was not retention but rather how to stem the tide, as it were.

His concern about money influenced a variety of phenomena: his interactions with others, the publishers he chose, the friends he chose, the quality of these relationships, the sort of pieces he chose to write, even the markings in his manuscripts, as the following anecdote illustrates. When Beethoven turned his pen to the late string quartets, a number of people wrangled for both the permission to perform the works in their subscription series (Schuappanzigh being one) because of the profit such a work could bestow, and the permission to have such a series conducted in their homes because of the prestige such a performance could bestow on the owner of the household. One who desired to house such a concert was Ignaz Dembscher, an agent of the war department of the government and, of course,
chamber music enthusiast. Well, when the B-flat major quartet [Op. 130, one of the composer's last] began to make the circuit, our Austrian bureaucrat applied to Beethoven for the manuscript. The master, however, refused, stating that Dembscher had failed to subscribe to Schuppanzigh's series, thus protecting the interests of his most-favored first violinist. At a party, Dembscher appealed to Holz to appeal to the composer to change his mind. Holz, before the entire gathering, steadfastly refused and declared Dembscher could expect no more music from Beethoven because of the snub to Schuppanzigh. The official was stunned and pale and asked if there were anything he could do to alter Beethoven's opinion on the matter, any way to rectify his error. Holz continued his jesting, "You can begin by sending Schuppanzigh 50 ducats immediately. Then, send 30 to Beethoven as a gesture of your good faith." Dembscher asked in shock, "Must it be?" (Muss es sein?) When Holz related the story to Beethoven later in the evening, Beethoven roared with laughter and penned a canon with the words: "It must be, yes, it must be. Out, out with the money. Out with the money, out it must be." The question "Must it be?" and its response, "It must be" became a running gag between Beethoven and Holz. The same question and response appear inscribed in the finale of the last of the late string quartets [F major, Op. 135] under the heading "The difficult resolution."

There will be as many theories about this
fascination with financial matters as there are theorists. We do know, though, that the composer was not the only one of his company or of his name so concerned, as the following ghoulish passage from Holz exemplifies:

As I enter the days of my life in which the horizon glows with the imminent setting of the sun, most memories emerge garbed in mist and shade, as if they were blurred images barely glimpsed from the window of a passing carriage. Occasionally, I round a bend only to find a moment vividly etched, one which seems sculpted by the sun so that all the hard and heavy lines of the scene leap into view unbeckoned, and often, undesired. I find myself, now, standing in a memory only too clearly recalled. My shoes are firmly placed on the floor of the composer's "death room" in the Schwarzspanierhaus, and the composer himself stiffly stretches in death above the rotting straw of his bed. His only surviving brother, Johann, circles the room and yells at me. Schindler and Dr. von Breuning stand quiet and clearly uncomfortable in a corner. This man, the brother of Beethoven, reminds me of a whippet sniffing out prey. He had hunted the room and not found the treasure he sought. He had done so as his brother fought with mortal hands the steel scythe of death. As it came to pass, I was the only one knowned with the location of the writing case containing the desired documents, the bank-shares Beethoven refused to consider his own as he had stipulated they be the sole property of his nephew. I felt the weight of a traitor's betraying arm as I revealed the aged cabinet containing the secret drawer. My feet were unable to move. In the case, besides the bank-shares, Johann found letters never mailed to an unrequited love dated some ten years before. The paper shares dropped into unintended hands. The letters of love had left cupped and empty the hands of a woman somewhere who perhaps did not even know they had been written for her. Beethoven lay crumpled on the bed. Why must I remember all of this so clearly?
"somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond"

[I have chosen the title of a poem -- a love poem -- to serve as the title for this section about the many planned but never taken journeys of Beethoven. Aspects of the title strike one immediately as being appropriate for this topic. But, love? Where might love figure into the equation? Ah, to lend shape to this section, we must turn to the figura provided by Carroll, for this is where my mentor's craft fashioned works of marvel.]

Well, dear readers, many great composers have also been great travellers, but such cannot be said for Beethoven. Mozart's odometer eclipsed Beethoven's while the former still had "child" tacked onto his description prior to the term "genius." Haydn hit the dusty highway and rode the rolling ocean's roof at an age when many are idly passing hours in a quiet, well-kept garden. Yet, our Beethoven remained close to home. However, dear readers, if planned trips were real, if desired journeys had blossomed into fulfillment, then our composer's passport would have been a veritable map of intricately cross-stitched colorful visas, and the seat of his pants and the soles of his shoes would have been as worn as the adventurer in his soul would have been sated.
This, readers, was a grand time for travel, for adventure, for exploration. The globe was shrinking under the powerful pressures of increased colonialism. The Orient as a place created in the European mind; a place of wisdom, origin, age, decadence, decay, and regeneration -- edged ever-closer to Europe, and many Europeans imagined it beckoned to them, called to them. We know it held appeal for Beethoven, but he may have known his Orient was "his Orient," a space constructed by his desires. Perhaps this is why he only travelled there in his dreams.

However, Europe was on the move. Beethoven was not. His most desired destination lay just across a channel. And it was his most desired for reasons which we would today consider more practical than those which lured him to the Orient, namely, readers, the filling out of his purse. Money, and piles of it -- paper or metal -- seemed to call to our composer from across the Channel. Why did he never leap this body of water? Why did he never channel his energies enough to ship his talent abroad, to export his genius to an audience clamoring for it? Why did he never set foot on the Emerald Isle?

[This section, which begins with such promise, must alas lapse into crudely collaged reimaginings of Carroll's hopelessly illegible scraps of paper. I could list the many trips Beethoven allowed to fall into the void of unrealized projects, but, I ask myself, would Carroll have tolerated...}
such tedious minutia? I could attack the stacks of memoirs and reminiscences and relay countless accounts of trips untravelled, but, I ask myself, have readers had enough of such accounts, at least for the time being? In asking these questions and questioning hard the answers I give them, I keep returning to the fortuitous nature of the title with which I've christened this section, brief though it may become. This poem is indeed about love, perhaps an unrequited love, the cause of so much soppy poetry wallowing in sentimentality, of which this poem cannot be counted an example. The correlations between travel and love, journeying and states of emotions, the various frontiers humans range internally and externally, all cohere nicely in the one bit of Carroll's pennings which I shall include in this section and which will, in fact, complete it.

One person has theorized that Beethoven lacked the courage to travel abroad, being sick, deaf, uncomfortable in public, and wary of places which spoke a foreign language and held strange customs. I find this theory viable, but unsatisfactory, if for no other reason than the fact of his having made numerous plans for travel prior to his falling into the state described by this theorist. No, I think the reason may be even simpler: love. An endless stream of invectives flowed from the composer's mouth, but I believe he loved Vienna and that this accounts for his travels of the mind, as well as his stasis. What about the multitude of
accounts in which he railed against and chided everything Viennese? Might we answer this question by admitting that love contains its opposite (as does everything), that love can wound as easily as heal, can separate as easily as conjoin, can inflame as easily as calm, debilitate as easily as rejuvenate, destroy as easily as create. Might this suffice to reconcile what at first appearance seems a paradox?

The pain of travel is as great as its joys. I have travelled widely and found fame and fortune, as well as other clichés. Beethoven stayed at home and found fame and fortune, as well as other clichés. Beethoven probably felt as foreign, as de-centered, as in thrall with the new and the alien in Vienna as any traveller in any exotic clime. I have travelled; it doesn't help. I mislead you; it does help, but not for long. Home and travel conflate.

[Why must much of the (re)construction of this text perpetually in the process of becoming be so painful? Certainly there is laughter and there is celebration, but passages such as this one wound me. Yes, Carroll travelled. Yes, Carroll accrued fame and fortune and attention. Yes, Carroll suffered abuse from colleagues and envious others. Yes, Carroll died anyway, unsaved by money or adoring listeners. Did Carroll find therapy in travel? Perhaps. Did Beethoven find therapy in planning trips he knew he would never take, therapy in the imagined wealth and receptions,
therapy in the phantom worshipping crowds loving him only for his music, therapy in being wrapped in warm and accepting dream environments filled with cultured and sensitive people? Probably. Carroll never found this, and perhaps Beethoven knew he wouldn't either.
Wien

[I hold my tongue and still my pen. Upon my honor, readers, this section dedicated to Vienna appears as Dr. House numbered and arranged the selections, at least as far as I could glean. Those passages which seemingly necessitated inclusion, those of Dr. House's and others', follow . . .]

Step out in the street and feel the wind kiss your cheeks and straighten your clothes. See the blizzard of paper blown by the Danube-spawned wind. Pamphlets, circulars, broadsheets, lampoons, newspapers, journals, and flyers blot out the sun and darken the sky. (Try your luck and pluck a florin instead of a flake, separate the profit from the loss.) Any one of these can be had for a mere ten kreutzer: high-brow, low-brow, middle-brow; informative, instructive, persuasive, polemical, communal, skeptical; arts, politics, religion, economics -- you name it. Listen to the hawkers spike the air with cries of their wares: The Nobility of the Viennese; Is the Anti-Christ Blue or Yellow?; Meals by the Danube; Mozart's Choral Music and Freemasonic; Weavers Weekly; Monks and Emperors; In Which It is Debated Whether the City Will Fall to Heathens; String Quartets; Where Geniuses Dabble; Lives of the Saints; Devaluation and
Your Purse; The Power of Nature; The Power of Relics; How to
Find the Secret Meaning of Texts; Meditations on Solitude; A
Journey into Hell; A Journey Back from the Afterlife; A
Protestant Praises the Pope; A Democrat Praises the Emperor;
A Scientist Praises a Cleric; Herbs that Heal; Making Certain
You Tune Your Piano-forte Correctly; In Which It is
Determined that Structure Conforms to Content; The Physical
Shape of Time; How Time Writes on the Body; Icons and Images;
Stories and Stories and Stories; Meditations on Mortality; On
Meaning Creation in the Face of Finitude; The Words of a
Roman Emperor and the Raptures of a German Composer; On the
Abuse of the Words "von" and "Your Majesty"; Wien: the
Palimpsest That Is Our City, -- And on and on, our composer
steps out into the street, out into the eye of the rag and
bone maelstrom.

O, Wien, you cosmopolitan island! Loadstone for
diaspora from all corners of the Earth! Abuser of them and
provider, too, of possibility! A space for possibility!

Wien, where the promise of cosmopolitanism vanished
into the buttery aroma of the plump pastry of provincialism,
just as the desired difference sparked by the mingling of
races and tongues disappeared into the jowly corpulence of
bourgeois bureaucrats self-assuredly sauntering toward
apoplexy. How unfair! How unfair of this city to give the
bland ease of reality to the traveller hungering after
illusion!
Beethoven, in a letter dated 1824: There are some who are content to sit all day and pad their hearts with fat and their feet with gout. I could never afford gout. True, I do enjoy a good drop of wine and my fish. But when one lives to eat and drink rather than the other way around, then one has joined the automata and succumbed to the deadening pleasures of avoiding the task of circulating those pleasures which best please the gods.

Beethoven, in a letter to Holz dated 1825: I once desired, dear splinter, to be the Bacchus of music. I desired to press the grapes for humanity and have them sip from this ocean. Then, I would cast them adrift on the sea I had wrought with only the scraps of a raft to which they could cling. Slowly the tempest would subside, and they would be marooned back on the dry land from whence they had come. Now, O wooden one lost in the labyrinth of love and the maze of marriage, I wish to be the same wine-some god, but my sole hope is that people realize it was they who had drunk the wine, had sipped of its virtue -- if virtue there may be, it is because their lips have bestowed it. Would it still be wine if there were no one there to drink it?

notes on contrasting Wien (B.'s workplace) and Salzburg (Mozart's birthplace): Wien, slant rhyme of the umbilical of the grape! Anagram of the grape's heady progeny! Life-giving, invigorating, active, half a eucharist, we are grateful to you! Yet, debilitating, liver-
rotting, brain-decaying if to you too often turned! Were you, O vine of Wien, introduced by the Roman emperor Probus, whose name christens the street on which Beethoven wrote his pain-ridden "Heiligenstadt Testament," his farewell to life? If so, how poignant the connection!

Salzburg, the city of salt, grainy, crystalline, over-powering, preserver of decaying flesh. Were one to ride to you in edematous entropy, could you preserve? Could you stay the boney-hand gripping the staff of the scythe? Could you still that final swing?

Wien, if we read it as a layered text, a palimpsest penned by generations of tribes and empires sweeping through the plain by the river and skirting the alpine foothills, we would find a layer hidden below street level, a layer of gory catacombs. Is this the heart of the text? Here, direct the torch this way. The bodies are randomly piled, a careless mound of corpses. See, the faces seem to dance in the tossing light, seem to have emotions playing on the pale visages. Were Beethoven to wander this textual core of the city, would he be pained by his childlessness, his knowing that he had not aided in keeping his family on top of this soil? Would he experience the collapse of the metaphorical and the literal in the tight heart of the textus, itself so impenetrably bound by the ramparts of the city?

Step out into the street, and you will be enveloped in music. Step into a house, into a room fitted with a fine
stove and panelled in pine, and you will be wrapped in the loving arms of a melody. Birds chirp from cages as if one were passing through a sylvan glade. The same cymbals, drums, and piccolos, which so frightened the inhabitants when played by the invading Turks, now charm the ears of every listener. Malzel's automata spring to life and compress a year's cycle of seasons into a microcosom of a few minutes, seemingly driven by neither clockworks nor hydraulics but rather by Haydn's *Seasons* mechanically playing as incidental music. One can nap on a sofa booby-trapped to cast the tardy dozer into a "musical hell." Snuff-boxes, inkwells, pen cases, bird cages, book-nooks, letter holders, desk drawers who knows, perhaps even human drawers? -- all are imbued with music to caress the ears with the opening of a hinge. Dentists lure patients into painful sessions with promises of a chance to listen to a box guaranteed to soothe the nerves and erase the pain. Clocks play pavanes on the half-hour, gavottes on quarter-hours, and popular lieder on the hour. Surely, the Viennese invented surround-sound.

From *A Traveller Spends Some Weeks in Vienna and in its Surrounding Environs*, anonymous, early 19th century:

Never did an excuse to escape the confines of the city ramparts go unheeded. In a mere minute's notice, carriages would be laden with people and food and heading down a road to exit the town. Often, the goal of the journey was a small village where new wine could be had. Pine or fir branches
bound to a pole rising from a thatch-roofed house indicates *der Heurige*, the house where the vine's most youthful offspring dwells. Here the vinter himself pours the patron's glass. This right was accrued under that most enlightened monarch King Joseph II. At such a place, the party stops to feast on dark bread, cheese with onion, cold poultry and sausage, the baskets over-flowing. The sausages bear the names of other cities of repute: Debrecen, Kracow, and Paris. A cornucopia blesses every trip as does music . . . Another favorite spot for an outing may be found at the inns dotting the Danube. The muddy, often gray, river teems with boats of every size, shape, color and purpose. They convey pottery, livestock, textiles, and travellers. One such inn has two exquisite balconies overlooking the river and allows its patrons the honor of selecting the fish on which they will sup from tanks where they live as if still in the free-flowing river below the balconies . . . Surely the Viennese are a blessed people. The luxurious is the common-place and the common-place the luxurious. God has blessed them for keeping the Turks at Europe's door and not allowing them entry to the house.

O Wien! The diaspora have bestowed their gifts on you and you have made them your own! The appropriated appropriate their appropriators! Is this not the lesson of empire? The Turks have left you coffee. And what is more typically Viennese than coffee-houses? Your world-renowned
strudel probably came to you from the Hungarian realm of the realm. The Romans graced your hills with entwining grape vines which bring forth wine. The Viennese dialect is spiced with lexical borrowings from Czech, Serbo-Croatian, Yiddish, Hungarian, Italian, Turkish and other languages. A truly hybrid tongue rolls in the mouths of your denizens. And a uniquely Viennese gesture, the counter-clockwise semi-circle with the right hand, dismisses all the above with its expression of "Who cares?"

Schuppanzigh, in the conversation books; please note that Schuppanzigh always addresses Beethoven in the third person:

—The city does indeed seem to have an unslakable thirst for the melodies of Rossini.

—I don't think they necessarily deny the composer in their midst out of spite. They may just find him too home-grown for their tastes. Despite his being a foreigner, he is not exotic enough for their fickle tastes.

—What he says is undoubtedly true. The Viennese let the fecund field known as the genius Mozart lay fallow and was fortunate not to have his soil salted. I might even go so far as to say that he died of neglect.

—Yes, yes, a hundred times yes. If it happened to Mozart it could happen to anyone. Also, we forget Haydn. He froze in a garret before Esterhazy gave him a position.

—Most certainly correct. It wasn't until he had made
his name world-famous in London that even Esterhazy knew what he had. Sad comments to be sure.

—Oh, nothing, I thought I heard a fanfare in the streets.

—No, I haven't seen the pamphlet on Strum. Will he be kind enough to allow me to borrow it and read it this evening?

—Now that the composer mentions it, his simile rings true to my ears, as well. The Viennese resemble the Lotus-eaters [from Homer's The Odyssey, found in Book IX, they are a clan who indulge in forgetfulness by eating opiates] in many attributes.

Step outside into the street, into the paper blizzard, and pluck a flake falling from the gray sky. Perhaps it is a ten-kreutzer newspaper. One could fare worse. A harvest of words can be reaped from a ten-kreutzer note. But where . . . where is the winnowing wind? We need to separate the grain from the husk, the contents from the container, the signified from the signifier, the metaphorical from the literal, the substance from the vessel. Or can we? Are these as easily separable as we are led to believe? asks the soul as it shuffles off its mortal coil. This is what Beethoven wants to know as he plucks this flake from the falling masses.

From our anonymous Traveller: I have noted an ever-vigilant pursuit of the "nobel," evidently a corruption of
the French word "noble," by the citizens of this fair, ramparted city. This quality, so elusive and so desired by those of any social standing, is manifested in every action and thought of those of royal birth. Or so it appeared to me because they are the measure by which others found themselves successful or lacking. The "noble" quality extends beyond the merely external refinements wealth supposedly bestows. It also indicates an internal refinement, politeness, a sensitivity to the beautiful, a hightened understanding of all matters aesthetic and sublime, and a nobility of spirit which no amount of opulent clothing could hide but which also unavoidably did materialize in the sartorial splendor of those who possessed it ... Naming seems inordinately important in relation to the attention given to the "noble."

Every greeting is embellished with lexical ornamentation designed to let anyone within hearing distance know the interlocutors' social standing as well as to inform one another that each is acutely aware of the other's rank. Moreso than having a lackey carry one's missal to church, moreso than owning country property, moreso than maintaining a large household brimming with servants, one's appellation separates one from others. Thus, the streets echo with constant cries of "My devotion, Herr Doktor," or "My admiration, Frau Court Counselor," or "My truest sincerity, Herr Superior Medical Counselor."

A note from Prince Lobkowitz: While our Beethoven
possesses a nobility of spirit and genius of music unequalled by any other in our time, he is wholly lacking in any of the outward charms which almost without exception accompany such internal endowments. To be sure, many a fine piece of my furniture has fallen prey to his awkwardness, and his coarseness of conversation has unwittingly offended the delicate sensibilities of my dinner guests more than a few times. I am not at all certain that a "van" on the Rhine indicates the same noble ancestry as a "von" on the Danube does.

Our Beethoven did employ his second name as a means to further himself in the class conscious world of Viennese music. He even used the "van" to allow have his custody case for his nephew Carl heard in the courts reserved for nobility, a ploy which had only limited success. If those he met confused his "van" for a "von," Beethoven made little or no effort to disabuse them of the confusion. Given his democratic spirit, which must be admitted did not extend to his servants, this might not be unexpected. Or it might be an opportunistic chink in the composer's armour. In the final analysis, he might simply have been doing as the natives do.

Step out into the street. Leave your pine-panelled rooms and stoves. Step out into the street where the stories swirl like the wind that picks up at dusk. Step out into the stories always being told, and into which you are born, and
choose the ones you wish to retell. Out in the streets amongst the stalls and hawkers and jugglers and hats and caged birds and music and parks and mechanical toys -- into the streets with stories biting at your ears and publications wrapping you like a prospective dinner at the fishmonger's stall -- into the endlessly circulating stories.
Genius

[A sub-text snaking its way through the writings presented thus far, one found scattered throughout the fragments Dr. House had dispersed throughout the scholar's oft-mentioned study (the good doctor's death chamber), is the cultural construction of Genius. To wit, I have assembled as best I could some of the many scribblings related to this provocative, but alas truncated, topic left from the fallen pen of my departed mentor. Again, I tell any readers of this text that the writings which have coalesced in this section were singled out by Dr. House personally for inclusion in some form or another. My skills at decoding the arcane and subtle markings by the professor have been sharply honed by now and not a single inky squiggle, not one page creased even so slightly beneath the delicate pressure of a badly cut finger nail, not one feint to throw the uninitiated off the paper path to true textual reconstruction has escaped my fine eye. I say this not out of self-aggrandizement, but out of self-confidence gleaned through thorough repetition. My eye flexes text-decoding muscles that would make the most steroid-bloated of body sculptors wilt with shame.]

In considering the notion of greatness as it pertains to music, an initial approach to the terminal we
shall call Genius, we can go to the famous musicologist
Alfred Einstein, whose name embodies and echoes yet another
member in our Hall (haul) of Geniuses. This musical Einstein
has written a text unashamedly entitled *Greatness in Music*,
which opens with a marvellous memory from the musicologist's
youth. Einstein tells of the Great Odeon Hall in Munich, the
scene of many of his earliest musical encounters. A semi-
circle decorates the apse constructed in the hall for the
orchestra. The niches contained in the semi-circle
themselves contain plaster busts of the immortals of musical
composition in Europe. They hovered above the orchestra like
a plaster halo broken in half, the gods looking down on what
they have wrought. What makes Einstein's story so intriguing
for me, dear readers, is the fluccuating cast of who
actually occupied the niches of this pantheon over the span
of time; that is, busts replaced busts as a composer's
stature waxed and waned. In 1811, neither Bach nor Beethoven
filled a slot. Michael Haydn and Cimarosa did. By the end
of the 19th century, the blessed crescent was populated by
the liknesses of Bach, Handel, Gluck, Haydn (Joseph), Mozart,
Weber, Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, and, who else,
Beethoven. The semi-circle later spread to include Wagner
and Liszt, with Brahms inexplicably absent.

Einstein finds causes for changes in this sideways
Arch of Musical Triumph in such things as generational and
national blinders. While this may be so, I find, and perhaps
readers you do as well, this rotating of heads a valuable catalyst for asking questions. What prodded the finger to give this roulette wheel of musical immortality a whirl? What engine drove the merry-go-round of rotating heads? What caused one bust to burst forth in glory and recognition while another collapsed in dishonor and ill-fated obscurity? Even more of interest to me, what gave birth to the impulse to create such a semi-circle, a thin line between the secular and the sacred, the fallen and the transcendant, the players and their prime movers? Had the secularization furthered by the Enlightenment so deprived society of saints that it manufactured new ones, ones which better suited the spirit of the age, an expanded hagiography for new human times? A look at the etymology of the word Genius may lead us to believe this was the case. And now, dear readers, such notions, that of a genius and a world populated with geniuses are held as common sensical, part of how the world is. Examples of genius we can be readily adduced. Every schoolchild knows them by heart; a litany of genius easily springs from our lips. Common sense. People try to sculpt their children into geniuses, and articles in the Sunday magazine of the newspaper display child geniuses along with helpful hints about how to produce prodigious progeny of your own. Part of how the world is. However, it is only recently so.

[A different passage:] Let us step back, readers; let us pretend to step out of the stream of time so that we
may observe it as a stream, and we will read a text (not one, but a hybrid constructed from many) which tells stories about the many metamorphoses of our term "Genius." At the imagined mouth of the stream -- imagined, for we can not see it; mouth, for it is both the source of the stream and an oral language, which is why we can not see/read it -- we find the Indo-European root *gen-, meaning to beget, to bring forth, to conceive. Here, appropriately enough, is the smallest trickle of this stream, its tiniest burn. This is where our genealogical river of "genius" begins; this is its genesis. It flows into Latin, where our gurgling water murmurs the word "genius" as the tutelary god attendant at every person's birth, an escort through the journey of life and beyond, the moulder of one's character and fortune. This is a very general and generous application of a word now limited to so few, falling as it did at that time on every one; it is generic, not reserved for special application, not a scarce commodity. Our stream flows on through the centuries, accumulating connotations and changing forms like so much shifting silt. In the seventeenth century in English, genius can be used to express the Manichean pull of good and evil contained in any one human. Via its rhyme (perhaps?) with the Arabic term jinn, in the same century and the one preceding it, genius may be used to refer to a demon or evil spirit. Would we consider an application like this to Beethoven, or Einstein (the mathematical one), or Picasso and
his tortured squares? Later, our protean term can be used to describe one's special talent. From continental influence, it casts its net wider to embrace what geist in German holds in its loving arms: the spirit or character of a people or a nation. Are we the least bit surprised to find this usage in the early eighteenth century? In the middle of this same century, dear readers, genius comes to mean an intellectual prowess of a particular individual of an exalted type. It distinguishes such a person from those lesser individuals possessing mere talent. Here, in the giddy throes of Enlightenment freedoms, our first geniuses are begotten! They are the favored ones, wedded with powers beyond the ken of normal folk such as you or I, readers. They beam beatifically down upon us from their heavenly niches, and we offer thanks to them for pointing the way to transcendence, for embodying lives which have overcome the messy one bestowed on most humans. They bridge the vast gulf separating humanity and the gods; they serve as the liminal state, the conduit, between the earthly and heavenly.

[Here the writings taper off into a melange of mangled and underdeveloped arguments. We can, I believe, leave it at this. Being keen readers, you will have derived a general gist of what might have been had fate not stilled our Carroll's pen.]
Schindler Contra Holz

All of the following passages have been selected, not without caution, from some of my older writings and gatherings -- some go back all the way to 1977 -- perhaps clarified here and there, above all, shortened. Read one after another, and they will leave no doubt either about Anton Schindler or about Karl Holz: they are antipodes. Other things too will become clear; for example, that this is a reading for those of varied interests, but not for myopic academes. I have readers in many disciplines, in musicology, in history, in cultural history, in anthropology, in hermeneutics, in the lay public -- I do not have them in Academia's shallows, populated by professors plumped up with the plumage of hubris.

And perhaps I could whisper to my good listeners whom I love as much as I loathe the -- How far, for heaven's sake, the condescension? Do not enter into league with the Dark Deans and crown yourself with false laurels.

Carroll House

Turin, Christmas 1988
[This section is culled from the various attempts on Carroll's part to display Anton Schindler -- Beethoven's "friend" and early biographer, in fact, first holder of the title "official biographer" until relieved of it by Beethoven himself -- as a pompous, self-aggrandizing, self-proclaimed authority. Carroll's move to resuscitate the reputation of Holz, and the viability of the violinist's memoirs, is prompted in many ways by the abuse this reputation suffered under the barrage of vehemence disgorged by Schindler. Dr. House's strategy subtly, and superbly, allows Schindler's rabid rhetoric to reflect his true character, to let his words speak for themselves, and for himself, as it were, and to allow Holz to reveal himself eloquently in a passage or two. Dr. House's writings frame the selections.]

Readers: What do we owe this windbag, Schindler?

C. H.: Amongst other transgressions, the burning (yes, readers, the burning!!) of many of Beethoven's Conversation Books.

Readers: How did Anton the Arsonist get his combustionist's claws on these volumes to begin with?

C. H.: By badgering the good Dr. von Breuning immediately after the composer's death, by hammering away at the grief-stricken friend, by taking advantage of the emotionally vulnerable, thus enabling him to spirit the texts
away to his lair. He was the first in a long line of graverobbers who sought to convert Beethoven's corpse into cash and personal notoriety.

Readers: Why -- what Satanic forces drove him? -- why did he burn these books?

C. H.: To "protect" the "reputation" of the departed composer. (Do not be scared by the scare quotes, readers, they only offset flatulence.) Yes, Schindler distinguishes himself by being the earliest example of an excisor of texts which would not deify Beethoven. Anything mortal about the person was expunged. Only the goodly, the saintly, the right, the transcendent would have remained of Beethoven as filtered through Schindler if he'd had his way. Oh, there are some exceptions to this. If Beethoven flies into a rage, who calms him? Schindler. Should the composer be out of sorts with a publisher, who settles the messy affair? Our Anton. If Beethoven mistreats a friend, who admonishes the genius composer? Our meddling Anton.

[From another writing by Carroll]: ... one need only glance at the title of Schindler's text to get an inkling of the man's character: *Beethoven as I Knew Him* -- all the authority of presence summed up in the title: I knew him, you didn't, so there ... makes B. sound like a tribe being studied by an anthropologist: "my people" being replaced by my composer ... might as well be: *Me and the Headman of Composers*, or *Argonauts of the Danube: Journeys in*
Music with Beethoven, or The Top of the Teutonic Tonic Totem and I.

[I assume it is up to me to contextualize the rift between Schindler and Holz (which was primarily one-sided) since Carroll left no direct framing for the rivalry and apparently assumed much shared information with the audience in this regard. Schindler had served as Beethoven's "secretary sans salaire" for several years, but the friendship cooled dramatically (this arctic air being a low-pressure system emanating from Beethoven) near the end of the composer's life. Much of this chill and eventual frost may have accumulated from the ill-fated concerts of 1824, the fallout from which resulted in Beethoven's accusing both Schindler and Schuppanzigh of cheating him out of profits. While the latter returned to favor, the former's fall from grace was never fully forgiven.

About this time, in 1825, Beethoven met up with Holz, whose congeniality, good head for numbers (especially as it pertained to the conversion of various currencies), conversational skill, wit, and wine-drinking capability qualified him as a suitable substitute for the position previously held precariously by Schindler. One may forgive the natural animosity Schindler transferred to the wholly innocent Holz, that is the projection of his own failings onto Holz, recast as Holz's conscious usurping of Schindler's position in Beethoven's personal/professional world.
However, when Holz produced a document definitely signed by Beethoven (a fact conceded by Schindler himself), but in someone else's hand, naming Holz as Beethoven's choice as official biographer, the hatred in Schindler swelled to gargantuan dimensions. His polemic against Holz continued long after the death of the poor violinist. I believe I have contextualized enough. To Dr. House):

Schindler's Style, plus Schindler on History

Schindler's accounts often find no correspondence with those of the exhaustively thorough Beethoven biographer, Thayer, nor with Holz's, nor with Schuppanzigh's, nor with Sir George Smart's, nor with numerous others' accounts, nor with the Conversation Books fortunate enough to escape his censorial flame. Well, what can we make of that? This Schindler, despite the many counter-claims, even has the gall to attack other writers on Beethoven. If you react as I do to this situation, readers, we may admonish Schindler with the saying, "Let he who is without sin cast the first stone." But Schindler does not heed such advice, and attacks these other writers; in so doing, he attacks their "mistakes": "These mistakes [supposed misinformation regarding the composer] we owe to writers of short stories and novels who unscrupulously twist historical facts of every kind to suit their purposes, completely negating the being of the person about whom they write. As we know, the masses much prefer this type of writing to historical works." (319) Yet
Schindler seems quite comfortable both deprecating "the masses" for their taste and adorning his "historical work" with metaphors drawn from drama, from the stage, while at the same time attacking fiction writers, as if verity lay unquestionably in the theater. On the very same page on which he demeans and chastizes writers of "short stories and novels," we can read: "Our drama has now reached a turning point," and "This character thus exits from our stage." (319) All life is not a stage, poor Anton, and the sounds you make striding the boards drive me to pity as much as to fury, for they indeed signify nothing.

In addition, that Schindler would posit positivist history as possible (and even extant within the binding of his text) reveals his limitations as a thinker. It is interesting to note that though such a history -- according to the actions of Schindler -- does not "unschrupulously twist historical facts," it does allow the destruction of materials not fitting "the facts" of the historical situation or personage.

Schindler on Holz's Puzzling Silence, plus Holz's Response

"... Holz was a member of the Schuppanzigh Quartet during its second period; that is, between its first rehearsal on 12 June 1823, after Schuppanzigh's return from Russia, and his death in March 1830. This period of seven years was sufficient to put Holz in possession of the
tradition that was best preserved by this quartet in the performance of both Beethoven's and Haydn's works . . . Of the members of the quartet who survived Schuppanzigh, Holz was the only one with the means to write down these traditions (in regard to tempo in general, changes in tempo in specific passages or whole sections, particular emphasis, etc.) and to save them -- or at least their most important elements -- from being lost. The unreasonable behaviour of the new generation of musicians as early as the beginning of the 1830's showed that it would destroy the spiritual character of all chamber music. This behaviour should have prompted those initiated in traditions of classical chamber works to use their better knowledge by constructing a dam against such a tendency.

"In the quartets of Haydn and Beethoven, no one was equipped to do this more thoroughly or more comprehensively than Holz. He, however, remained silent. He did not even react to the appearance of the Brunswick Quartet, whose interpretations often completely negated the inherent character of the works performed . . . How was it possible for Holz to keep silent in the face of such performances? At that time his word could still have carried weight, for it would have found support among the many intelligent musicians of Schuppanzigh's time who were still alive then. But who would support it today, after a deluge of errors, now that we have come to the place where emancipation from the domination
of tradition is regarded as the feat of a powerful spirit secure in the knowledge of its own superiority? In my own struggles against the ever more threatening evil -- virtuosity for its own sake among instrumentalists and conductors -- I publicly called upon Holz again and again to let his voice be heard. But he ignored my plea, was insensitive to the obligation that he was to intervene in this vital matter and thus to make manifest his memory of Beethoven. Truly a puzzling silence!" (477)

Anton, alone, heroically battling the ever-encroaching evil, the all-consuming darkness found in the audacity of the younger generation to, dare we say it, interpret the music for themselves (hardly are the words out when a vast shudder encompasses my very being), turns a vitriolic pen on our Karl to castigate him for abdicating his divinely-given authority, for not fighting the good fight. Holz -- almost unbelievably responded to this posthumous attack on his integrity and eerily anticipated the polemic:

In the mid 1830's, I was publically assailed by Anton Schindler -- what a puzzling man I find him even to this day to make some sort of final pronouncement regarding the playing of some of the Beethoven string quartets, op. 127-132. Evidently, a particular performance did not meet his understanding of the music, and he desired I position myself as an authority on the matter due to my playing these pieces with Schuppanzigh and Bohm under the watchful eye but very dormant ear of the composer. Of course, I ignored such an absurd request, especially given its being played out in so public a forum.

Even if I were to make a public ruckus over
markings, they would only be my understanding of what Beethoven's markings were. Beethoven himself might have changed his mind about them -- as he did in the finale of op. 127 when we practiced it and eventually performed it with Bohm. Why, therefore, attempt the impossible: to set these things in stone? Even were it possible, would it be desirable? Why still discussion and debate by imposing the final word? (If I did so, where would Schindler be? without a platform to pontificate his self-import . . . perhaps I did err, then.) I promise that my silence in this matter will lead to more thought about the works, more introspection on the part of players, listeners, and critics than my pronouncements ever would. I would not dare still the tongues of so many nor kill the joy of dissensus while it slumbers in seed. I do not wish to say so late in my life unkind words about anyone. I will simply say that Schindler would love to play ultimate arbiter in this matter -- or any as it relates to Beethoven while I am happy to play quiet provocateur for present and future questioners of this music.

Schindler Attacks the Dead

Schindler, ever-sensitive to the concerns of others, writes: "After the death of Karl Holz on 9 November 1858, the Viennese papers took great pains to publish wholly erroneous information concerning his relationship with Beethoven . . . It is important that some of these reports should be refuted and others corrected." (477) Of course, Schindler bore the burden of refutation and correction himself. Selfless, this Schindler, as he lists a few minor errors of chronology regarding the friendship between Holz and Beethoven and devalues any influence the former may have had on the latter.

Do you, readers, find it ironic, as I must confess I do,
that Schindler's attack on the dead seemed so very safe at the time, when in actuality, it wasn't? When one launches salvos at "the silent majority" (as Homer called the departed), one expects them to remain silent. Our dear Karl, however, breeched etiquette and spoke up when he was supposed to have been quiet. His memoirs break decorum. His writings give tongue to the dead -- an (un)earthly voice -- and thus haunt the vagaries of veracity palmed off by Schindler.

Beware those who denigrate the dead. Beware the living who seek fame and fortune at the expense of the departed, for as Whitman said, "And as to you life I reckon you are the leavings of many deaths." [Carroll, how you call and warn and advise and admonish those of us left on this side of the grave. I can only pray you will be read thoughtfully by those most in need of your words.]

Epilogue/Epode

Schindler, Schindler, tall-tale teller, swindler,
lighter of liar's fire, untruth's kindler,
unkindly stacking kindling to burn out others' voices,
you tossed the match, un-matched loss, killed-off choices,
so long, none of you anon,
flail on, swell on, fail on, An-ton.
[The spirit moves; I feel it pass. Carroll, do not scowl, do not shake your finger, or dismiss me with a derisive snort. You are now the ghost of textus past. The present dwells within me. I am now the shuttler of voices, the warp and woof of the current weaving, the bobbin and the gyre. Certainly you remain the tutelary deity, the prime mover, the one who oversees and points the way. Now, however, I hold the reins. I juggle the voices; I am the medium through which the inky incantations flow. I know your mind, Carroll, and live to give life to the texts you have chosen and those you have led me to choose. As if I were an automatic writer, my hand is guided to the sources which flesh this corpus out with your spirit. You will have the final say, Carroll, rest assured; the end will be yours. The moment now is mine, and I choose to follow your lead and be as mute as possible in the matter. I write what others wrote and join their voices in polyphonic evocation of the late string quartets.]
The Late String Quartets of Beethoven

[Before I can lapse into almost perpetual, and certainly desirable, silence, I must once again assume the mantle of contextualizer. The late string quartets, a focus of this final chapter, stand virtually unequalled in the Western musical canon; so universally lauded are they that no one today would dare utter anything but superlatives in the same breath as any mention of them. (To get a sense of their position, one need only look at Aldous Huxley's Point Counter Point, which in the climactic scene finds one of the characters attempting to persuade another of the existence of God by playing a recording of the Heileger Dankgesang movement of the A minor quartet. But I digress.) Initially misunderstood, denigrated as the illogical product of a genius gone mad or merely dismissed as the incoherent scratchings of a composer too long isolated in deafness, these quartets have broken into the clear light of critical reason and distance and are now generally acknowledged as possibly the greatest works by possibly the greatest musical genius the world has known.

These quartets sprang from a variety of impulses, not the least of which was Beethoven's stated desire to move away from large-scale works, such as the 9th symphony and the
Missa Solemnis, and to re-explore the less-is-more, introspective terrain of ensemble chamber music. Another may have been the return to Vienna of Schuppanzigh after a seven-year absence in Russia. The legitimating catalyst for composing the quartets begins innocuously enough in St. Petersburg on the 9th of November, 1822. From the pen of a certain Prince named Nikolaus Borrissovitch Galitzin flowed a commission "for one, two or three new quartets." The prince, long an admirer of Beethoven's music, especially the quartets of Opus 59, informed the composer in the same letter of his desire to advance his skill on the violincello and proposed that Beethoven set the terms of the agreement. As Carroll would have written, an inviting offer indeed. The commission flowed from the prince's admiring pen, sailed over the dense and salty Baltic, entered the mouth of the Order, ebbed into the Danube and bounced fortuitously downriver into the hands of the anxious composer almost as if it were a sign from a divine power to compose the music this composer most desired in his heart to write. The writing of the quartets was to occupy Beethoven's last years and would prove to be the final pieces of music fully realized under his meticulous hand (casting forever into the void of silence known as 'unrealized projects' a tenth symphony, an opera based on Goethe's Faust, another on Macbeth, an oratorio based on Saul, and a Requiem).

As neither the numbers of the quartets nor the opus
numbers reflect the true chronology of composition, and since dedications were switched, a variety of publishers involved, and first performances also out of synch with order of composition, and further, due to such knowledge being assumed in and confused (in diverse ways) by the various writers in the section which follows (itself modelled on Carroll's "The Torchbearers' Tales," but, admittedly, more ambitious in scope), I shall place clarity in the fore and align the indices of these works to ease the readers' labors. They are in order of composition: String Quartet no. 12 Opus 127 in E flat major, composed 1822-25 (simultaneous with the composition of the entire 9th symphony), premiered 6 March 1825 in Vienna by the Schuppanzigh Quartet (re-performed under the orders of Beethoven by the Bohm Quartet, the personnel of which was the same as the Schuppanzigh but with Joseph Bohm assuming first violin duties), first edition printed in Mainz by B. Schott in June 1826, and dedicated to Prince Galitzin; String Quartet no. 15 Opus 132 in A minor, composed 1824-5, premiered 6 November 1825 in Vienna by the Schuppanzigh Quartet, first edition published in Berlin/Paris by M. Schlesinger in September 1827, and dedicated to Prince Galitzin; String Quartet no. 13 Opus 130 in B flat major (the original finale of which was separately published as the Grosse Fugue op. 133), composed 1824-25, premiered 21 March 1826 in Vienna by the Schuppanzigh Quartet, first edition published in Vienna by Philharmonia in 1953, and dedicated to
Prince Galitzin; String Quartet no. 14 Opus 131 in C sharp minor, composed 1825-26, premiered 5 June 1828 in Halberstadt by the Muller Brothers quartet, first edition published in Mainz/Paris by B. Schott in June 1827, and dedicated to Baron Joseph von Stutterheim; String Quartet no. 14 Opus 135 in F major, composed 1826, premiered 23 March 1828 in Vienna by the Schuppanzigh Quartet, first edition published in Berlin/Paris by M. Schlesinger in September 1827, and dedicated to Johann Wolfmayer; and the new finale to the B flat major becomes the standard for the Opus 130, composed in 1826, premiered 22 April 1827 in Vienna by the Schuppanzigh Quartet, first edition published by M. Artaria in Vienna in May 1827, and dedicated to Prince Galitzin.

Now, kind readers, I fade . . . I fade . . . I lapse into the chasm of silence from whence I emerged . . .

[Holz:] That the composition of the string quartets about which much controversy has arisen was an enterprise in which Beethoven was fully engaged and to which he was completely committed seemed absolutely natural to me as I was never personally acquainted with the composer at a time when he was not at work on them. I have found it startling that the familiar is immediately and unquestioningly assumed to be natural. This, I assume, is the reason why the natural for one individual is incommensurate with the natural for another, though each may live in the very same town. Thus, I was startled to find others harboring displeasure over Beethoven's venturing upon this particular path of composition. Evidently, they believed they knew how best he should spend his time and talent.
[Many were displeased, Schindler, who now writes, for one:] In the early weeks of 1824 [sic; it was late in 1822] a letter arrived which irrevocably altered and wounded the course of European musical history. This letter requested Beethoven write several quartets for strings. The request was embedded in the flowery and deceptive language of flattery, a manner of speech to which Beethoven was usually immune. However, just as some snakes in the Orient have magical powers which can cast a spell over their victims and so completely hypnotize them that they wholly relinquish their will, the language of this Russian serpent allowed him to slither unthwarted into the garden and snatch the Master from his grander plans. And the St. Petersburg snake had a local ally in his reptilian league in the form of Karl Holz. The so-called friend of Beethoven led the Master from his work on a tenth symphony and an opera of Faust and encouraged him to squander his talent on line drawings of dwarfs rather than on sculptures of giants. This same serpent tempted Beethoven to carouse in beer and wine taverns and caused undue concern in him over his financial affairs. My encouragement to put aside such childish pursuits as chamber music and money went unheeded. Who can explain the spell? Holz even duped the Master into becoming the godfather of his first-born son! I believe my anguish over this turn of events is shared by every enlightened connoisseur of music.
The Master and I entered a prolonged period devoid of communication.

[Beethoven, in a letter to Schott, the music publisher:] Apollo and the Muses will allow me to elude the carrier of the scythe for a while yet. My journey over the river Lethe to the Elysian fields has been stayed, for I feel now that I have truly written but a few notes in my lifetime. This quartet [E-flat major, Op. 127] assures my tenure under the azure canopy for a brief period more. My health remains poor. Illness etches its pall on my skin, but youthful energy rises within me to blunt its point. My fingers ache to grab my pen, and when I am done with writing, my legs pulse to walk in the woods. You, maker of marks and exact replicator of mistakes, will undoubtably profit from my poor imitation of Lazarus. And how will you reward my efforts? By sending editions of errors to the world and filling it with sounds unintended by the Author. Hasn't it always been such? A work leaves the Author's hand to be recast in the mould of the Audience. You will continue to be a publisher [Verleger] without being embarrassed [verlegen, one of Beethoven's favorite puns]. For this sin you should do penance in a hairshirt but I absolve you ahead of time, for you know not what you do. In the meantime, leave me in peace and send me the silver I am due. Though I have dodged the Reaper for now, my health is not good.

[Carroll House, rough notes re. the failing health
of Beethoven:] Make mention of Dr. Wagner's interesting, but inept, autopsy. By 1822, the year the E-flat major is begun, B.'s 5'6'' (same height as Napoleon) stocky frame had begun to wither. Maladies of this year: earaches, gout which drives him to bed for 6 weeks, plus the usual digestive distress. 1823: eye trouble begins (April to Jan. 1824), darkened room required even for composing. 1825: year of greatest decline: very painful illness April and May (inspiration for Heiliger Dankgesang?), strict diet imposed: no wine, spirits, coffee, or spices, kept indoors to remain warm, weakened stomach, chronic inflammation of the bowels, sporadic fevers and chills, fear of typhus, B. goes ghost-like virtually overnight.

[Beethoven, a dialogue letter to his doctor, May 1825:] Patient: I know spring water is best, but surely I may be allowed some white wine mixed with it. The beer here is detestable.

Doctor: You may do so, and soon, I will restore your health.

Patient: I spit up blood which may come from my windpipe or the lungs. Sometimes, it courses through my nose. My general condition is weak indeed. I am aware enough of my body to know that it will not recover of its own ability. Pray, doctor, close the door on Death and tell me how you will heal.

Doctor: I will first be a Brownian [a follower of the
medical theories espoused by the Scottish Dr. John Brown] and attend to the organs. Then, I will be a Stollian [after the Viennese Dr. Maxmilian Stoll] and consider your illness by attending to anatomical and functional aspects of your ailments. Every bit of you and every aspect of my being will come under my care.

Patient: Please do not delay. I shall be very grateful to have back my strength.

Doctor: I will prescribe for you, and soon, very very soon, youthful health will be yours.

Patient: Praise be to God and Science.

[Dr. House's barely legible notes continue:] 1826: mistaken for a peasant often due to shabbiness and general lack of concern for appearance; at Gneixendorf, many note swelling of feet and belly, travels in cart in inclimate weather, dropsy worsens, pain in liver, jaundice, possible case of hepatitis -- the end of the tale is known --

[Prince Galitzin, a letter to Beethoven, 29 Nov. 1823:] I am growing increasingly impatient to receive a new quartet from you; nevertheless, I beseech you not to pay any heed to my impatience or allow my weakness to cause you to falter. Let only your genius be your guide. I would never command such genius because I know it is outside the bounds of all rule but its own. When your artistic inspiration seizes you, you will produce the piece I so desire. I know full well from your acts, words and music that you would not
allow commerce to take precedent over art. I merely write to inform you of my own anxious state. Patience is a virtue I have yet to garner.

[Anxious to use the new E-flat major Opus 127 to inaugurate a new subscription series of quartet concerts, Schuppanzigh writes in the Conversation Books. His quartet features Schuppanzigh on first violin, Holz on second, Weiss on viola, and Linke on cello. Readers will note again that Schuppanzigh always addresses Beethoven in third person in the Conversation Books.]

—If he [Beethoven] has it in his mind to yield to me the quartet, in enough time to advertise it, there may be a significant increase in the present subscription.

—Surely he knows that a new quartet from his noble hand would draw a sizable crowd. Should this come to pass, he would profit as well.

—In E-flat.
—Has he sent it to Galitzin?
—No, just pastries.
—The soup there is thin and bland.

—He grants me the right to make the work known to the public? That my quartet shall perform it for the first time?

[Letter to the Schuppanzigh Quartet from Beethoven humorously admonishing them to give the premiere of the Opus 127 their best effort:]

Great Sawers of Strings!
Each player has had bestowed upon him the part he is to play. Each is bound by a solemn oath sworn in this letter by which he pledges to do his best, to play in a distinguished fashion, to please the Muses in his efforts, and to vie with one another in the admirable competition of excellence in musical skill and interpretation.

Each who takes part in this performance, and in so doing honors this pledge, is to attest to his verity in the undertaking by signing this document.

Beethoven

Schuppanzigh

Sir John Falstaff disguised as the Devil's fiddler

Weiss

Violist to the Olympians

Linke

Handler of the composer's accursed violincello

Holz

Last, but in signature only

[Beethoven, letter to his nephew, Carl, late June 1825:] The Quartet failed, the players not the music. The failure was primarily due to Schuppanzigh. His corpulence requires he take more time than usual to decipher and understand a piece. Also, he tires easily. I cannot imagine how he manages to squeeze those sausages which reside at the
ends of his hands onto the neck of a violin.

[Holz:] The first performance of the E-flat major quartet, the first of the final set of quartets, failed miserably. I choose not to place blame anywhere other than on circumstances. Schuppanzigh had begged and cajoled Beethoven to allow him use of the work to initiate his new subscription series, rightly thinking this would increase the number of subscribers. When Beethoven finally acquiesced, we were left insufficient rehearsal time. Worse still, we could never get Beethoven to attend any of the rehearsals. He was too busy composing the second quartet [Op. 132].

Schuppanzigh practiced us hard, but himself harder still. He struggled vainly to capture the spirit of the work. He was weary the day of the performance and expressed distaste for the work itself, much to my surprise. I truly believe that had Schuppanzigh been given more time, and had he concentrated on the new and difficult quartet instead of on the number of new subscribers it generated, the performance would have been successful. It is difficult to fault the kind violinist in this situation as a musician's income, even in Vienna, precariously teetered on the cliff of poverty at all times.

Beethoven expressed his wish that Bohm be given the work. Schuppanzigh protested, especially when Johann [Beethoven's sole surviving brother] criticized his playing. Johann was completely ignorant of music and was only echoing the opinion of the herd in an attempt to gain his brother's favor, especially as that might translate into financial gain for himself. Despite all of our objections, the piece fell to Bohm, and we were to play it with him.

[Bohm:] Fairly or unfairly, rightly or wrongly, Schuppanzigh was accused of ruining the debut. He appeared tired and unable to finish off the performance adequately. The whole affair did not go off well. Few felt moved, and
most felt confused by the piece.

Beethoven, who was not present at the performance, demanded public retribution immediately. He sent for me and brusquely said, as was his manner with me, "You must play my new quartet. You must save it from incompetence and infamy." Various people jockeyed about him giving all sorts of advice, but Beethoven remained steadfast. To me the difficult task fell. Of course, I had played with Holz, Linke, and Weiss while Schuppanzigh had been in Russia, so no problem existed with our managing to play together.

Before embarking on the work itself, I queried each of the performers sans Schuppanzigh as to why the performance had gone awry. From these sessions, I constructed a plan. I endeavored to study the work in detail before attempting rehearsal. Then, I convinced the composer to calm his impatience and allow numerous rehearsals. We practiced the piece frequently and always under Beethoven's watchful eye — I say eye, for the unfortunate soul was so completely deaf that he could not hear a single note of the inspired music he had composed. He watched carefully all of our movements, overcompensating with one faculty the loss of another. He commented frequently on tempos and bowings. This made rehearsals slow, tense, and difficult. Despite all, we were able to resolve some of the work's difficulties and alter tempos that seemed to diminish effect, with the composer's agreement.
Fortunately for all involved, the second performance went off well and was received enthusiastically by reviewers and the paying public. Beethoven felt vindicated, and Schuppanzigh was restored to favor. This allowed me the opportunity to remove myself from the awkward position into which I had been thrust.

[Carroll House writes of Sir George Smart, our next chronicler:] If we may say of Beethoven that he was an undaunted advocate of England and the English, then we may rightly call Sir George Smart Beethoven's English advocate. (One wonders whether Beethoven's opinion of the English would have wavered or not had he known about the active suppression by English society of Smart's side occupation as a greengrocer for many years.) Well, more to the point, Smart was indeed a staunch supporter of Beethoven's and was able to provide a regular venue for the performance of his symphonic music as he was Director of the Philharmonic Society in London -- yes, the same Philharmonic Society which commissioned the ninth symphony and which sent aid in a form Beethoven would appreciate (namely, 100 pounds sterling) when the composer lay supine in the Schwarzspanierhaus. Smart's life and career was intimately intertwined with Beethoven's, even if at a distance. After the composer's death, the connection continued since Smart was involved in the life of the composer's music and reputation. He continued to schedule and conduct Beethoven's symphonic music regularly in
London. In 1845, Smart travelled to Bonn (as did Queen Victoria and Prince Albert from England, other heads of state from all of Europe, and musical luminaries from the entire continent) for the dedication of a statue to the composer in his birthplace. Another part of the festivities brought Smart together with Holz (whom he had met in 1825) on a vessel which had just been christened the "Beethoven." As this newly named transporter of souls bobbed on the choppy gray-green waters of the Rhine, Holz informed Smart that he had a viola and a violin once owned by Beethoven which were, much to his chagrin, being offered for sale. Smart did not make him an offer.

[Although Carroll continues for several pages detailing Smart's stay in Bonn, this is not the trip in which we are presently interested. It is enjoyable reading to be sure, but not particularly pertinent at this juncture. Should it fit in later, I will certainly employ this extended passage. For the moment, though, we will read from Sir George Smart's diary of 1825. (Please note, my readers, how unobtrusive I've been and how appropriately the texts have been arranged. They pulse along, as do the quartets themselves, via the association of ideas, not argumentation of a single point or thesis.) Smart documents his three-month journey from London to Vienna and back. He stayed on the Danube from the 4th of September to the 20th of the same month; the purpose of his journey was to secure exact timings]
for the 9th symphony (or the "Choral Symphony," as he called it).]

9 Sept. (Friday) . . . Holtz [sic] has informed me that Beethoven has arrived from Baden. There is to be a performance of a new M.S. quartette [sic; this spelling holds throughout Smart's journal] later today . . . at 12 took Ries to the Hotel Wilden Mann, the lodgings of Mr. Schlesinger, since I was led to believe by Mr. Holz that I could find Beethoven there for the Quartette performance. He was there and he greeted me most cordially. I was introduced to many Professors of Music assembled there to hear this, the 2nd [Opus 132], Quartette purchased by Mr. Schlesinger -- over 3/4 of an hour in length, played twice. The performers were Schuppanzigh, Holz, Weiss and Linke, each I had met earlier.

A most extraordinary performance and piece. Five movements in all, each but one seems a Quartette in microcosom. Unimaginable scope. I have never heard such sonorous reaching as fills this piece. Most moving and haunting is the third movement, which bears the title "Holy Song of Thanks to the Godhead from a Convalescent, in the Lydian Mode," the use of the Lydian is remarkably effective given it is an anachronism. The solemnity of its opening inspires bowed heads. The pace is unduly slow, almost intentionally strained, creating an effect of asceticism and hymn: four voices joined in praise for recovery. Beethoven himself is the convalescent in the title, as he has just
recovered from a serious illness. Everyone remarked how well he looked. I, on the other hand, was quite shocked by his appearance, for he appeared more aged than his years should have showed. He was very energetic, though. He removed his coat to direct the performers. A word about the Quartette before the direction. The solemn holy song did not complete the piece in tranquil transcendence as other less stoic composers might have done. The piece returned to earth with renewed vigor and wisdom and thanks. Beethoven watched the play of the members very carefully. A particular passage -- staccato -- was not played to his eye's satisfaction; alas his ear could not register any sort of sound, and he seized Holz's violin to play the passage as it should be. Owing to the same disability which made his eye so keen and his ear so dull, he played the part a quarter of a tone too flat. His point, however, was rhythmical not tonal. The players under Schuppanzigh's admirable lead played splendidly. I can think of no more difficult work in the entire chamber repertoire than this. Consequently, there is no piece I know of which could have prepared them for this challenge. I could follow a score from where I sat and they met all challenges well. Holz is perhaps the weakest of the four but also the youngest and a truly engaging fellow. After the performance, all paid the greatest attention to Beethoven and made much over the piece. There were fourteen of us in the tiny and poorly ventilated room. Of the crowd I knew a few, Bohm (the
The partner of Steiner (the music publisher), Schlesinger of course, Czerny. I arranged a trip to Baden for Sunday and left at twenty-five minutes past two... had my hair cut -- bought a hat...

[Dr. Braunhofer, in a letter to Beethoven, late 1825:] I know it has long been your habit to douse your head with cold water when you are at your labors. I would strongly advise against continuing this practice. It can not be good for your fevers or your ears. Please suspend this habit and refrain from the taking of spirits.

[We return to Smart's diary:] 11 Sept. (Sunday) Schlesinger invited me to stop and dine at his lodgings at the "Wildemann." The party was larger than before: Beethoven, his nephew, Holz, Weiss, C. Czerny, who sat at the far end of the table, Linke, Schlesinger, Schuppanzigh, who sat at the head, and myself. B. delightfully jolly and constantly calling Schuppanzigh Sir John Falstaff, a very appropriate name for the rotund violinist who suffered many jokes about his girth, evidently expanded during his stay in Russia. We all took turns writing to Beethoven in his book. He joked often and laughed loudly. He holds -- I do not -- that all of Handel's trumpet parts were written for one man. He expressed disbelief at our double Bill of his "Mount of Olives" and "Wellington's Victory," at which I produced a small poster announcing it. He laughed heartily at both the coupling of the pieces and my readiness with the proof. B.
can hear a little if you hollow [sic] in his left Ear.

The meal was superb. We started with some excellent wine called "Woslu" [Voslau] followed by Hungarian red wine. Splendid fried potatoes and red cabbage. The main course, I was informed, contained two of B.'s favorites: fish and noodles with cheese. Also, following the European fashion for American tastes: turkey and not goose. B. over the fish yelled out: "I would love to eat oysters fresh from the sea! I desire to stand on the coast and sup on shellfish."

Schuppanzigh said: "The river is quite enough for me." Holz informed me that Schuppanzigh had recently been involved in a boating accident. Schuppanzigh continued: "I would have been drowned but the stream was shallow. Drowning: a death I abhor. Water so swells a man." Much laughter at that. B.: "Sir John, you need no swelling. Your fall in the river flung fish to inland peasants who had never before seen sea creatures, and they thought these animals had fallen from the sky." Linke followed: "Wingless birds or exiled angels."

Schlesinger lifted his glass: "Of angels, let us drink to the healths of Goethe and Cherubini!" We did. Holz said, "I am told that Cherubini claims he will not write a string quartet. When asked why this was so, he replied if Beethoven had never written any then it would possible for me to do so. As it is, what can I do?"[sic, in regards to punctuation] B. followed: "Cherubini's Requiem is the finest in that form, finer than even Mozart's." Someone proposed we drink to the
repose of Mozart's soul, and we did. The same was done for Bach's. B. said: "His name should not have been Bach, but rather ocean because of his infinite ability to produce melodies and recombinations of them. The ocean does this as well, always changing but giving one variations on the same theme." The pun in German is that Bach means brook. Schlesinger addressed me: "Perhaps you can aid me, Mr. Smart. I have been encouraging our Beethoven to travel to England. Perhaps you can bear witness to my claims. In three months, deducting travelling expenses, I estimate he could make 1,000 pounds, or over 2,500 florins, at least." I concurred, adding that two concerts at the Philharmonic Society alone, with new music, would yield at least that amount. This was not including what he could earn in Edinburgh. B. claimed he could not travel until the summer. "For now, I have much writing to do here. Quartettes continue. By Jove's and Apollo's graces, they continue." When asked how many more, B. replied: "I am not certain yet, but the number of them will surely be odd. They say there is divinity in odd numbers, either in nativity, chance, or death. I will add Quartette composing to the list if it does not fall into one of the categories already." With that the dining part of the evening ended.

B. was in high spirits. He went to the piano and was coaxed into playing. He touched the instrument and produced a small theme and asked, in French, "Upon what
subject shall I play?" "Upon that one," I enjoined. The theme must surely have been in his mind for some time. He played on it about twenty minutes in a most extraordinary fashion, sometimes very fortissimo, but throughout full of genius and passion. He abruptly finished and leapt up from the instrument as if in agitation, and quickly left the room. I spoke with the nephew about a trip to London. B. reappeared, and we hastily made plans for me to visit him in Baden to discuss the timings for the Choral symphony. Schuppanzigh held true to his appellation of Falstaff by donning a pair of antlers and comically galloping about the room. I remember hearing the loud crack of splintering wood as I departed the room.

[Beethoven, in a letter to Holz, commenting on his being invited to his brother's estate in Gneixendorf:] The name sounds like the breaking of an oak tree. The air there is healthy. My brother makes my buttocks ache, but perhaps I should try to get to know him better.

[from the Conversation Books, Holz's hand, plus one other, unidentifiable:]

—No, I am afraid that it is broken.
—The entire chair is destroyed. It can't support any weight at all, especially Schuppanzigh's. Do you have any idea when you might have done it?
—A fugue, a massive fugue for the ending of the B-flat?
—Why such an ending for the Leibquartett?

—The previous two [the E-flat major, Op. 127 and the A minor, Op. 132] drift off into nothingness, sweet dissolution. They evaporate as moisture returning to clouds. Dissipation, but atomic return to an original form that wasn't apparent, as if, to me, returning to fire, the many back into the one. Why, then, a fugue?

—If integration is essential, why the constant contradictions in dynamics, rhythms, and themes in the opening movement? Not to mention the vast dissimilarity between movements.

—No, I agree, a quartet is not a plant.

—So they were merely opposing voices being brought into juxtaposition?

—But doesn't a fugue resolve difference, as if by appropriation?

—I understand. Integration, as in a fugue, need not obliterate difference.

[another hand:] — I imagine a fugue depends on difference. How else would development occur except via opposing voices?

[Holz, again:] — I said that contained within the formal structure of a fugue, resolution occurs, or is attempted. That its apparent reliance upon contrasting voices and difference is only appearance, merely illusion. The difference is swallowed in the formal construction, the
voices are thrown into opposition to serve merely an overarching frame of coherence and univocality, they are ultimately under the control of a single voice. It is monologue masquerading as dialogue, monophone posing as polyphony.

—He said I am a dunderhead for believing this. Then, I am a dunderhead. I refuse to be taken in by these formal delusions.

[Schuppanzigh, in the Conversation Books, a later date than the above:]

—The rehearsals are going well. He would be pleased with the Cavatina. All the players know the price in tears it extracted from him, and they feel it is palpable in the music itself.

—Very much like a song, or an aria. Yes, the quality of the voice, the sorrow of the voice, the yearning of the voice blossoms like a throat coming into maturity.

—The fugue is causing trouble. It is indeed troublesome and difficult. Surely he is aware of its demands, not only on players, but listeners, as well.

—We will have to wait for that, won't we?

[Holz:] Schuppanzigh reported to Beethoven, who, as was his wont, refused to attend the first performance. In all, the news was not so bad, but we were all aware that Beethoven had decided the success or failure of the work depended almost exclusively on the reception of the fugue. For all the vicissitudes residing in the
movement, it was generally conceded that we had done an admirable job with it. Despite our efforts, the audience was completely befuddled by this final movement and met it with a perturbing silence upon conclusion. Our Viennese version of Falstaff attempted to defer both the conveyance of this information and to embed it in gladder tidings. "The Presto and alla danza tedesca were hailed and calls for encores rained down upon us with such ferocity that we were forced to oblige the requests and repeat the movements."

Beethoven asked the question everyone in the room knew, and dreaded, he would ask, "What about the fugue? Did that get encored?" When Schuppazigh reported that it had not, Beethoven fumed, "That alone, of any movement I have ever written, should have been encored. The cattle! The asses! Their long ears are so clogged with Italian arias that they can hear little else. Once the sugar is removed, they can't stand the taste of the cake. What nourishes is tossed out, what rots the gums and intestines is clamored for. What am to do with such tastes?" He ranted like this for quite some time.

The only person who might have rivalled Beethoven in anger and discontent over the reception of the quartet, which I emphasize was generally enthusiastic, was Artaria. He had, after all, paid the unrivalled sum of 80 ducats to publish the work. As I had finessed the deal and overseen its finalizations, it was to me that Mathias Artaria ran with his ill-humour. He had a legitimate complaint, I must concede. The fugue as a finale posed serious problems in terms of the quantity of manuscripts likely to sell. "Can you, Holz, imagine such a piece being played for leisure? Can you imagine a cheerful evening in a baker's home accompanied by this fugue? Would they reach for this or Haydn?" he asked me as he frantically paced in my apartment. I must concede, he had a legitimate complaint. "These are my buyers, Holz. Not the likes of you or Linke or Weiss or Bohm. Certainly there will be professional musicians who will purchase a work from Beethoven, but they do not constitute the majority of my patrons."

Thus, it fell to me to attempt to persuade Beethoven to change the quartet. Artaria suggested Beethoven
publish the fugue separately, in a transcription for piano with four-hands. I thought this a good idea, and a good place to begin. I decided my strategy would require several flanks, a multitude of approaches. My initial foray was to explain Artaria's concerns and his position. I would put forward his offer. After planting this seed, I planned to leave Beethoven on his own for a week or more. Then, I would pay him an unexpected visit, carefully referring to the finale, when the topic arose, as a separate publication, not a substitution of the fugue. I also planned to discuss with him how the fugue brought an incommensurate distribution of weight to the various movements. Beethoven was already deeply involved with the writing of another quartet [the C-sharp minor, Op. 131] and would be loathe to extending this sort of haggling unnecessarily. Finally, I would appeal to his purse.

[Holz, in the Conversation Books:]

—15 ducats for a new finale and 12 for the piano arrangement.

—All of them will be published at the same time.

Artari has promised payment in advance.

—Halm, the pianist, has already agreed to do it.

—I think of it as a supplement, a separate piece adding to and elaborating upon the original.

—As the Leibquartet currently stands, the fugue poses weighting problems.

—Well, it threatens to dwarf the other movements. If all of the attention is focused on this last mammoth movement, then the others seem insignificant in comparison. Their import is diminished.

—Do you need the doctor?
—Sit down for a moment. It will pass.

—Would you like some coffee?

—Yes, the opening seems trivial or spurious when contextualized by the fugue. To me this is a great injustice. The fugue looms at the end like an emperor dictating how the rest of the movements will be understood and judged. It demands that its will reign.

—A supplement, not a substitution. They will be published together. Artaria has promised as much.

—Do you feel so? I can not agree. I do not consider a supplement to mean the piece is incomplete. I think it allows for more open-endedness, more interpretation.

—27 ducats means no more mucking about with publishers for several months. You will be free to write as you wish. A plump purse always comforts and gives one freedom, or at least the illusion of it.

—Is it? in C-sharp minor

—Well then. Do I have your permission to inform Artaria to go ahead with it?

—Let's wait. Artaria is in a hurry, but isn't he always?

[Beethoven, in a letter to Holz, Sept. 1826:] Best Wood [Holz] of Christ! Where have you been hiding? Marriage need not consume every minute of one's life. Save some time for your friends. Please tell Artaria I accept his accursed deal. 12 and 15 as agreed and a pox on his press to boot.
My sliver of mahogany, I am too tired and ill to resist the tides of opinion. Perhaps I am wrong. I am resigned to my fate, and the writing goes well. What more can I ask for, other than to see my friends from time to time? Please visit me soon, Hermes, with news from the gods of the press and the wind-bladder and bring silver in your bag. I am to go to Gneixendorf soon. It is unbelievable, I know. But my brother is the biggest ass in all of the empire, and I must make my peace with him or hear his bray in my sleep till the string of my fate is severed. I am ready for country air, to walk and to compose. yours in tunes and spoons, Beethoven

Beethoven at Gneixendorf

[Carroll contextualizes:] Imagine if you will, Dear Readers, picture in your mind's eye a plateau almost completely devoid of trees and shrubs; the only viscous flora about are clumps of vines. A tiny, single-road village huddles on the plateau. Its houses are as low as the clouds, conveying a sense of condensation. The elevated expanse of land offers a fine view of the Styrian mountains and the Danube in the distance, if one can get high enough. Our composer -- dropsical, edematous, jaundiced -- waddles beneath a bank of low gray clouds. (Perhaps waddle is hyperbolic, but a definite rocking motion has infiltrated a generally vigorous gait.) Though quite different, when he squints, the landscape reminds him of the Rhine of his
birthplace and youth, as if he had returned to that river: itself blue and filled with a thousand winking diamonds in the sunlight. As our Holz describes him, our composer's body seems barely capable of incorporating the fluid it is producing, as if an ocean rolled inside yearning to burst its fleshy restrainer (container?). While the sky may be gray, the clouds are dehydrated: a visual promise of rain fugally voicing more thoughts of liquid, but the line between the internal and external is painfully drawn at the epidermal edge, or so it would seem. In a sense, he has returned to the Rhine of his youth through his arrival at Wasserhof (water court), the estate of his only surviving brother, a man he has never really liked and who has generally caused him little but embarrassment. Despite all, our composer is here at Wasserhof in Gneixendorf: gray, flat, and bare; clouds, vistas, and mud; isolation, deafness, and undesired company, only serving to remind him of the family he never had. Our composer winces with each careful step, winces at the swelling, the lack of woolly woods through which he so loves to wander, at being a guest in his brother's house.

Do I paint a gloomy tableau in your mind, my Kind Readers? I do not mean to. Such is not the case. You may wonder, as I do, Readers, who wanders with the lone figure? Does the ghost of his infant brother, Ludwig Maria, his near namesake, accompany this walk? Is this gone one privy to the composer's thoughts? If so, does he hear the joyful and
humorous music of the F-major quartet or the new finale to the B-flat major, the music Beethoven was composing at this time and place, the last he would ever write? From where, our petite ghost may ask, can this music arise? The outside reeks of bleakness; the inside sloshes in rapid decay, disease, unease, and discontent. Our diminuitive Doppelgänger is as startled as we, Readers, to hear how jovial this music is, how light, how free, how unreservedly beautiful, and how unlike most of the earlier work which seemed to ask the world to bend its will to that of the music's. A sharp wind rises and slices across the plateau. It is a winnowing wind, one that easily allows the grain to shed its chafe. Perhaps our angel in exile understands that his grown brother -- the one he has symbiotically sustained and complemented, the one on the other side of mortality -- has identified the husks of his life and now wishes to rejoice in the grain, to be a Bacchus pressing the grapes of becoming (not being) into wine. He waddles on.

[Holz:] I was surprised -- indeed, I am surprised at how frequently I am surprised in my memoirs; certainly makes one wonder exactly what one thinks the past is, or was -- I was surprised when Beethoven accepted the invitation to visit his brother at Gneixendorf. Johann had attempted every sort of act of ingratiating to which Beethoven had remained impervious. This was the same brother who identified himself beneath his signature on a letter to the composer as "landowner," prompting Beethoven to designate himself in his reply as "brainowner." This episode neatly characterizes the
character of these two characters and their relationship. After Carl's [Beethoven's nephew] failed suicide attempt, Beethoven may have felt familial unease or remorse at the remoteness which so circumscribed his relations with his relatives.

To Gneixendorf he went. He said in a note to me prior to his departure that the town's name sounded like the breaking of wood, which led him in turn to pun on my name by asking if I the splinter may be found anywhere near the wood which broke. I visited him only three times. On each visit, as was his custom wherever he resided, he led me on a lengthy walk. His attention to any walking companion flitted about like a bird trying to decide on which branch to light. Much of the time, he would retreat into his own thoughts and whistle, hum, or stamp out a theme he was mulling over. Occasionally, he would pause to jot something down on one of the many scraps of paper which jammed his pockets to their capacity. He would even, some times, flail his arms about so wildly that he would frighten grazing livestock as he brought a passage to crescendo. On one of our walks near Gneixendorf, we came upon a peasant driving but a few oxen. Beethoven, oblivious to all about him, chose this moment to let loose with a theme which eventually found its way into the finale of the F-major. Just as he exploded with the theme, the oxen became skittish. The farmer driving them beseeched, "Quieter, please! Just a little!" Not hearing a word of the request, the composer tore on with the tune racing through his mind, and the oxen stampeded, running into a neighbor's house. As might be imagined, the owner of the oxen was utterly dismayed at the events. Beethoven slightly eased the situation, once he realized it, by apologizing most sincerely and profusely to both the farmer and the people living in the house into which the oxen now cowered. (Being quite young, they were calmed readily and easily coaxed from their haven.) As we rounded a corner some distance from the chaos, Beethoven burst forth in laughter. "Holz! Did you see the way those cattle ran! Did it not remind you of the way the asses ran from the fugue in the B-flat quartet? They acted as if I were Yahew. I am the most fearsome beast
for beasts! Even cow-eyed Hera would run from me." That everyone misunderstood, or disliked, the fugue he referred to, even to the point of his having to provide a substitute for it, had always angered Beethoven. Now, however, he laughed easily at the matter and at himself. Laughing at the reception of his work, and being able to joke about it in this manner, was not characteristic of him. Thus, I remember this event quite well.

He spoke to me often during my visits about the series of quartets he was just completing and which so occupied his last years. Unfortunately, much of what passed between us has passed into the embers of the day, the winter of memory, and are but a glimmer of their former phosphorescence. I do recall his telling me he felt the C-sharp minor [Op. 131] to be his greatest piece of music. When I asked why this was so, he replied, "Because, thank God, it lacks virtually any fancy and because of what I've done with the voices in it." I pursued his assertion regarding this supposed lack of fancy. "What I mean is that I had to do very little to make it manifest, to bring it forth. All I felt I was doing was relaying themes and harmonies and rhythms I had already heard. Certainly, I played with these, made them more interesting, at least more interesting to me. But mostly my imagination was still. I heard songs and voices and passed them along. This is how the piece should be played as well, as if everyone in the audience already knew it, as if they were being reminded of what they already knew, of what was at hand, as if they were Homer's audience. That's it! I felt like Homer when composing." "And we should be like Homer's audience when listening to this quartet?" "Yes, to all of these recent ones." "Must it be so?" I stood and shouted. Beethoven laughed "It must be so!" and snatched a coin which I had tossed from its tumbling through the air. The metal's winking in the sunlight was swallowed by his palm but continued in his eye as he roared with laughter. "Sing, Holz, you splinter from the cross all humanity must bear, sing the songs addressed to all people!" he laughed.

He and Carl argued ceaselessly at Gneixendorf. His relationship with his brother was tenuous at best and that with his sister-in-law can only be described as
almost war-like. His quarrels with Carl grew increasingly violent after the young man proposed staying on at Wasserhof, his becoming quite comfortable with the life of sloth he led there. The landscape was dull and lifeless, very unlike that which so often attracted the composer. As far as I could discern, the entire situation was very unlike Beethoven. The only thing like him was the suddenness with which he decided to depart and actually did so . . . Anxious as always to move lodgings and ready to get back to business in Vienna, Beethoven dragged Carl from the comfortable country accommodations on the first day of the last month of the year. The weather was unusually raw and frosty for early December. Despite there not being a regular coach available, contrary to what Schindler claims about Beethoven's brother hiding his, Beethoven insisted on departing at that moment, and the two unfortunate travellers rode in an open cart -- "the devil's vehicle" Beethoven called it -- exposed to the weather. . . .

When he finally made his lodgings at the Schwarzspanierhaus (after having to be lifted into the wagon for transport), his clothes were damp and his body swollen. He wrote me a short note immediately upon his return, addressing me as "Your Official Majesty," displaying good spirits, and said he had taken to his bed, betraying ill health. He would never truly rise from this bed again. I sent for a doctor.

Wet, damp, frosty, drizzly, misty . . . inside and out, the composer was tapped at least four times. The straw beneath his bedding molded and required regular changing due to the moisture gathered from body drainage. After the coma overtook him, Beethoven's chest leapt and lunged like a steam engine overfed with coal; it rose and fell like the sea swollen in storm. Death appeared as a sea-captain riding the grim dark waves, hugging the rolling ocean's roof, and plunging the composer to its silent floor. . . .

Wet, damp, drizzly, but unusually warm and close was the weather outside as we, inside, arranged our chairs before the composer's bedside. He had requested we play this music which he had never heard. His desire to hear it was only increased by his physical incapacity to
travel so that he could do so. It was no mean task to find players as quickly as the situation demanded. The composer lay in the final throes of the various maladies which plagued his body. His eyes were thick with film, but he managed to prop himself up enough to get a decent view of us. These same eyes would slowly close less than ten bars into the piece. For a moment, in that silent sliver of anticipation and desire as the bows hover above the soon to be quivering wires, he spied us and smiled while staring at the strings pulled taut above the wooden shells of the instruments. His face was so pale that we all feared for him. There was hardly adequate space for the four players, the bed, and the piano. I had to take first violin; the other players were Karl Gross, Baron Konig, and ... the fourth player fades. We played for him the C-sharp minor quartet, Op. 131, as he wished. Within five days after our playing, he was dead. It was November in 1828. Who would have thought this would be the last piece of music he would ever hear? Who could have imagined the tragic irony of his toast after Beethoven's funeral, the one in which he said, "To the next one amongst us to join Beethoven!" That it would be he?! Poor Schubert, so young, so precocious with melody and lieder, as if he were simply singing the songs from everyone's youth ... 

My pen grows heavy. My memory dims, but at the same time cruelly casts shafts of light and illuminates experiences I wish not to recall. My pen grows light. My memory glows with laughter and people, with the warm joviality of company, food and drink. My pen will sink to the earth's center and fly off into the sky. I must let it go. I feel I should like to join Beethoven on the river -- bladder aiding bladder, mad as a hatter, mind conjoined with matter -- blowing by the bastions and battlements, singing stories and riding the currents of all rivers.
[I turn again now to you, Carroll: mentor, inspiration, friend. This, my final address, dear departed Dr. House, is my final apostrophe, an apostrophe that rounds out a volume voluminously laden with apostrophes. Apostrophes mark holes and possession and are addresses to those absent; absent letters, absent persons, letters to absent persons. As I think back through this portmanteau bastard-child of a text and hear in my mind's ear the endless turnings away by speakers/writers, the various grammatical and rhetorical functions of apostrophes seem to make them an appropriate symbol for the entire enterprise.

Did I ever express to you how much you taught me? Did I ever tell you how much you meant to me, how much I admired you? No, I doubt I ever did. We rarely do, usually leaving such things until the addressee has left, leaving them for an apostrophe.

I address you readers, now, living and reading these words -- allowing them to live again under your co-creative eye -- and I tell you that I found under Carroll's arched body, beneath the apostrophe her mortal coil formed while cupping the desk (marking a hole in the air), these words, undoubtedly the last she ever penned. I leave them to you and leave them to her to speak to you across the shadowy
border which attempts to demarcate the fictive distinction between the realms of the living and the dead.]

Fellini once wrote in tribute to his film scorer Nino Rota ". . . music makes us melancholy: it fills us with remorse. And useless as remorse always is, music attacks me with the voice of admonishment, a voice I feel destroying me because it sings so loudly, conjuring grandiose dimensions of harmony, of peace and of accomplishment, and yet quite clearly leaving me excluded -- a total exile! Music is cruel it stuffs you with nostalgia and regret and when it's finished, just leaves you utterly directionless: music introduces you to the unattainable. Marvellous, but how sad! But on the other hand, at least I know Nino Rota, he is my friend, I know he likes me, and all this is somehow consoling: it is the slightly dubious consolation of knowing that in the kingdom of metaphysics with its flawlessly interlocking laws and conventions you at least have the ear of a highly-placed relative who can act as your mediator and maybe even put in a good word for you." [liner notes to Amarcord Nino Rota, Hannibal Records, 1981] Can I find such consolation in my own life gorged on regret and remorse? Can I count on you, Beethoven? Even though we were never friends in the flesh, I know you; indeed, I do. When the textual tidal wave ebbs, when the cacophonous confusion of layered voices and books recedes and falls away, when the present collapses into the past and the only progress found is that
of a theme in one of these late quartets, I know you as well as any human being can know another. You allow me this access. The hypnotic wheels of the cassette-deck turn like great cosmic spirals, like churning gyres of turn and re-turn within the metaphysical cycles of being and becoming, and you sing to me the stories you -- and all humans -- are born into, are part of, retell: no past, no present; no life, no death. And you sing to me the tragedy that is our hubris, our vanity, which emerges in our believing that our limited view of the creative-destructive unity is the only view. I know your voice lent to strings in the late quartets: voice of hymn, lieder, rural song, and aria; a voice celebrating meaning creation, a voice giving tongue to metamorphoses, a voice speaking to the receptive souls of all who listen. I know I've not sat down with you in my backyard -- hand gently placed on an oak table, searching for a pulse -- mosquitoes raising itchy bumps about our ankles, and blown coals into burning embered mirrors of a twilight sky slowing just below the horizon, and yet, I, too, hope you put in a good word for me and the corporeal conversation beside a fire we may someday share.
Notes-Credits

Much of this novel relies on "imaginative reconstructions," that is the re-working of "actual" historical documents and accounts, which themselves vary greatly from one another should such an "actual" document appear in more than one place. The verity of my fiction rests, perhaps, in its admitted fictiveness, its human fashioning (this bearing in mind that "fact" and "fiction" both etymologically require human making and shaping). Further, since the theme of inter-textuality in the writing of anthropology and history, and that of the textual construction of identity and knowledge, play important roles in the novel, I have drawn on numerous sources and included many allusions to help flesh out these themes. The following is a list of sources drawn on for each section. All writing attributed to the characters Holz, House, and the student -- unless otherwise indicated in the body of the text -- is solely my work. For complete bibliographic information regarding any of the texts cited below, readers are directed to the Direct References section.
Introductory Section: The accounts of Beethoven's death and his funeral were reconstructed from a number of different sources, many of these varying widely in regard to details, sequence, mood, and even events. The main sources drawn on were: Thayer's *Life of Beethoven*; Schirmer's *Beethoven: Impressions of Contemporaries*; Nettl's *Beethoven Encyclopedia*; and Hamburger's *Beethoven: Letters, Journals, and Conversations*. The letter to Franz Wegler from Beethoven referring to the slumbering of his muse can be found in most collections of Beethoven's letters. Beethoven's statement regarding the qualities a Requiem should contain is quoted from Cooper's *Beethoven: The Last Decade*, pg. 127. The quote attributed to "one writer" about the Viennese disdain for change comes from Johnston's *The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History*, pg. 168. In "The Torchbearers' Tales" there are direct quotes from Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell* (a quote found in Beethoven's daybook, from Solomon's *Beethoven Essays*, pg. 281); Melville's *Moby Dick*, pg. 536; Goethe's *Faust*, lines: 11590, 11824, 11973-6; Heraclitus; Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Book XV, lines: 122-4; and Homer's *The Odyssey*, Book XI, lines 219-21. The quotation of parts of Grillparzer's oration comes from the translation of it found in Hamburger, pp. 269-70, which incidentally differs quite a bit from the versions of it found in Thayer, Nettl, and Schirmer.
"Reminiscences": Most of the selections found in this section are "imaginative reconstructions" of extant documents left by the people credited with a given "reminiscence." Perhaps the best analogy for these "imaginative reconstructions" would be musical variations on a given theme by another composer, in which the "original" theme is so reshaped as to bear virtually no aural resemblance to its originary state. As with the Grillparzer oration above, often several versions of an "actual" document exist. The account attributed to Rollstab is modified from those by him found in Nettl, pp. 190-2; Schirmer, pp. 176-90; and Hamburger, pp. 228-30. The reminiscence attributed to von Bursy is imaginatively reworked from his writings found in Hamburger, pp. 145-9 and Thayer, pp. 643-4. The writing attributed to Amend is very loosely based on the one found in Thayer, pp. 222-4. (The line, "We give birth astride a grave," is employed in this selection, though slightly modified, and comes from Beckett's Waiting for Godot.) The account attributed to Liszt is drawn from Schirmer, pp. 162-3. The quote employed by Dr. House from Thomas Hardy is from the poem "I Look Into My Glass." The writing given to Spohr is drawn from his writings found in Nettl, pp. 240-4; Schirmer, pp. 94-9; Hamburger, pg. 110; and Thayer, pp. 871-3.

The shorter writings which finish this section, when
based on other documents, are as follow: von Breuning, from his book on life in the *Schwarzspanierhaus*, quoted in Thayer; Wegler, based on a letter to him from Beethoven, in Hamburger, pp. 53-4; Schulz, very loosely based on an account of his which appeared in "Harmonicon," Jan. 1824, cited in Schirmer, pp. 149-53 and from Beethoven's sketch-book notes on the "Pastoral Symphony," in Hamburger, pg. 68; Gleichstein, quoted -- but out of context -- from a letter to him by Beethoven, in Hamburger, pp. 103-6; and Beethoven is quoted from a letter to B. Schott's Sons, in Hamburger, pp. 227-8.

An additional note: the volumes listed as being in the study of Dr. Carroll House are some of those supposedly in the possession of Beethoven at the time of his death. I have selected for inclusion here the texts most frequently cited by Beethoven in his letters and daybook.

Transition: The passage which serves as transition to the third section of the novel -- Dr. House's notes about the text, or so the student assumes -- owes some of the conceit regarding narrative and the burden of the addressee to Lyotard and Thebaut's *Just Gaming*, pp. 19-43, and contains paraphrases of Benjamin's essay "The Storyteller," as cited, found in *Illuminations*, pp. 83-110.
"Beethoven's Kosmos: Fate and Resignation": As with the "Reminiscences" chapter, this one draws heavily on a variety of sources supposedly known by, near to, and dear to Beethoven and then attributed to Malzel's automaton (my invention), Beethoven's journal, or his letters. And, as with the sources employed in the "Reminiscences" chapter, the ones in this chapter have been modified, if not almost completely generated, by me.

In the long section from Holz, I have Malzel's automaton utter several mystical sayings, the sources of which in order of utterance are: a makeshift piece drawn from Beethoven's daybook, as quoted in Solomon, pg. 225 and me; Bertrand Russell on Stoicism, pg. 254 in A History of Western Philosophy; me; me; me; and the first line from Werner's Die Templar auf Cypren found in Beethoven's daybook, in Solomon, pg. 263 and the rest from me.

The longer portion of quotes attributed to Beethoven's journals and letters have the following sources, again in order: me; me; Aurelius' Meditations; from Beethoven's "Heiligenstadt Testament," from Thayer, pp.304-5; Beethoven, a letter to Ranka, in Hamburger, pg. 135, with the last line by me; Beethoven's daybook, in Solomon, pg. 246; from Templar's Die Templar auf Cypren quoted in Beethoven's daybook, in Solomon, pg. 263; first line in Beethoven's daybook, in Solomon, pg. 269, with the last line by me;
Homer's *The Iliad*, Book VI: line 488; Beethoven's letter to Hauschka, in Hamburger, pp. 165-6; Beethoven's daybook, in Solomon, pg. 277; through the list of Indian notes comes from Beethoven's daybook, in Solomon, pg. 276, after that, me; Homer's *The Iliad VI: 146-50*; Beethoven's daybook, in Solomon, pg. 258; Beethoven's daybook, in Hamburger, pg. 156; very loosely based on an account by Johann Andreas Stumpff of a day he spent with Beethoven, in Hamburger, pg. 221; Homer's *The Iliad XIII*, as quoted in Beethoven's daybook, in Solomon, pg. 259; Beethoven's daybook, in Solomon, pg. 260; from Herder's *Muh'und Belohung*, as quoted in Beethoven's daybook, in Solomon, pg. 261; me; Homer's *The Iliad IX: 79-81* and *XXIV: 549-50*; Beethoven's daybook, in Solomon, pg. 282; first two sentences from Beethoven's daybook, in Solomon, pg. 274, the rest from me; Jones' "Hymn to Narayana" from Jones' *The Asiatic Miscellany. Consisting of Translations, Imitations, and Fugitive Pieces* quoted in Beethoven's daybook, in Solomon, pg. 266; me; from the *Bhagavad-Gita* quoted in Beethoven's daybook, in Solomon, pg. 268; the first sentence is from me and the rest is from a gloss on Hesiod's *Works and Lives* quoted in Beethoven's daybook, in Solomon, pg. 270; Beethoven's daybook, in Solomon, pg. 272; the first sentence from Beethoven's daybook, in Solomon, pg. 294, the second sentence from Homer's *The Odyssey* quoted in Beethoven's daybook, in Solomon, pg. 294, and the rest from me based on Homer; and from Strum's *Betrachturgen uber die Werke Gottes*
"Dreams": The third and final dream is a direct quote of a letter from Beethoven to Tobias Haslinger, from Hamburger, pp. 177-8.

"Deafness": The line quoted in the beginning of this chapter comes from a blurb sent to my home by Book-of-the-Month-Club about Solitude: A Return to the Self by Anthony Storr. The author of the blurb is anonymous. The lines quoted from Heaney are the last two of his poem "The Guttural Muse" in Selected Poems, pg. 153. The lines from Handel are from his Messiah, which sets quotes from The Bible to music. The quote from Beethoven's daybook about his solitary life being a prison can be found in Hamburger, pg. 176. There is also a quote from Aurelius' Meditations and one from Carlyle's Sartor Resartus, both attributed.

Transition: The quotation from the letter by Beethoven to Zelter which serves as transition to the fourth section of the novel can be found in Beethoven Letters, vol. II, 1796-1826, translated and edited by Lady Wallace, pg. 98.

"Finances": The story related to Ignaz Dembscher is culled from Cooper, pg. 73 and Thayer, pp. 976-7.
"somewhere i never travelled, gladly beyond": The title of this chapter comes from the e. e. cummings poem of the same title.

"Genius": The memory recounted by Einstein of the Great Odeon Hall in Munich can be found in his *Greatness in Music*, pp.3-5. The etymological river evoked by Dr. House has two mouths: the OED and Partridge's *Origins: A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English*, pg. 250.

"Schindler Contra Holz": The title and introductory paragraph of this chapter are modelled on Nietzsche's "Nietzsche Contra Wagner," in *The Portable Nietzsche*, translated and edited by Walter Kaufmann. pp. 661-83. The first two quotes by Schindler come from his *Beethoven As I Knew Him*, pg. 319. The third, extended, quote can be found in the same text, pg. 477. The fourth and final quote from Schindler also derives from pg. 477. The quote from Whitman is from the poem "Song of Myself."

"The Late String Quartets of Beethoven": The allusion to Huxley's *Point Counter Point* is in reference to pages 426-31. The pun of *verleger* and *verlegen* comes from a letter sent to Schott by Beethoven, in Lady Wallace, pg. 163; the rest of this letter as presented in the novel is modified
from the letter found in Lady Wallace. The dialogue letter from Beethoven to his doctor is loosely modelled on such a stylistically-crafted letter from Beethoven to Dr. Braunhofer in 1825, found in Hamburger, pg. 231. The letter from Beethoven to the Schuppanzigh Quartet is modified from such a letter, which can be found in Thayer, pp. 939-40. The encounter between Sir George Smart and Karl Holz on the vessel "Beethoven" is recounted in Smart's diary, found in Young's Beethoven: A Victorian Tribute, pg. 64. The longer account attributed to Smart is very loosely based on his diary accounts (again, widely divergent) as found in Schirmer, pp.191-5; Thayer, pp. 961, 969, 971, 1035-6; Hamburger, pp. 238-40; and Nettl, pp. 235-6. In the account of the dinner attributed to Smart, there are numerous allusions to and quotes from Shakespeare's The Merry Wives of Windsor, and the pun on Bach's name was one of Beethoven's favorites and appears in a letter to Breitkopf and Hartel (amongst other places) found in Hamburger, pg. 37, as well as in an account of Beethoven by Karl Gottlieb Freudenberg, in Hamburger, pg. 237. The reference to the sound of Gneixendorf comes from a letter to Tobias Haslinger from Beethoven, found in Lady Wallace, pg. 230. The various puns on Holz's name are scattered throughout Beethoven's correspondance with Holz, and I have generated a few myself. The physical description of Gneixendorf owes much to that provided by Thayer, pg. 1006. The reference attributed to
Holz regarding Beethoven's reply to his brother's signature of "landowner" is conveyed in an account given by Johann Andreas Stumpff, found in Hamburger, pg. 220, and is one of the more famous stories about Beethoven.

Final Chapter: The quote from Fellini comes from the liner notes to "Amacord Nino Rota," Hannibal Records, 1981.
Direct References


Oblique References


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