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An anthem for Europe:
Comparing historical appropriations of Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*

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Abstract

Since its composition two centuries ago in 1824, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (*Ode to Joy*) has been heralded the world over not only as a great work of art, but also as a symbol of political importance. In Germany, it was lionised as the embodiment of a national spirit, first during the Franco-Prussian war, then as a prize of the Nazi repertoire; in Rhodesia, it became the national anthem of a far-right white ethno-state, while on the far-left, it occupied a rare position of Western revolutionary music in China. Today, the piece stands for the official anthem of the European Union. But, fascinating as this meandering story is, it also raises an important question: How did one static object come to represent actors on every edge of the political spectrum? Furthermore, does the complex history of this symphony affect its role as a symbol of contemporary European integration? This thesis answers these questions in a comparative historical analysis, which looks at three cases from Europe (as well as two from beyond the continent) where the Ninth Symphony has been appropriated for political ends. With the aid of Karlsson's typology of the 'ideological use of history' and Žižek's theory of 'ideology as an empty container', the analysis establishes the important role that the Ninth Symphony played in spreading political ideas. I showcase how nineteenth century German nationalism, Nazism, and European Unity each invoked the *Ode to Joy* as a symbol of their ideological framework. I contend that this has been possible due to the grand but vague messages that each ideology has attached to the symphony's original call of universal brotherhood. Finally, I also consider whether the tumultuous history of the Ninth inhibits its ability to symbolise Europe today, but ultimately conclude that the concession of lyrics which transfigures the anthem into a purely musical work salvages its ability to stand for a diverse continent today.

Key words: Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, political appropriation of music, Žižek's empty container, historical narrative, political symbolism

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Chapter 1: Introduction

"...And I felt all the malenky little hairs on my body standing endwise and the shivers crawling up like slow malenky lizards and then down again, because I knew what she sang. It was a bit from the glorious Ninth by Ludwig van –"

Stanley Kubrick, "A Clockwork Orange" (1971)

What piece of music can inspire such visceral and profound reactions if not the Ninth Symphony of Ludwig van Beethoven, the *"Ode to Joy"*? There is perhaps no composer in the Western tradition more esteemed than the German, no symphony more venerated than his last. It arises everywhere: from film and literature to commercials and concerts, the *Ode* has undoubtedly touched millions in the two centuries since its completion in 1824. Indeed, at the turn of this millennium, Beethoven's original manuscript became the first musical score in history to enter the UNESCO Memory of the World archive (UNESCO, 2001).

Naturally, like so many great works of art, the Ninth has also achieved political prominence. Across the world, politicians often herald important works of art as reflections of the national culture: Eugène Delacroix's "Liberty Leading the People" (the best known artistic depiction of the revolution in France) cemented Marianne as the personified French Republic – where today her likeness presides over government buildings, emblems, and coins throughout (Assemblée Nationale); in 1935, the Indian artist Nandalal Bose was personally commissioned by Gandhi to produce arts and crafts exhibitions to accompany congressional meetings, and was then entrusted to illustrate the newly-independent India's constitution (Kumar, 2013); in Mexico, the murals of Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco supervise the walls of the National Palace, their opposing styles another reminder of a nation's delicate balance between indigenous identity and colonial culture (Martin, 1990; NPR, 2020). These examples each demonstrate the importance of great works of art to the political sphere, and to the construction of narratives about and around a nation. Yet, while all these works hold a clear and obvious link to a specific nation, the political symbolism of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony has been contested since its composition. Heralded through history by actors across Europe on every edge of the political spectrum – including nationalists, socialists, the Nazis and now the EU – the *Ode*'s journey through the European political sphere reveals a history as rich and meandering as the piece itself, and one worth analysis. This thesis pursues that venture.

I. Aim & Research Questions

The present thesis analyses the political use of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, *Ode to Joy*, in European history, with a particular focus on its adoption as the official anthem of the European Union. Essentially, the thesis explores how the Ninth has been utilised by different political actors, and if its use by oppugnant actors affects its success as a symbol of the modern European Union. Precisely, the analysis examines three specific actors, who have appropriated the Ninth for political ends: nationalists in nineteenth century Germany; the Nazis; and the European Union. The core question explored within the analysis is how the same individual artefact can be appropriated by such divergent actors – indeed, ideologically incompatible actors – as a tool to reach multiple unique but incompatible ends.

While recognising that many symbols are employed by political actors, this thesis only aspires to examine the appropriation of one particular symphony. Nevertheless, the author hopes that its findings will shed light on how other types of symbols (such as flags, statues, mottos etc.) could also be appropriated by antagonistic actors.

In summary, the two principal research questions proposed by this thesis are:

(1) How has Beethoven's Ninth Symphony been employed by different political actors in their pursuit to construct divergent historical narratives?

(2) Following (1), does the EU's contemporary symbolic use of the piece succeed, despite its historical appropriation by the Nazis and other ideological enemies of the EU?

II. The disposition of the thesis

Following its initial introductory chapter which lays out the background to this analytical project, this thesis continues with two chapters outlining the theoretical and methodological framework of the thesis, respectively[1]. Thereafter, the fourth chapter entails the analysis before a final fifth chapter contains concluding remarks and suggestions for further research.

The theoretical framework of this thesis encompasses several key concepts that will guide the analysis. The first concept introduced is that of a 'historical narrative'. This concept is set out at the onset because it describes the *way* in which this thesis approaches history, that is, how history can be used to create grand stories that engage (and sometimes mobilise) groups of people. Subsequently, a second concept will be laid out: Slavoj Žižek's theory of 'ideology as

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[1] While recognising that 'methodology' is sometimes taken to include both theory and methods (that is, research assumptions and tools) this thesis splits the term. Henceforth, I refer to research assumptions as 'theory' and methods and tools as 'methodology'.

an empty container'. Žižek's theory conceptualizes ideology as the lens which tints our experience of reality but cannot be removed. Central to the theory is the notion that objects of ideology – the signifying concepts under which subjects' experiences of reality are arranged, such as 'God', 'the Nation', or 'the Party' – are inherently vague concepts. Regarding this thesis, Žižek's theory will frame the point that various concepts referred to in the *Ode to Joy* by political actors through European history ('brotherhood', 'universality', etc.) have been effectively appropriated by a range of actors only insofar as they are vague, but powerful, notions. Related to this, a third theoretical/methodological approach is then introduced: Klas-Göran Karlsson's typology of the 'ideological use of history', which was developed together with Ulf Zander[2]. This perspective concerns the attempts made by intellectuals and politicians to organise historical elements in such a way that influences or authorises certain actions or beliefs. In the context of this thesis, the author interprets Beethoven's Ninth as another element of history that has been used in order to aid the dissemination of influential ideas. These include nationalism, national-socialism, socialism, and universalism, each of which will be studied more deeply in the analysis chapter.

The methodological framework explains the approach taken to tackle the research questions. In this instance, the method of choice is a comparative historical analysis (CHA). I begin by discussing the four characteristics of CHA as described by Michael Lange: its epistemological assumption, the level of analysis, the comparative method, and the within-case method. To make a meaningful comparison between the historical uses of Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*, the chapter sets out the common frame of reference and method for making these comparisons. The structure of the paper will also follow a text-by-text organisational scheme, discussing all of case A, before all the uses in case B, then C, and so on. Throughout, the linking between sections will be made clear and cogent. The methodology chapter also introduces the sources selected for this analysis and discusses some of the epistemological challenges that were faced.

Next, the analysis chapter will carry out the objective of this thesis: the investigation itself into Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and its political appropriation in European history. The analysis chapter begins with a section underlining the historical importance of music to politics, justifying where the link began and why, in the first place, this investigation is worthwhile. I first spell out the advent of political music before laying out the evidence for Beethoven's political thought specifically. Thereafter, the second section analyses three discrete cases where

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[2] The author recognises that Karlsson and Zander's typology also holds epistemological premises. Henceforth, it is referred to as Karlsson's theory because the selected sources are written by K.G. Karlsson.

the Ninth Symphony has been politicised: among early German nationalists; in Nazi Germany; by today's European Union. In addition, a complementary section looks at the history of the symphony's political history outside Europe. Although the scope of this thesis focuses on Europe, I maintain that two interesting cases from Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and China can also contribute to the discussion. Following these, a third section 'zooms out' to ask what the complex history of the Ninth Symphony means for Europe today. Here, I contend that the European Union's anthemic appropriation of the Ninth Symphony embodies the continent's struggle to build a new identity out of its past. I explore how the symbol is arguably stronger owing to a lack of lyrics and its position as a purely musical work, but conclude that a controversial and commercialised arrangement leaves much to be desired.

Finally, a fifth and concluding chapter concludes the thesis' final discussion points. Recounting the main findings from each case study, the conclusion reviews the lessons learned about the symbolic appropriation of music, especially of one artefact by many actors. The conclusion also notes what could be improved for subsequent investigations into the topic and suggests areas for further research.

III. Previous research

Concerning Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the principal guide to its political history has been Esteban Buch, the author of "Beethoven's Ninth: a political history". Buch's book, originally published in 1999, is an authority on the history of the piece, from its early reception in Vienna to its growing stature around the world. The book is foremost a history, with the author's analysis typically reserved. Nevertheless, Buch has followed up on the work in his 2021 article on the European anthem and its arrangement by Herbert von Karajan. This more journalistic text addresses the moral problem of an anthem copyrighted by the private estate of a former member of the Nazi party. Buch has also presented his ideas to the European Parliamentary Research Service (the parliament's in-house think-tank) as a panellist during an event looking at the history of the European anthem. Further histories of Beethoven and his role in German history have been written by David Dennis ("Beethoven in German Politics: 1870-1989") and Pamela Potter with her 1998 book "Most German of the Arts: Musicology and Society from the Weimar Republic to the End of Hitler's Reich" and her 2007 article 'Dismantling a Dystopia: On the Historiography of Music in the Third Reich'.

In addition, much has been said on the symbology of Europe. A key text on this subject is Johan Fornäs' book "Signifying Europe" (2012), which analyses the many motifs which surround

Europe, from its very name rooted in Greek mythology to the modern imagery employed by the European Union. A further source of research on the symbols of the European Union specifically comes from Carlo Gialdino (2005).

IV. Limitations

This thesis aims to shed light on how Beethoven's Ninth Symphony has been utilised by different political actors, and if its use by oppugnant actors affects its success as a symbol used by the modern European Union. It explores three cases in Europe in a comparative historical analysis, supplemented by two cases from beyond the continent in less detail. Because of the limited scope and length of the paper, the thesis does not account for many of the other instances where the Ninth Symphony has been used for political purposes. To name a few: the Soviet Union, France, Austria, the United States, and Peru. In each of these nations, an interesting history of the Ninth is apt for research. Furthermore, this thesis engages with only one type of historical artefact, a work of music, and is therefore limited to the symbology that is attached to music, specifically anthems. Its findings on the historical appropriation of music may not translate to that of flags, emblems, mottos, and other important symbols. Moreover, the text is not a research into symbology *per se*. That is, it does not delve into the social or psychological reasons why certain types of symbols work, neither does it endeavour to position musical symbols on an elevated plain above others[3]. Finally, while this analysis engages with topics of ideology and the use of history, their introduction should not be considered as a deep, qualitative exploration into their validity. The epistemological relevance of these theories is not elaborated here; their theories are simply used in a careful, guiding way.

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[3] For an interesting summary of theories regarding the particular psychological force of musical symbols, I suggest Johan Fornäs' "Signifying Europe" (2012), p.149f.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

I.   What is a historical narrative?

When historians approach their subject, a key element to explore is the construction and dissemination of narratives. A narrative is a type of story where the communicative element is emphasised. They have an overarching plot (or message) and relate to a wider perspective of events through convincing language that implies some grand connection (Karlsson, 2007). Under this definition, a narrative can be examined with a series of questions: *who* tells the story, *who* listens, *how* the story is told, and ultimately *why*. A key facet of this arrangement is the conveyance of a specific message to a defined audience. One example of this process is the early communists' effort to create a narrative portraying history as the continual struggle between working people and the upper class. This story was first told *by* figures like Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (and later, more forcefully by Vladimir Lenin before Josef Stalin); it was told *to* the working class of society – indeed also uniting them in name as the *proletariat*, defined against the *bourgeoisie* – and the ultimate *message* of this narrative was that the *proletariat* should come together to topple the *bourgeoisie:* "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries, unite!" (Marx & Engels, 2015).

Narratives are often 'coloured in' by material artefacts present in wider culture. Familiar artefacts reinforce the narrative pull of a story, giving weight to its overarching plot by providing individual points of reference that can be organised into a sensible pattern. Such artefacts may be drawn from a wide array of sources, including documents, diaries, speeches, films, public buildings, statues, and so on. The ability of an artefact to support a narrative is influenced by its familiarity to the audience, its accessibility, and how expressive it is. For instance, Michelangelo's statue of David was invoked by the Irish President Michael D. Higgins in an address to the European University Institute in Florence; the President remarked that the statue embodied three essential lessons for the modern European Union: that culture, in all its diversity, should be at the heart of public discourse and public space; that the impact of policy decisions on human beings should be foremost in all our endeavours; and that "in a contest as to future direction, there is no inevitability that the Goliaths of this world will come out on top; no certainty that might will be proved right" (Higgins, 2018). Here, in three deft moves, President Higgins manages to convey three powerful messages about the future of Europe, told in marble sculpture. By invoking the famous work of art, Higgins' messages take

on stronger purpose. It is unlikely that the President's narrative would be so convincing without this reference. The artefact he chooses to support his message personifies his point – in this case quite literally.

At this stage, it is important to recognise that not all historical narratives are wholly alike. The offered description may conjure a negative image of historical narratives, as something artificial and constructed by intellectuals with rotten ambitions. To be sure, if certain historical narratives fit this description, it is not an intrinsic quality of the concept. For instance, efforts to construct a narrative of shared European history after the Second World War were born rather out of a desire to establish a peaceful continent than to impose some subversive theory. Today, according to Klas-Göran Karlsson, grand narratives about history have fallen out of fashion (2010, p.51). Perhaps this is tied to the general move away from the absolute and towards the relative, which underpins the moral crisis felt by Nietzsche in what he called "the death of God". In other words, given the decline of faith and the popular rise of moral relativism over the last century, it is unsurprising that grand ideological narratives are not as commonplace as they once were.

Nevertheless, this thesis discusses historical narratives, namely those constructed through an ideological use of history. Because the scope of concern in this paper is chiefly ideologies (an often-misunderstood concept) such as nationalism, Nazism, humanism, and other -isms, we must first understand what is meant by 'ideology'. Having defined that, we will become better equipped to engage with the concept of an ideological 'use' of history.

II.   Žižek's conception of ideology as an "empty container"

We often conceive of ideology as that which blurs. Instead, according to philosophers Karl Marx and Slavoj Žižek, we should think of ideology like rose-tinted spectacles which tint our vision, but which we nevertheless wear all the time. The tint of ideology 'colours in' our relation to the world, how we interpret each object and ultimately how we behave. It was in this sense that Marx formulated his classic understanding of ideology: "Sie wissen es nicht, aber sie tun es" (German: They know not what they are doing, but still, they do it) (1996). Ideology functions then, in Marx's view, akin to Kant's central claim in the Critique of Pure Reason: we experience the 'real world' always by means of our senses, but never reality itself. In this way, to remove the spectacles is to perform the critique of ideology. As Žižek elaborates,

"Ideology is not a dreamlike illusion that we build to escape insupportable reality; in its basic dimension it is a fantasy-construction which serves as a support for our 'reality' itself […] The function of ideology is not to offer us a point of escape from our reality but to offer us the social reality itself as an escape from some traumatic, real kernel" (1989, p.45). According to this account, ideologies serve above all to orient subjects' experiences of reality. As such, the force of ideological statements does not hinge on their truth or connection to 'the way things really are'; the goal of ideology is simply to unite subjects beneath a common sense of purpose – and to have them believe that is reality. When Marx wrote "Sie wissen es nicht" (They don't realise it), he was referring to this quilting effect. Concretely, if an ideological statement does contain some proposition about the world (e.g., "the King will never stop working to secure a better future"), then this tells us as much about the subject's lived relation to reality as it does about the reality itself. Political ideologies such as nationalism also function this way. They are constructed both to establish or maintain a particular social structure, and to orient subjects' relation to that structure. In the case of nationalism, the ideology authorises the power of the state as ultimate (and denigrates the authority of say, an international trade bloc), it influences citizens' beliefs and behaviours, and it mobilises the masses to defend the nation from perceived threats against it. But what is the nation? And why is it so powerful as an idea? Next, we will explore how a grand idea like 'the Nation' can be ideologically powerful even if its definition is fundamentally unclear.

According to Žižek, our language about the world consists of words with definitions, or what he calls "signifiers" with "signified descriptions" (1989). For Žižek, when we engage with the world, we do not perceive objects as they really are, but rather, we interpret objects according to their definitions. These form a web of descriptions where each word supports the definition of another. He writes: "Ideological space is made of non-bound, non-tied elements, 'floating signifiers', whose very identity is 'open', overdetermined by their articulation in a chain with other elements" (p.95). In other words, our understanding of the world consists of an endless chain of meaning without any fixed point of reference to ground this meaning. Like a dictionary, then, our language creates a coherent system of reference. But, as anyone trying to understand a language by browsing its dictionary will notice, there must be something more. Žižek claims that in order to halt the never-ending chain of signifiers and descriptions, there must be some 'master signifier' that can ground all the others. In other words, a fixed point of reference (p.96). By way of example, Žižek conceptualises the notion of 'democracy'. An

essentialist view of democracy holds that there is a real and definable cluster of features which every phenomenon purporting to be democratic should possess; an anti-essentialist view would deny the possibility to make any such definition. Žižek does not want to concede to anti-essentialism, because otherwise his theory of 'signifiers' and 'descriptions' does not carry through, but he is also not an essentialist: for instance, he rightly points out that there is very little, if anything, that correlates the liberal-individualist notion of democracy to the real-socialist understanding of democracy (p.108-109). Hence, he takes a third approach to the problem: the definition of 'democracy' contains all movements and organisations which legitimise themselves as democratic. In other words, "the only possible definition of an object in its identity is that this is the object which is always designated by the same signifier – tied to the same signifier" (Ibid.). Of course, this creates another problem: if Žižek is right that democracy is whatever describes all legitimate democracies, then at the foot the concept lies a tautology. Yet, this is exactly the point the philosopher wishes to make; it is what he calls "the fundamental paradox of the *point de capiton[4]*":

> *The 'rigid designator', which totalizes an ideology by bringing to a halt the metonymic sliding of its signified, is not a point of supreme density of Meaning, a kind of Guarantee which, by being itself excepted from the differential interplay of elements, would serve as a stable and fixed point of reference. On the contrary, […] its role is purely structural, its nature is purely performative - its signification coincides with its own act of enunciation; in short, it is a 'signifier without the signified'. The crucial step in the analysis of an ideological edifice is thus to detect, behind the dazzling splendour of the element which holds it together ('God', 'Country', 'Party', 'class' ...), this self-referential, tautological, performative operation.*

(Žižek, p.109)

Bearing through the author's perplexing style, we come towards the central point of Žižek's theory: objects of ideology, the concepts which provide a frame of reference for all meaning, are fundamentally empty concepts. The "dazzling splendour" of the master signifiers which hold together entire structures of ideological thought are simply performative; be it "God" in a theocracy, "the Market" in capitalism, "the Party" in Stalinism – each is an empty container. Nobody has ever seen 'it', and nobody knows what 'it' refers to. Indeed, according to Žižek, 'it' refers only to itself. Thus, ideologies strive to identify individuals with grand political

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[4] A scholar of French psychoanalytic theorist Jacques Lacan, Žižek often uses his terms. Here, the *point de capiton* refers to the central nodal point (or 'rigid designator') which grounds the web of floating, interdependent signifiers into one coherent structure. Žižek's use of obscure terminology has contributed to criticism from certain academics like Roger Scruton and Noam Chomsky, who have labelled his writing style as intellectual posturing.

notions, but nobody knows quite what these sacred notions are. Still, herein lies the true beauty of the empty container: one can fill it up and drink whatever one likes. Since there is no observable referent behind these ideological 'others', subjects can believe in different definitions and still purport to subscribe to the same notion. Further examples of these "signifiers without a signified" include "the Nation", "the People", or Rousseau's "the General Will". In Žižek's view, each of these concepts is simultaneously a beacon of meaning and yet entirely devoid of any fixed definition.

To review, the principal purpose of ideology is to orient subjects to the world around them. Ideology forms the constellation of ideas within which we operate as persons and citizens, shaping how we both view and interact with the world. These constellations form discernible shapes and give meaning to observers. Moreover, each ideological constellation has one node around which all other ideas revolve, from which they derive their ultimate meaning. However, these central nodes are themselves devoid of meaning. They refer only to themselves. In this essay, we shall encounter ideas like "Brotherhood", "All Men", and "Universality". We will examine these concepts because they appear in the chorus of Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*. Specifically, our investigation delves into how these concepts have been smuggled into various political ideologies. I contend that this has been possible because of the "empty container" nature of ideology. Simply, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony has been successfully appropriated by vastly different political actors because each has understood its lyrics to signify vastly different descriptions. But, before we depart from Žižek's theory of ideology, the theoretical arsenal of this thesis must make a third and final pit-stop. We now understand what ideologies are and how they function; now we need to understand how a historical symphony comes into play. To explain, I rely on Klas-Göran Karlsson's theory about the *ideological use of history*.

III. Karlsson's "ideological use of history" theory

According to Klas-Göran Karlsson, "history is made use of when it is activated in a communicative process so that certain groups can satisfy certain needs or look after certain interests" (2010, p.45). In his writings, Karlsson has identified several ways in which history can be made use of, each with a different purpose. The academic pursuit of history is perhaps the most classical; Karlsson calls it the *scholarly-scientific use of history*. This type of use is subject to rigorous standards defining what history *can* and *cannot* do, such as the notion that history must be understood against its own context, not the interests and conditions of the latter-

day historian, as well as setting out the primacy of empirical sources (Karlsson, 2007). Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to characterise history only as the pursuit of trained academics. Indeed, history is made use of by all people, insofar as all people understand themselves as part of a temporal chain of events. Interestingly, there are a host of ways in which different actors use history, and they often do so in attempts to influence the present and future. The different uses of history vary in scope from the simple desire to sell certain products all the way to the existential need to preserve a living group. In the former sense, we might refer to a *commercial use of history*: imagine an advertising agency which invokes the mythology of a nation in order to provoke a mental association between history and their product. In the latter, we speak of the *existential use of history*, such as an activist who invokes historical crises in order to bring urgency to a present threat. Additional uses of history include the *moral use of history*, which often arises from indignation at the perceived lack of attention given to troubling aspects of history, and which seeks to put right that lack of attention; the *non-use of history*, an intentional ignorance of history in an effort to obscure the importance of the past, often undertaken in contrast to the promise of the present or future; finally, the *political-pedagogical use of history*, characterised as the deliberative comparison of 'then' and 'now' in order to obfuscate what are felt to be serious societal problems of the later era (Karlsson, 2007).

However, the use of history which this paper is concerned with is the *ideological use of history*. According to Karlsson, the ideological use of history describes the attempts of intellectuals and politicians to arrange individual events into a historical pattern of influential significance (Ibid.). Such histories are constructed not in order to create empirically verifiable theories about reality, but to influence others toward some desired belief or action. In fact, the versions of history presented in an ideology may be wholly contrary to empirical evidence, and yet remain effective as long as they manage to "convince, influence, rationalise, mobilise and authorise with the aid of historical perspectives" (Ibid., p.12). This separation from truth stands in contrast to both the scholarly-scientific and moral uses of history, for whom a key consideration is whether history really was as their stories present. Another difference is the focus of the ideological use on the entirety of the historical construct, whereas the moral use typically fixates on discrete historical events (Karlsson, 2010, p.50f). For example, a group of intellectuals or politicians may exploit recurring events in history to present a grand narrative that entices sympathy from their peers. One important instance of this use of history was the Bolsheviks' effort to mobilise the Russian populace toward revolution. Drawing upon the writings of Marx and Engels, the party of Lenin saw history as a conflict of class struggle.

Seeing the repeated, horrific violence perpetrated by the Tsarist state against commoners and peasants, Bolshevik leaders succeeded in convincing the working class to revolt. Atrocities such as the Bloody Sunday massacre in Saint Petersburg were easily woven into the fabric of this narrative, lending weight and generating an emotional connection to the Bolshevik story.

Overall, Karlsson's typology of different uses of history is not without caveat. Its author recognises that the different uses may overlap, and that in some cases, different uses may be hard to distinguish. He also acknowledges that the term "use of history" may imply a "misuse" or "abuse" of history. However, this thesis will not engage in a normative conflict over what uses of history count as abusive. Instead, for purposes of this research, I stipulate that the ideological use of history is chiefly characterised by an actor's ability to engage with – and become influenced by – the past. Whether that engagement is best described as use or abuse is secondary to the matter that an actor was influenced. As Carl Schorske understood, the process of historical thinking involves "the employment of the materials of the past, and the configurations in which we organize and comprehend them, to orient ourselves in the living present" (1998). However, such orientations are not always predicated on empirically verifiable facts; the concern is whether versions of history *presented* by intellectuals succeed in orienting the audience to the world around them.

In summary, this thesis understands that history is used for ideological *purposes* to the extent that artefacts from history are manufactured into a coherent pattern of significance with a view towards mobilising others toward specific beliefs or behaviours. The key research of this thesis examines how the historical artefact of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony has been used in the construction of ideological narratives in Europe. Furthermore, from a Žižekian understanding, ideology is that constellation of ideas which orientates a subject's connection to the world. Ideological statements, though not necessarily reflective of reality, possess a strong influential power by their ability to unite subjects under a common object of ideology. Furthermore, these objects are often referred to as grand terms like "the Nation" or "the People", which are vague enough to conjure influential ideas in the minds of many, but which are also empty enough that nobody can truly pinpoint to what they refer. Thus, ideologies work to appeal to a great deal of people with a great deal of power. These ideological structures often begin with the use of history and of familiar artefacts, including, in the case of this thesis: music.

Chapter 3: Methodological framework

The term 'methodology' refers to the set of procedures and rules utilised by researchers in their pursuit to gain knowledge about the world. These methods are important to get right because appropriate methodology can lead to scientific findings, whereas inappropriate methodology can result in findings that are unfalsifiable, incomplete, or generally not instructive (Lange, p.4f). By scientific, we understand that knowledge is empirically found, measurable in evidence, and apt for analysis. The academic Michael Mann has suggested that, within the social sciences, there is only one methodology: It consists of eight steps: (1) formulate a problem, (2) conceptualise variables, (3) make hypotheses, (4) establish a sample, (5) operationalise concepts, (6) gather data, (7) analyse data to test hypotheses, and (8) make a conclusion (Ibid.; Mann, 1981). Mann goes on to suggest that the only methodological differences between social-scientific research papers occur in step (7): the procedures used to analyse data. According to Lange, these procedures will also dictate to some degree the techniques a researcher uses to collect her sample.

This thesis is concerned chiefly with the appropriation by various political actors of one historical artefact, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. The purpose of the analysis is to understand how one particular piece of music can be interpreted and reinterpreted by different actors, despite remaining a 'static object' – that is, one which has not changed *in itself*. Given the goals of this pursuit, this research approach in this thesis will follow what is known as a *comparative historical analysis*.

I.   What is a comparative historical analysis?

The goal of a comparative historical analysis (henceforth "CHA") is to understand a given social phenomenon by comparing and contrasting two or more cases in history. An effective CHA provides a common frame of reference within which different data can be analysed, while also maintaining a tight focus on the data at hand. Overall, there are four key characteristics of a well-rounded CHA. The former two are best understood as epistemological and ontological premises, that is, they concern the pursuit of knowledge and the study of reality[5]. The latter two characteristics are rather methodological (Ohnesorge, 2021).

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[5] Episteme (from Ancient Greek ἐπιστήμη): "knowledge"; Ontos (ὄντος): "that which is".

i. Epistemological standpoint

First, CHA stems from the positivist school of thought, which affirms that social scientists can gain knowledge about the world by using social-scientific methods (Furlong & Marsh, p.193f). Competing accounts such as postmodernism deny this possibility outright, suggesting that the "sheer complexity of social relations" alone is enough to condemn the social scientist's pursuit of knowledge from the beginning. According to postmodernists, discourse in the social environment severely biases any analysis of the field, so much so that any insight is impossible (Lange, p.5). Furthermore according to Lange, works that take this stance are inherently anti-methodological and should therefore be considered "epistemologically distinct" from CHA (Ibid.). Nevertheless, this thesis affirms the ability of CHA methodology to unveil important information about the world, and thus adopts an epistemologically positivist assumption. In summary, this thesis makes can be said to begin with the following premises: (1) the social environment works, (2) this environment may be complex, but it remains fundamentally available for analysis, (3) the challenge of social science is to understand *how* it works.

ii. Level of analysis

The second characteristic of CHA is its focus on so-called 'big questions', questions that Mahoney & Rueschemeyer have dubbed to concern "large-scale outcomes that are regarded as substantively and normatively important by both specialists and nonspecialists" (p.7). Understanding that the subject of analysis involves groups rather than individuals, CHA is thus best suited to analysing actors of the sort this thesis will focus on: nation states, empires, and transnational organisations. As Lange has pointed out, historical thinkers have at times employed CHA research methods to examine individuals, but in doing so, have still focused on the impact of structural environments against individual actions, thus retaining a macro-meso-level of focus (p.5f). Moreover, whereas micro-level analyses collect data from the individual level to understand the motivations, influences, and actions of single persons, a macro-meso-level analysis examines "causal processes of involving a number of people", thereby shedding light on the common and institutional factors that influence how groups behave (Ibid., p.6). To be sure, this thesis will draw upon data concerning individuals, but the individuals in question are taken to possess extraordinary power, such as state and military leaders, or enormous cultural influence, such as Beethoven himself. As such, every individual mentioned in this thesis remains explicitly linked to a structural analysis, and therefore appropriate for CHA research.

iii.   Comparative method

Third, and the first of two methodological characteristics of CHA, is the somewhat tautological principle that CHA research methods are comparative. In general, a comparative analysis is achieved when two or more pieces of data are held against each other in order to elucidate the similarities and differences between them. Within the set of comparative methods, multiple formats exist: narrative analyses, discourse analyses, statistical analyses, Boolean analyses, etc. Since this thesis explores the various narratives that Beethoven's Ninth Symphony has been employed to support, narratives are the object of comparison in this study. In the previous chapter, I defined the term "historical narrative". In order to compare historical narratives, this thesis will look for the underlying messages, themes, and patterns that arise in different narratives where Beethoven's Ninth Symphony has been utilised. To this end, we shall examine written texts, media representations, and official communications by governments and other actors. This will be further described in the following section on sources.

A further distinction in the comparative-historic method is between synchronic and diachronic studies. Whereas synchronic comparisons focus on many phenomena within one specific period, diachronic comparisons focus on one phenomenon across different periods (Ohnesorge, p.265). By observing only a handful of different use cases, this thesis both respects its limited length and is empowered to scrutinise each individual case in more detail. Notwithstanding, the analysis section of this thesis still includes a pair of additional cases that lie outside its principal realm of research. Following the three principal case studies (early German nationalism, the Nazi period, and the European Union), I also explore two cases from beyond Europe: Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and China. Examining these cases, albeit in less detail, provokes a deeper insight into the true political nature of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and lends important context to our use cases focusing on Europe. That said, because the comparative method necessarily involves multiple cases, the endeavour inevitably requires a degree of "further concretization, sequencing, and filtering since they cannot possibly address cases in their entirety" (Ibid., p.266). To achieve this goal, this CHA focuses on the political use of Beethoven and his Ninth Symphony, but not of other compositions unless doing so provides relevant context for the research.

iv.   Within-case methods

Finally, a typical CHA makes use of within-case methods to carry out an informed analysis. Within-case methods pursue an in-depth analysis of a single case and may take the shape of three variants, according to Matthew Lange. Of these, he writes, the most common is the causal

narrative method. This method explores causal chains involved in provoking particular phenomena (Lange, p.4). Because this technique explores how narratives discuss phenomena, it is the best suited method for the endeavour of this thesis. Other within-case methods include process-tracing and pattern-matching, but since the former investigates mechanisms that link related phenomena and the latter aims to test theories, neither is best-suited for the pursuit of this paper (Ibid.). Regardless of form, it can be said that within-case methods establish the overall "historical" element of comparative historical analyses because each looks at how the past affects the present/future.

Summary

To summarise, in historical studies, a comparative analysis can be understood not only as a method of putting two (or more) pieces of data against each other, but also as an epistemological project employed with the ambition of unearthing new knowledge. One of the most common methods of comparative analysis is called a 'within-case' method, wherein the causes of a particular phenomenon are searched for. This method is historical in the sense that it peers into the past in order to explain some current phenomenon. Lastly, the level of analysis can be said to take place on the macro-meso-level, that is, the research aims to shed light on structural phenomena, as opposed to micro-level phenomena concerning only individuals.

Throughout, this thesis will employ qualitative research methods, as opposed to quantitative research methods. Whereas quantitative analyses lend themselves to important conclusions via the use of numerical data, statistical surveys and experiments, qualitative research achieves insight from the examination of non-numerical data. For this research, this data will consist of observations, documentation, imagery, and other records. Given the ambitions of this thesis and the nature of data available, a qualitative analysis is the preferred method by which to gain knowledge about the ideological uses of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

II. Sources and selection

To achieve its goal, this thesis will make use of different types of sources. Many take the form of primary sources, including letters and written anecdotes, and many are secondary sources, such as historical studies and newspaper articles. Often, these types of sources go together. Records of the performance of the Ninth Symphony, as well as documents testifying the various interpretations of the piece (for instance, a lyric sheet from South Rhodesia, who adopted the piece as its anthem but changed the lyrics) constitute a primary source. Likewise, one important

type of secondary source used consists of commentaries on these performances, including those by journalists and musicologists. For instance, the thesis makes note of the 2019 performance of the *Ode to Joy* in the European Parliament, where Brexit Party MEPs turned their backs on the orchestra in defiance, and the media reaction to this event. The event can be discussed both as a primary source and as a secondary source because media discourse and reactions provide a compelling hint of what the dominant narrative is in society.

A key type of primary source heavily utilised in this thesis is the written word. For instance, in Chapter 4, Section II A, I discuss Richard Wagner's interpretation of the Ninth Symphony, including from his essay-book "Beethoven" (1870). While aspects of the book may better be seen as secondary sources on Beethoven's life and times, we can also perceive the book itself as a primary source if we instead divert our focus to the narratives espoused by Wagner. In other words, the book itself is a primary source on the attempts of Wagner (and other intellectuals in the second German Empire) to politically lionise the composer. Elsewhere, I make use of eyewitness accounts, such as Ferdinand Ries' written recollection of Beethoven's violent outburst when Ries informed him of news concerning Napoleon Bonaparte. This anecdote from a primary source forms one of the most important points of the essay. Further still, the use of official documentation is an indispensable source for the analysis. Particularly, when discussing the Ninth's use in the European Union, official communications by the Council of Europe are put forth in contrast to other primary sources such as the letters exchanged with Herbert von Karajan, the composer of the arrangement that the EU adopted.

Forms of secondary source include, foremost, commentaries on the history of the Ninth Symphony. As mentioned, a great deal of previous research has been done in this field by authors such as Buch, Dennis, and Potter. Another interesting secondary source is the newspaper clipping mentioned in Section II.B of the analysis. The clipping contains a sketch of the stage at a theatre play which commemorated Beethoven's centenary. The sketch allows for additional insight into the play and its staging which would otherwise not be possible. Regarding this instance, and in others when appropriate, the Annex chapter at the foot of this thesis contains images and other interesting figures deemed too long or distracting for inclusion in the main body of the paper.

III. Challenges

The foremost challenge of this investigation will be the analysis of ideological narratives. Specifically, the identification and description of different ideologies. In light of the definition of ideology made in the theoretical framework (described as the spectacles through which the world is lived and related to, and as using grand but vague terminologies) it is understandably difficult to identify how ideology is taking place. That is, because ideology is always cloaked around us, it is therefore difficult to discern. Indeed, while the term 'ideology' is often associated with machines of political propagandas from a bygone era, the fact that dominant ideologies today such as capitalism and consumerism remain largely unquestioned is evidence of the pervasiveness of ideology. In any case, this thesis benefits from the current extensive theory of ideology and does not attempt to offer arguments for their existence, rather stipulating in its theory that ideologies function in a given way.

Another challenge in this endeavour concerns sources. Concerning the modern European Union, a plethora of information is readily available for analysis. However, given that much of this thesis concerns the events of the previous century and the one before, an additional challenge has been to divulge key information about the interpretation of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in bygone eras. Although the books of Wagner, letters of Beethoven's secretary, and coverage of concerts by print media are sufficient to conduct a meaningful and interesting analysis, the reliance on a select few primary sources is worth noting. This hurdle contributes to the ability of the researcher to analyse data. For instance, whereas the ideological use of the *Ode to Joy* today could theoretically be tracked in terms of number of performances, audiences reached, and so on, such data is not as abundant concerning the use of the piece in 1870. Nevertheless, the author of this thesis maintains that the sources available provide an adequate amount of data, both in the qualitative and quantitative sense, and that the findings of the analysis remain relevant and insightful.

Chapter 4: Analysis

I. The advent of political music, and its importance to Beethoven

At each coronation since Edgar's ascent to the throne presiding All England in 973 AD, a choir has sung a verse from the Bible's Book of Kings. To celebrate the coronation of George II, in 1727 George Frideric Handel drew upon the same verse for his composition *Zadok the Priest* (Levy, 1953). Handel's anthem has been used at the coronation of every British monarch since, including at the recent ceremony for Charles III on 6 May 2023. After a long and anticipatory build-up, the music reaches its crescendo and bursts into a culminating hymn that connects God and sovereign. With the aid of polyphony in its arrangement[6], Handel's piece makes every attempt to establish this connection: it is as though the cascading voices of the choir reflect the millions of the nation, only uniting in one voice to utter the final creed "God save the King! Long live the King!". It would be the first time that music and politics become so inextricable.

> *Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed Solomon king.*
> *And all the people rejoiced and said:*
> *God save the King! Long live the King! God save the King!*
> *May the King live for ever. Amen. Hallelujah.*

<div align="right">(Office for the Royal Maundy, 2011)</div>

Handel's coronation anthem would not be dubbed a *national* anthem, but his composition has outlasted any other piece of music as a piece of political music, that is, a piece of music intentionally linked to a political event or ceremony. Written close to three hundred years ago, *Zadok the Priest* recently marked its fortieth consecutive appearance at the crowning of a British sovereign. No other work has accompanied the political sphere for so long. Indeed, such is its success, that *Zadok* has made an impression beyond Britain and beyond politics for that matter, too; in 1992, Handel's music inspired composer Tony Britten's anthem for the UEFA Champions League, arguably one of the most recognisable sounds in sport (UEFA, 2020).

While Handel's first venture into political music may be considered a case of top-down association (his anthem would be played by professional musicians and singers for a private audience of the aristocracy, and should not be assumed to represent the musical taste of the monarchy's subjects), the reality of the pre-modern era of music in Europe dictated that, for many composers, the most secure career was to work for the nobility. As a result, much of the recorded musical output before the twentieth century came from the hand of court musicians.

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[6] See bars 50 to 62 of the musical score.

Handel, for his part, was baptised Händel in his native Germany, where he worked for various noble houses before moving to Britain, eventually becoming naturalised by Parliament in 1727 (and dropping the umlaut), the same year as the coronation (UK Parliament, 2020). Handel's naturalisation further suggests the growing importance of the political musician through the eighteenth century. By 1718, the Schism Act which theoretically prohibited foreigners from teaching in England had been repealed, meaning the composer's expectations to tutor the royal princesses were no longer under threat by the time he was appointed 'Composer of Musick for his Majesty's Chappel Royal' (Ibid.; Medley, 1907). Rather, Handel's naturalisation is better viewed as protectionism from the crown – that his artistic output was an asset of too much quality to cede to other nations. Thus, the move also signals an early sentiment of nationalism over the art form – an attachment which, as we shall come to see, would later expand to other composers across Europe.

Back on the continent, a young man from Bonn moved to Vienna in 1792 to pursue further education in composition, just as war began to rumble near his hometown. In Vienna, he received instruction from virtuosos such as Salieri and, by 1794, had won the patronship of local nobility. There, three decades of magnificent output would ensure that the world remembered his name. But besides inspiring countless studies and at least one master thesis, Ludwig van Beethoven was also a political thinker. His third symphony, now known as the *Sinfonia Eroica* (Italian: Heroic Symphony) was initially titled in dedication to Napoleon Bonaparte. The dedication was famously rescinded, however, when news reached the composer of Bonaparte's self-proclamation as Emperor of the French. As Ferdinand Ries, Beethoven's secretary and pupil at the time of writing *Eroica* recalled:

> *In writing this symphony Beethoven had been thinking of Buonaparte, but Buonaparte while he was First Consul. At that time Beethoven had the highest esteem for him and compared him to the greatest consuls of ancient Rome. Not only I, but many of Beethoven's closer friends, saw this symphony on his table, beautifully copied in manuscript, with the word "Buonaparte" inscribed at the very top of the title-page and "Luigi van Beethoven" at the very bottom... I was the first to tell him the news that Buonaparte had declared himself Emperor, whereupon he broke into a rage and exclaimed, "So he is no more than a common mortal! Now, too, he will tread under foot all the rights of man, indulge only his ambition; now he will think himself superior to all men, become a tyrant!" Beethoven went to the table, seized*

the top of the title-page, tore it in half and threw it on the floor. The page had to be re-copied and it was only now that the symphony received the title "Sinfonia Eroica."

<div align="right">(Wegeler & Ries, 1987)</div>

The anecdote from Ries is a crucial source on Beethoven's political thought. Not only does the dedication of the symphony to Napoleon back up further evidence of the composer's republicanism – Napoleon the First Consul was emblematic of the shifting tide towards antimonarchical sentiment across Europe – but Beethoven's subsequent retitling of the piece reveals a longstanding lament for what could have been. In the end, the symphony's official dedication upon publication in 1806 (two years after Napoleon's coronation) would be in honour of Prince Franz Joseph von Lobkowitz, Beethoven's patron in Vienna. While the new dedication to a prince rightly calls into question the composer's republican ideals, Lobkowitz's handsome payment for the tribute reflects the realism of a career in music during Beethoven's day. For the right price, it seems, a symphony could also be bought. Nevertheless, Beethoven also added a subtitle: "Eroica Symphony: Composed to celebrate the memory of a great man". Thus, although financial reasons may have contributed to the new dedication, that *Eroica's* supplemental subtitle mentions "the memory of a great man" suggests that its true subject of homage remained Napoleon the First Consul. Furthermore, the musicologist Claude Palisca has argued that elements of *Eroica*'s second movement resemble the triumphant marches of French composers with whom Napoleon would have been familiar, and which Beethoven may have included to "flatter Napoleon". Palisca also goes on to point out that Beethoven did not modify these phrases even after his outburst regarding the new Emperor (p.200). In conclusion, the historical record surrounding Beethoven's Third Symphony provides compelling evidence of the composer's political thought and suggests that his subsequent works merit inspection from a political perspective, too. Having established the historical importance of music to political processes before the time of Beethoven, and of the composer's documented political attachment to his own works, this thesis will now progress to its core subject of analysis: Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the *Ode to Joy*.

II.   Beethoven's *9th Symphony* as a political work

A. Embodying the nationalist German spirit

One hundred years after the birth of Beethoven in December 1770, the final embers of the Franco-Prussian war were burning. To mark the composer's centenary, all the large towns in Germany held festivities; celebrations continued in London, Brussels, Milan, Madrid, New York, and Saint Petersburg – but not in Paris (Buch, 2003, p.157). In Germany, the confederated states that would soon become unified by Bismarck under Wilhelm held ceremonious events that would tie the proliferation of culture to their progress on the battlefield; in Leipzig, the city hosted a *Festspiel* (a theatre play written to commemorate a specific occasion) that intimately connected Beethoven to the war. At the debut of *Das Erwachen der Künste* (English: The awakening of the arts), the first scene depicted nine muses being awakened by the tune of Beethoven's *The Ruins of Athens*, then descending from the clouds to watch the Prussian armies defeat those of France. Its second act showed the muse Polyhymnia crowning a bust of Beethoven with a wreath of laurels in recognition of his help in the war, since, allegedly, his music had inspired the German soldiers to victory (Ibid.; Brennan et al.). The stage was ornamented with the names of important victories in the Franco-Prussian war; at its foot lay the bodies of several wounded or dead French soldiers[7]. In the final scene, flames are said to have shot out from either side of the bust, while the figure of Beethoven itself rose into the air before the curtain dropped to a final rendition of Beethoven's 1814 *Germania*, composed to celebrate victory over the French tyrant Napoleon (Dennis, p.33). The grandeur of the scene is striking. The final parallel between the one-time honouree of the *Eroica* symphony and the contemporary French enemy was the final touch of an evening of celebration in Prussia. The message was clear: at the dawn of the new German Empire, Beethoven was no longer a mere composer of great works; he had become a great work himself. The real Beethoven may have died many years prior, but his enduring life as a symbol for political appropriation had only just begun.

The nascent Empire's recruitment of Beethoven was only part of a larger project of cultural consolidation among the formerly numerous Germanic states. For his part, Otto von Bismarck, the new Chancellor of the German Empire, would famously remark of Beethoven: "If I were to hear that music often, I would always be very brave" (Schmitt, p.257). Nevertheless, as Buch has pointed out, the conditional in Bismarck's aphorism indicates that he probably did not listen

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[7] See Annex, *Figure 1*

to the composer's music all that often, or at least did not place much political weight on it (2003, p.158). Indeed, according to Dennis, historically recorded anecdotes passed to Bismarck's biographers imply that "Bismarck and his family enjoyed and admired Beethoven's music, but none indicates that the chancellor interpreted that music in political terms" (p.37). None of this, however, halted the association between the composer and the Iron Chancellor. On 28 March 1892, the conductor Hans von Bülow led the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in a rededication of the *Eroica* symphony in honour of Bismarck. Bülow's score for the occasion featured the name "Bonaparte" scribbled out with the alliterative new dedication underneath; moreover, lyric sheets were distributed among the audience, encouraging them to sing along to freshly penned words that hailed the Prussian[8]. After the performance, Bülow addressed the audience to recount the by-then famous anecdote about Beethoven's fury upon Napoleon's coronation. Bülow then proclaimed that Bismarck embodied the heroic ideals of courage and valour espoused by the symphony, and informed the audience that what they had heard was rededicated "to the brother of Beethoven, to the Beethoven of German politics, to Prince Bismarck!" (Brennan et al.). Thus, whether or not the mastermind of German unification listened to the music of his compatriot, the mythical marriage of the duo was inevitable. On the one hand, Beethoven was by this point well established as the patriarch of German if not all European musicology. On the other, Bismarck, despite having left political office two years before Bülow's concert, was well on his way to being considered the Empire's founding father (Buch, 2003, p.158). By advancing the association, Bülow contributed to the idea that the political leadership of Germany was inherently driven by culture rather than conquest.

Meanwhile, another titan of German classical music was making his tribute, too. Richard Wagner, who had positioned himself via multiple efforts as Beethoven's musical and cultural heir, coincided the 1870 centenary with the release of his book *Beethoven*. The work, as Wagner would pen in its foreword, arose from "the thought that I might be asked to give a speech as part of some ideal ceremony to the glory of the great composer [but] no other opportunity worthy of the occasion was offered to me". Wagner's claim contradicts the invitation he received – and declined – to conduct the Ninth Symphony at a centenary gala in Vienna (Buch, 2003, p.159). Notably, while the Austrians displayed a lasting faithfulness to the German culture, they had in fact only recently been defeated by the Prussians themselves in 1866. Nevertheless, the feeling was not reciprocated by Wagner. For Wagner, it seems that the occasion deserved greater than could be offered by Austria; a grandeur that Wagner might have

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[8] See *Figure 2*

felt he and he alone could provide, thereby feeding into the desire to construct his theatre at Bayreuth. In any case, his writings reveal that the Ninth was undoubtedly close to his heart. In the 1851 essay *Opera and Drama*, Wagner would describe the appearance of the voice in the Ninth Symphony as "absolute music", the limit of expression possible without venturing into other arts – a barrier which Wagner would soon pursue to traverse in his operatic compositions, seeking to bring music and drama together into a universal work of art, or *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Still a friend of Wagner at that time, Friedrich Nietzsche espoused the same view: "If someone were to transform Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* into a painting and not restrain his imagination when millions of people sink dramatically into the dust, then we could come close to the Dionysian" (2008). Alas, for Wagner, no work yet could eclipse the *Ode to Joy*, as he would go on to describe:

> *"The highest art never gave birth to anything more artistically simple than this melody, innocent as the voice of a child; the instant we hear this theme, murmured in the most uniform manner, played in unison by the lowest string instruments of the orchestra, we are overcome with a sacred trembling. This theme becomes the cantus firmus[9], the chorale of the new church around which, as in the church chorales of S. Bach, harmonious voices join in counterpoint. There is nothing to equal the sweet intimacy this melody achieves, primitive and so pure, as each new voice joins in, until every ornament, every burst of increased feeling, is united with it and in it, as though the world were breathing, assembled around a dogma of the purest love at last revealed."*

(Wagner, 1870)

The tone of Wagner's voice leaves little room for doubt. For him, the *Ode to Joy* is a highly spiritual piece. His language, intentionally religious, traces the Protestant chorales first penned by Bach – another German – to the otherworldliness of Beethoven's achievement. Reading Wagner, one might think the author saw the *Ode to Joy* delivered from heaven itself. But Wagner's words are not only evidence of his faith. The "new church" he speaks of is also a hint at something else: the proliferation of the German culture. Indeed, for Wagner, the "harmonious voices" are not alone; the world itself is "breathing". There is reason to see this conception of the world not only in the philosophical sense, but in a political sense too. For it was in the same

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[9] "Cantus firmus" (Latin): a pre-existing melody which forms the basis of a polyphonic composition.

essay that Wagner earlier wrote: "As the German armies are victoriously advancing to the very heart of the French civilisation, there suddenly awakens within us a feeling of shame because we live dependent on that civilisation" (Ibid.). Whereas the culture of France had hitherto succeeded in proliferating across Europe (including to Beethoven, who venerated the nation's republican movement until Napoleon's coronation), Wagner here makes clear his feeling that the German culture should become universal. He goes on: "The German spirit must guide its people so that it may bring happiness to other peoples, as its mission dictates" (Ibid.). The perfect vessel for this delivery, of course, is the supreme Ninth Symphony. For Wagner, its unparalleled melody and "harmonious voices" – who, notably, sing their chorale in German – promise to reveal a momentous joy to all people, perhaps whether they seek it or not. In this sense, Wagner's 'universalist' heraldry of the *Ode to Joy* is rather more a nationalist view that one nation should impose its culture unto others.

Wagner, a leading intellectual of his day, also wielded tremendous influence. His success in lionising Beethoven was a clear instance of an intellectual using history. As we have just seen, Wagner's foremost contribution was to create ideologically persuasive narratives about the Beethoven's Ninth Symphony embodying the German spirit. His interpretation of the piece displays clear nationalistic tendencies, a vision that would extend into the next century.

B. A favourite in the Nazi repertoire

Continuing the work done by Wagner to establish Beethoven as an icon of the second German Empire, successive intellectuals would soon herald the same music as an important pillar of the Third. Indeed, at Bayreuth, the site of Wagner's opera house and spiritual home of German performance arts, the first annual festival under Nazi rule was ushered in by a performance of the Ninth Symphony, conducted by Richard Strauss (Spotts, p.173). The two figures of Beethoven and Wagner were, by now, fully cemented icons of the German spirit, and not only in musical terms. From the very onset of Hitler's leadership as Chancellor, in the Spring of 1933 the periodical magazine *Die Musik* lauded the "nationalisation of German music". One author went so far as to proclaim Beethoven and Wagner the pinnacle duo of "urdeutsche" ("primeval German") music, calling them "united in the personality of Adolf Hitler" (Hille, p.666; Buch, 2003, p.205). The magazine would go on to be taken over by the Nationalsozialistische Kulturgemeinde (NS Culture Community), an organisation within the Nazi Party that sought to dictate the programme of cultural life – in other words, the forerunner to Joseph Goebbels' Ministry for Enlightenment and Propaganda.

Hitler's veneration of Beethoven would only grow from 1933. At the 1934 Nazi congress in Nuremberg, the Führer walked out accompanied by Beethoven's *Egmont* Overture (Dennis, p.163); four years later, he would fund from his own pocket the new monument to the composer in Bonn (Buch, 2003, p.205). When war broke out in 1939, Hitler told a beer hall in Munich that "one single German, Beethoven, has done more for music than all the English put together" (Schröder, p.221). In addition, the Führer's birthday was commemorated each year with a musical performance; in 1937 and 1942, under the baton of Wilhelm Furtwängler, the Berlin Philharmonic rung out Beethoven's Ninth in his honour, while in 1945 they played Beethoven's Seventh (Ibid.). These birthday performances were broadcast on public radio, thereby contributing to the wider celebrations expected of citizens across the Reich each year and deepening the association between Beethoven and the present regime. Finally, on 30th April 1945, the national radio accompanied its announcement of Hitler's suicide with a performance of the funeral march from *Eroica* – a tribute echoing Bülow's homage to Otto von Bismarck with the same piece more than half a century previously.

Yet, the personal affiliation between Hitler and Beethoven would stop there. There is little evidence to suggest that Hitler exalted the composer as much in his private life as in public, and as Buch has pointed out "Hitler's name is rarely directly linked with Beethoven's, and most writers at the time were content merely to elaborate a nationalist discourse in which Beethoven was already regarded as a kind of führer" (Ibid.). Nevertheless, the lack of personal ties between the two men was compensated by a series of propaganda motions that cemented Beethoven's position among the highest echelons of Nazi heroes. The beginning of Nazi rule ushered with it a new administration of the national radio broadcast, still the principal means of communication in the 1930s. Buch describes how the first programmes of the new state radio consisted of a series on Beethoven, a continuation of the efforts begun after 1870 to establish a "musical soul" common to all German people (2003, p. 206). According to Pamela Potter, the soul that made Germans a "Volk der Musik" (people of music) was often thought to empower composers to write pieces that spoke to "the universal" (2007, p.625). This notion of universality echoes Wagner's normative claim in *Beethoven* that German music is destined to touch the souls of all people across the world. But, if intellectual and political leaders of the Second Empire began this project, those of the Third took it to the next level.

Under Nazi rule, classical music moved beyond the realm of culture and well into that of the military. As Buch elaborates, "in addition to the traditional orchestras, the National-Socialist Party, the Hitlerjugend ["Hitler Youth"], the Wehrmacht, and even the elite SS all had bands

and orchestras that played Beethoven nonstop" (2003, p.206). Whereas the Franco-Prussian War saw just one band of German troops perform Beethoven (specifically, the Egmont Overture in occupied Sarcelles on the occasion of the 1870 centenary) by the time German regiments transgressed the western border once more, Beethoven was rife. Moreover, in the newly occupied territories, German armed forces oversaw innumerable public concerts that venerated Beethoven alongside other German composers. For instance, in Belgium, the interwar establishment of German-friendly music societies led to at least 166 concerts featuring 695 works performed by German soloists and conductors (Derom, p.110). Of these, Beethoven's compositions were by far the most common, followed by Wagner and Mozart (Ibid., p.112). These concerts took place in Belgium's principal cities, including Antwerp, Brussels, and Ghent, and were "widely advertised and positively reviewed" in the collaborating press – a privilege not afforded to concerts organised by existent non-Germanic societies (Ibid., p.109f). Moreover, media coverage extended far beyond Belgium, with newspapers and magazines printed in Germany sharing the news of Beethoven's proliferation across Europe (Ibid.). Further still, the same methodical promotion of German music occurred in every occupied territory, including but not limited to in Greece, Norway, France, and Ukraine[10]. Clearly, the propagation of Beethoven and his music was not a coincidence but an organised attempt to further consolidate the occupying power's cultural dominance. Peering at the attitudes toward the simultaneous rise in youth bands reveals the Nazi attitude concerning the importance of music. A leading figure in the effort for organised musical education stressed the importance of such groups for the war effort:

> *This high number [of musical groups] has arisen from the progress of the war, the beginning of which saw only one hundred unified Hitlerjugend music groups. These groups evidence the foundational emotions of gratefulness that Germans hold toward all cultural efforts of the Hitlerjugend; they also prove that political leadership and music education are intimately unified. The war has established itself as the father of music practice, and formed an explicit antithesis of the old Latin saying that during the war the muses must have silence. The rich number of Hitler's words on the importance of art are like the deepest kernels which the youth, in their action, transform into a constant state of fulfilment.*

<div align="right">(Stumme, p.21)</div>

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[10] A research project titled "Music and Resistance" by the Department for Musicology at Universität Münster is bringing together a team of international researchers to examine Beethoven's reception in occupied territories during the war. Their findings will be published in an anthology in anticipation of the Beethoven year 2027. More information about the project is available at https://musicandresistance.net/beethoven-in-nazi-occupied-europe/.

Stumme, who was by point of writing the Oberbannführer (lead organiser) of music for the Hitlerjugend for ten years, does not conceal its importance. He understood that as well as promoting conformity and unity, teaching children various marching songs and military fanfares would lead to the idolisation of soldiers in general, and by extension the Nazis' wider conquest. More broadly, it has been suggested that Germany's nineteenth century task to unify fragmented territories led Nazi propagandists to understand that political consolidation requires as a first step the consolidation of culture (Potter, 1998). From this standpoint, the promotion of Reich-approved music should be understood as a catalyst for overall sympathy toward German culture. Whereas Hitlerjugend marches were to gather support for the military as a whole, the proliferation of Beethoven was to draw sympathy for German culture as a whole.

It is also worth noting the economic reasons that may have contributed to the Germans' forced spread of Beethoven and other artists to the occupied territories. Simply put, by installing troupes of Reich-approved soloists and conductors around Europe (and suppressing the success of non-German competitors) the Germans created favourable economic conditions for their own artists. With regard to the recent economic turmoil faced by citizens during the days of the Weimar Republic, it must be acknowledged that musicians suffered from a particularly precarious position. As seen in recessions of the current day, the arts and culture sector was exceptionally vulnerable to the economic situation of the 1930s. Furthermore, as Potter has suggested, the Nazis' ability to provide opportunities to musical groups also served to "dignify such movements by giving them official status, for example, as subdivisions of the music chamber" (2007, p.640). In addition to being a tactic for Nazification, granting these honours should also be seen as an attempt to acknowledge their role in German culture as a whole. To these ends, the Nazi Party succeeded in ingratiating itself with young Germans in the culture sector. To musicians frustrated by decades of social and economic disappointment, the Nazis' focus on classical music promised prosperity as well as social acknowledgement. Thus, as we attempt to examine the Nazis' ideological heraldry of Beethoven (and other artists), it is important to consider the material benefit that these policies brought to ordinary Germans, albeit at the vast expense of others. Ultimately, only with the cooperation of musicians could Hitler's regime effectively carry out its cultural conquest.

Fundamentally, however, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony posed a serious lyrical problem for purists of the Nazi ideology. Schiller's poem, one that heralded the brotherhood of "all men" seemed entirely at odds with the Nazi dogma of racial hierarchy. This problem was pointed out in 1938 by Hanns Eisler, a prominent Austrian composer who was exiled from Germany. Eisler

sarcastically remarked: "All men become brothers, with the exception of all the peoples whose lands we want to annex, with the exception of the Jews, the Blacks, and a great many others to boot" (Buch, 2003, p.209). To be sure, the fascists had a response to this charge. For them, the refrain "Alle Menschen werden Brüder" did not undermine the Ninth's ability to speak for Nazism, because their political ideology explicitly excluded Jews, Roma, Africans, etc. from any definition of "Mankind". It was in this sense that the Nazi musicologist Hans-Joachim Moser expressed his view that "Mankind" in the *Ode to Joy* was speaking only of one a humanity that was "the most German imaginable" (Ibid.). In addition to demonstrating the Nazis' deplorable racism, Moser's comments also show the extraordinary flexibility that Nazi intellectuals were forced to conduct in order to transfigure a message of universality into one of Aryan supremacy.

C. The European Anthem

After the war, declining nationalism in Europe coincided with the Ninth Symphony's growing stature on the continent as a representation of peace, cooperation, and pan-Europeanism. When East and West Germany were divided after the war, they came together in a united team at the Olympic Games of 1956, 1960, and 1964; when a German athlete won the gold medal, it was awarded to the neutral anthem of Beethoven's Ninth (Segrave, p.37). Simultaneously, the tune was growing in prominence among the continent's rebuilding political institutions. The Council of Europe, the first of the postwar institutions, was inaugurated on 5 May 1949, echoing the primary calls by Winston Churchill in March 1943 to establish such a body. The same year in Strasbourg, a city thrice besieged in sixty years, the President of the French National Assembly Édouard Herriot issued a speech calling for closer Franco-German cooperation, in which he asked of his neighbours to be "faithful to the spirit of Kant, Goethe, and Beethoven" (Melchior de Molènes, p.182).

Amid growing certainty that the future of Europe would be marked by the advent of more integrated transnational politics, the new institutions also began thinking about symbols that could emotionally involve and anchor the new continental culture. A 1950 report by the Council of Europe explored "practical steps which might be taken to make public opinion directly aware of the reality of European union", and proposed among them the introduction of a flag and anthem, continuing: "The day that a European hymn salutes the European flag, as today the national hymn salutes the national flag in various countries, a great step will have been made along the road to this essential union" (Council of Europe, Doc. 85, Annex 2; Buch, 2003, p.221). The need for an anthem was further emboldened in the context of European

celebrations, such as 'Europe days', prizes, and so on. For instance, after the Council of Europe created the 'Europe Prize' in 1955 and then the 'Flags of Honour' initiative in 1961 for municipalities proliferating European ideas, many felt that the ceremonies were lacking in grandeur without an anthem to close proceedings (Gialdino, p.2). Eventually, the Council began its search. While several options were considered, including a Europe-wide competition open to all young composers to write a new piece, it was decided to select a "well-known composition with which Europeans could identify" (Ibid., p.3). Other pieces were considered such as the Prelude to *Te Deum* (already familiar as the jingle used by the Eurovision Song Contest), but the choice quickly settled on Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

On 8 July 1971, the Council adopted Resolution 492 (1971), and the European anthem became official. The resolution settled "the acceptance by member countries as a European anthem of the *Prelude to the Ode to Joy in the fourth movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony"* and recommended "its use on all European occasions, if desired in conjunction with the national anthem". An extract from the preamble of the resolution sheds more light on the decision: "Being of the opinion that it would be preferable to select a musical work representative of European genius and whose use on European occasions is already becoming something of a tradition." Two words stick out from this extract, "genius" and "tradition". The former, while irrefutable in the case of Beethoven, suggests that his work is somehow uniquely European. This would have been problematic for two reasons: first, because as Buch has pointed out, it exudes the sort of "cultural nationalism" that the entire idea of European integration was supposed to dispel (2003, p.237). Second, because any hint that the *Ode to Joy* is strictly representative of Europe also contradicts the core message of universality inherent to the piece. Still, the latter part of the quotation reveals a more pragmatic reason for the selection of the Ninth. In speaking of the "use on European occasions [that] is already becoming something of a tradition", the Council is not merely referring to the fact that, on its tenth anniversary in 1959, the organisation heard a performance of the Ninth Symphony in Strasbourg. More importantly, the line points to one of the biggest problems of European identity construction as a whole, namely, that something new is being built but something old already exists, and in order to build new Europe, people were looking to the old. From the embers of war, Europeans sought to create new institutions, new identities, and new relationships. But doing so required new traditions, and the most accessible and mutually agreeable were remnants of Europe's past. Still, the Council could not adopt *Ode to Joy* exactly as it was.

Of the changes made from the original Ninth Symphony to the new European anthem, the most significant was lyrical, or rather, the omission of any lyrics. Indeed, Schiller's poem which had first inspired the work (and given it its name) would not make the cut. Officially, a report by the Council noted that "some doubt was felt, mainly with regard to the words of the Ode to Joy, which were in the nature of a universal expression of faith rather than specifically European" (Radius, p.4). Returning to the earlier point that the Council's emphasis on "European genius" implied that the Ninth Symphony was first a European work and then a universal work, this report suggests that the Council was somewhat aware of this snag – but only as far as its lyrics were concerned. Still, the necessary step to transform Beethoven's universal hymn into a European anthem was the very act that killed it, "passing over in silence the very text that had made it the symbol of the democratic values that the Council of Europe was now desirous of upholding", Buch says. He goes further: "The European anthem, therefore, was not a piece of vocal or instrumental music but rather a song without a text, an incomplete symbol" (2003, p.238). This is a crucial point. As Buch points out, the severance of the text is also a severance of meaning. Without words, the European anthem loses its voice and therefore its ability to speak for Europeans. Gone is the message of universal brotherhood and left behind is only the shadow of its melody.

But, while Buch's interpretation is appealing, the lack of lyrics in the European anthem should not be considered an automatic hindrance to its expression. Instead, returning once more to Žižek, we might conceive of the disappearance of the lyrics as a critique of ideology. Having seen throughout this study the myriad of politicians and intellectuals who have interpreted Beethoven's Ninth Symphony as something "universal", only to then twist the piece according to their own ends, this lyric-less interpretation offers a refreshing honesty. In other moments, the chorus of the *Ode to Joy* has been its apex, looked up to by Wagner and his followers as the enigmatic expression of the national spirit. Embedded in phrases like "All humans become brothers", "All creatures drink of joy", and "A kiss to the world", nationalists have subverted Schiller's poem to fit their own agendas. For Wagner, the Ninth Symphony revealed "the mission" of the German spirit: to impose Germanic culture unto others; for the Nazis, the Ninth was an ode to all humanity, as long as one defined humanity to exclude Jews, non-white people, people with disability, and so on. In this regard, the refusal to espouse the song of "universality" can be regarded as a rejection of the trope itself. In other words, the waiving of the lyrics is a critique of their appropriation. Of course, whether accompanied with words or not, the music

of the Ninth Symphony is resilient enough to remain recognisable. Listeners know its deep tones and humming timbre, and they know its message, even if it is silent.

That said, one should not assume that the Council of Europe chose to cancel the lyrics as a deliberate critique of ideology. The principal reason for the omission was deeply pragmatic – it would not have been prudent to give preference for one (or a few) languages without including all the other Council of Europe languages. While the feat of a multilingual hymn has been achieved in other parts of the world, notably in South Africa with its five-language national anthem, the task would be too difficult to carry out in Europe, considering the Council's member states by 1971 already numbered 18 (46 today) (Buch, 2003, p.239).

In 1985, the Council of Europe notified the European Commission and member states of their permission for the European Community (the precursor of the European Union) to adopt the anthem and flag of the Council of Europe. The following year, as the European flag was hoisted for the first time in front of the Berlaymont building (the Commission's headquarters in Brussels), the Brussels Conservatoire brass band rung out the *Ode to Joy* (Gialdino, p.5). Since then, the *Ode* has been performed at EU events such as European Conventions on treaty amendments as well as celebrations to celebrate EU enlargement, as in 2004 (Ibid.). Today, the official website of the European Union states that: "There are no words to the anthem; it consists of music only. In the universal language of music, this anthem expresses the European ideals of freedom, peace and solidarity". Thus, from the Council of Europe to the European Union, it is arguable that the *Ode to Joy* has become a symbol of Europe on the whole.

Of course, that would not be the end of the story. In 2019, during a performance of the anthem to open the European Parliament, 29 Brexit Party MEPs turned their back to the music. Responding to the President of the Parliament Antonio Tajani's charge that the stunt was disrespectful, who opined that "you stand for the anthem of another country", Brexit Party leader Nigel Farage said it was "disrespectful" of Tajani to refer to the EU as a nation. Farage and his colleagues were backed by members of the far-right Identity & Democracy parliamentary group, but the overwhelming majority of lawmakers criticised the protest (Kayali & Sheftalovich). Nevertheless, while many politicians and members of the public were agitated by the Brexit Party's stunt, if one lesson arose from plenary that day it was this: the *Ode to Joy* symbolises Europe today. For those intellectuals and politicians rebuilding Europe to adopt the *Ode* as a symbol of union was one matter; for rivals of such union to turn their backs on the music demonstrates that the symbol categorically succeeded in its association.

Before closing this section on the European anthem, a final note must be made on its arrangement. The uneasy fact is that Herbert von Karajan, the man who arranged and recorded the piece, whose name stands on its copyright, was also a member of the Nazi Party. In 1971, the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe wrote to von Karajan to ask him to conduct the *Ode to Joy* for the official anthem. It is noteworthy that the original letter did not propose von Karajan's arrangement; that was his idea (Tončić-Sorinj). Von Karajan's membership of the Nazi Party was well-documented, and he attended a denazification trial in Vienna in 1946, where he was cleared of illegal activity; von Karajan later also received the backing of Helmut Schmidt, former Chancellor of Germany, who said he was "obviously not a Nazi. He was a participant" (Kammholz). Nevertheless, Buch has recently argued that von Karajan's 1933 accession to the Party was neither required nor materially advantageous; further, evidence of antisemitic comments in private correspondence as well as von Karajan's participation in far-right youth associations cast doubt over his affiliation to Nazism (2021, p.6f). At this point, the author of the thesis would like to point out that this is not a claim that Herbert von Karajan was an out-and-out Nazi. Acknowledging the outcome of his tribunal as well as arguments to the contrary, however, paints a hazy picture of the composer at best. Another issue is that von Karajan's involvement in the European anthem ultimately led to a copyright dispute because the composer had arranged the piece in a manner different enough from Beethoven's initial score as to count as an original work. The alterations have been downplayed by Buch: "The European anthem distinguishes itself from Beethoven's original score by its slower tempo, the suppression of six notes in the four opening bars, a slightly fuller orchestration in the march variation – a "trombonisation", as Berlioz said in similar situations – and the final *ritenuto molto*. Except for these details, the arranger just cut-and-pasted three fragments of Beethoven's Ninth" (2021, p.14). In any case, the European anthem is the copyright of von Karajan and his estate, despite calls from the Council of Europe to relinquish the rights (Ibid., p.11). The estate receives royalties when the arrangement is played by orchestras of professional musicians, and the piece is available for purchase exclusively from the Deutsche Gramophon record label. The result is that Europeans continue to pay private individuals and companies for access to their own anthem. More worryingly still, the exact figures of how much money has been paid to the von Karajan estate and Deutsche Gramophon is protected, meaning that Europeans have no idea how much the privilege has cost them (Ibid.).

If the story of von Karajan and the European anthem contributes anything to this discussion, it is its display of history being used in a myriad of ways – whether Europeans realise it or not.

First, the basic theme of this essay; that a historical artefact like Beethoven's Ninth Symphony has been used to construct narratives about European identity. But in addition, the bizarre twist of a Nazi Party member becoming the conductor – and proprietor – of the anthem of a supranational organisation that was founded in light of the existential need to pull a continent away from Nazism. The story also points to the 'non-use of history' described by Karlsson: where inconvenient histories such as allegations of Nazism are left out of the official narrative. And finally, Karlsson's 'commercial use of history' is apparent in the further irony that all of the above has also contributed to the financial profit of an individual and a record company. The Ninth Symphony, composed almost two centuries ago, embodies the rich, meandering, and sometimes terrible history of Europe. Today, it stands as a symbol for Europe. It is a symbol that deserves more than to be appropriated for commercial ends.

D. Beyond Europe

Having examined the three primary cases concerning the political appropriation of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, this thesis now turns to analyse a supplemental set of interesting use cases from around the world. In this section, we shall examine two instances where political movements have in some way utilised the symphony for ideological purposes outside Europe.

i. *National Anthem of Rhodesia*

Worldwide, one of the best-known cases concerning the political appropriation of the Ninth Symphony comes from the former Rhodesia, today the independent Republic of Zimbabwe. In 1965, resistance to British efforts to transfer power to the country's black majority population lead the white-minority leadership of South Rhodesia to unilaterally declare its independence from Britain (Paul, et al., p.288). The new administration actively sought to prolong apartheid policies and maintain a tight white grip of control in Africa and was branded a "racist minority" regime by a resolution passed by the UN Security Council (1965). Nevertheless, the state held out until 1979, when growing international pressure and military defeat forced the government to begin the transition toward black majority rule (Ibid., p.294f). During the last five years of its lifetime[11], the state also adopted a national anthem: "Rise, O Voices of Rhodesia", set to the tune of the *Ode to Joy*. Undeterred by the fact that the Council of Europe had adopted the *Ode* already two years earlier (a fact that is said to have embarrassed British politicians who now associated the tune with Rhodesia at European summits (Sutherland & Fender)), the two bodies avoided any copyright dispute, with Rhodesia agreeing not to use the same arrangement as

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[11] Until 1970, the state held on to its loyalty to Queen Elizabeth II and retained the anthem "God Save the Queen". Upon its declaration as a republic, it dropped this association, leaving Rhodesia without an anthem until 1974.

penned by Herbert von Karajan for the Council of Europe (Buch, 2003, p.245). A much more significant change to the new anthem was its lyrics. While the original text by Schiller and spread by Beethoven appealed to universal values and brotherhood, the state of Rhodesia existed bluntly to reject these notions. Instead, a public competition for new lyrics was put out and eventually won by a Ms. Mary Bloom. Her text "Voices of Rhodesia" refers to major themes of God and the natural beauty of the land but conceals any prior notion that the tune originally referred to the unity of peoples[12]. The irony of a racist state adopting Beethoven's music in this fashion was not lost on observers at the time. The British journalist Richard West asked, "how could one not squirm with embarrassment when the TV ends at night with the Rhodesian national anthem to the tune of Beethoven's Choral Symphony?" (p.44). And yet, according to national media at the time, the tune was only landed upon when the government listened to a tape recording of the Ninth Symphony after four years without an anthem (Rhodesian Herald). One writer for the Herald paper, Rhys Lewis, summarised the criticism, stating his shock that a melody with "supra-national associations [and] indissolubly linked with ideas on the brotherhood of mankind" was being used for "local nationalistic ends" (Ibid.). Lewis' remarks embody a wider resistance to Rhodesia's repugnant use of the *Ode to Joy*, the transgression of a racist state into the sublime realm of aesthetic experience. He continues:

> *"To ears familiar with these unforgettable sounds [of the Ninth Symphony], the 16-bar version of the theme itself will seem inconclusive and poverty stricken. When forcibly wedded to jingoistic words other than Schiller's Ode to Joy, the outrage to one's sensibilities will be complete, to say nothing of our response to Beethoven's vision being irretrievably damaged by association."*

<div align="right">(Ibid.)</div>

Still, Lewis points to something more, that every defender of the *Ode to Joy's* political career must defend. As Buch has observed, Lewis' criticism denounces not only the anthem's initial transgression into the public sphere with a message diametrically opposed to Beethoven's, but that it "also invades the private sphere through its unconscious and uncontrollable logic of 'association' – which, as he notes 'irretrievably' damages the individual" (2003, p.249f). On this charge, however, all political uses of the *Ode* are guilty. So far, Rhodesia remains the first and only state to adopt the tune as a national anthem, but its example is only an extreme form of the same appropriation that has occurred on other continents. Listeners of the Ninth

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[12] See Appendix for full text.

Symphony who implicitly associate the piece with Europe must also ask themselves if the conditioning implies a transgression of the same sublime, private musical experience.

ii. _A contested composition in China_

During the Cultural Revolution in China, when the leadership of Mao Zedong banned all traces of Western 'bourgeois' culture from Chinese society, numerous musicians who had conducted, performed, or written about Beethoven were systematically arrested, tortured, and executed (Davis). According to Cai & Melvin, co-authors of _Beethoven in China_, a conductor of Shanghai's Symphony Orchestra in the 1960s, Lu Hongen, was jailed for political criticism and sympathy with Western culture: "Finally, they decided to execute him. And he said to his cellmate, 'If you ever get out of here alive, would you please do two things: One is find my son, and the other is go to Vienna, go to Beethoven's grave ... and tell him that his Chinese disciple was humming [Beethoven's] _Missa solemnis_ as he went to his execution.'" (Cai & Melvin, 2016). Ironically, the composer was originally hailed by the Party. After the first embargo on Western music was lifted in 1922, Beethoven developed a reputation as "the original revolutionary". Melvin says: "They recreated him as Revolutionary Beethoven, who was the man who freed music and could help free the masses of people, too" (Ibid.) The homage would reach an apex when, in 1959 on the tenth anniversary of the People's Republic, the Central Philharmonic Orchestra performed the Ninth Symphony, with Schiller's text translated into Mandarin. In a further twist, in March 1977, a radio broadcast across China aired the final two movements of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, marking the end of the Cultural Revolution. According to Cai & Melvin, it would be the first time that people across the country had heard foreign music in over ten years. Finally, on 19 May 1989, the German would return to the fore of Chinese politics when the Ninth Symphony was blared by students at Tiananmen Square. With makeshift speakers powered by car batteries, the Ninth became a resource for resistance among protestors without weapons. As the voice of Chinese Premier Li Peng announced martial law, Feng Congde, one of the student leaders recalled: "The students, when we heard the announcements, we were so angry – and I put on the cassette of Beethoven's Ninth to cover the voice of the government system. So there was a real battle for voice. Hundreds of thousands of students shouting, as we broadcast the music on the square louder than the government system. I just had a feeling of winning, of triumph" (Mitchell, 2013). Of course, Beijing ultimately emerged from Tiananmen Square with power consolidated at the expense of the lives and freedom of countless dissenters. Today, Beethoven remains at the heart of the Chinese

corpus of classical music. Despite the rising cultural influence of the nation, the German remains its favourite classical composer and the most often played (Cai & Melvin, 2016). And, in a country where monuments to foreigners are rare, statues to Beethoven can be found in Beijing, Shenzhen, Qingdao, and Tianjin – an attempt, perhaps, to build a new, state-sanctioned image of the composer.

The Chinese examples further demonstrate the malleable nature of symbols. From his initial embargo to state sanction to a hero for the masses, the history of Beethoven in China is extraordinarily turbulent despite the limited tenure of his presence. Beginning as an enemy of Mao's cultural pogrom, Beethoven's music was passionately regarded by both sides of the revolution. For dissenters, the composer represented freedom, expression, and hope. For the ruling Party, he posed a dangerous threat to the ambitions of the state. The Chinese example is a harrowing example of the violence that can accompany the use of history. Positioned against the current efforts to regenerate Beethoven's image within China's musical culture, the case also materialises how history can be used to selectively obscure remnants of the past.

III.   What does the *Ode* mean for Europe today?

Finally, having established that all actors examined in the previous section did 'use' Beethoven's Ninth Symphony for various ideological ends, we arrive to the second research question of this paper: Given that one static artefact symbolised the German nationalists, the Nazis, the European Union, as well as the far-right in southern Africa and the far-left in China – does the mixed history of the Ninth Symphony taint its ability to represent Europe today?

The answer to this question requires a review of Žižek's claim ideological statements are, at their core, devoid of meaning. Returning for a moment to Žižek's theory (which was explained in more detail in Chapter 2, II.) we understand that ideology shapes our interpretation of the world and our relation to it. What's more, the language we use is reflective of these structures. For Žižek, concepts like 'justice', 'right', and 'humanity' derive their meaning from whatever ideological system one inhabits. Earlier, this analysis offered evidence of this phenomenon, such as in the Nazi claim that the line "All humans become brothers" refers to human beings only the Aryan race (Buch, 2003, p.209). A Žižekian account observes two points: first, the definitions of terms differ across ideological systems. Second, these definitions depend on the 'master-signifiers' of each ideology. This means that for a nationalist, every concept depends ultimately on 'the Nation'; what is just, what is right, maybe even what is human – all refers to

what is understood by 'the Nation'. The same is true for a Stalinist, for whom 'the Party' is the ultimate point of reference, or for a theist, for whom it is 'God', and so on (Žižek, p.109). The paradox, however, is that these 'master-signifiers' (the Nation, the Party, God, etc.) do not refer to anything else. Indeed, according to Žižek, they cannot. "The only possible definition of an object in its identity is that this is the object which is always designated by the same signifier – tied to the same signifier" (Ibid., p.108f). The crucial step of this theory is to acknowledge that these big ideas are purely functional – they hold everything together in a coherent system while remaining empty themselves. For Žižek, the 'master-signifer' is thus no more than a tautology: 'God' is God, 'the Nation' is the nation. The philosopher calls it the "signified without the signifier", an unattainable concept whose only role is structural (Ibid.).

Building on this theory, we begin to view the true power of ideological statements: they are simultaneous beacons of meaning and vacuums of definition. "All humans become brothers" is profound to anyone willing to define it. The statement is an empty container, a structured entity that can carry the meaning of whatever one pours into it.

The shallow nature of statements in the *Ode to Joy* was further elucidated by Žižek in the documentary "The Pervert's Guide to Ideology" (dir. Sophie Fiennes). In it, he rightly points out that the universal message of *Ode to Joy* has never really been neutral: "Whenever an ideological text says: 'All humanity: unite in brotherhood, joy, and so on', you should always ask if this 'all' is really 'all' – or if someone is excluded". Each example explored in the analysis of this thesis revealed such an exclusion. For the German nationalists of the nineteenth century, it was the outsiders, specifically the French who were not welcome in Wagner's vision of universality. One might even interpret his shunning of the Austrians as a continuation of this attitude. The Nazis, of course, took ten steps further to exclude virtually everybody from their definition of "all humans". To them, the *Ode to Joy* was little more than racist perversion. And, for Europeans today, the very dismissal of lyrics from the European anthem is evidence that the text speaks to a universal that is too broad for European tastes.

And yet, is this not the precise message of the *Ode to Joy* for Europe today? For a continent marked by its inability to define itself, its history of war and peace and everything that goes with it, the eternal question of Europe, "who are we?" is met by the anthem's response: "who are we not?". Taken at face value, the abandonment of Schiller's poem is about language, an attempt toward political sensitivity – 'we are not only German speakers'. On closer inspection, the decision is an abandonment of meaning – 'we are not universal'. The radical departure from

the original meaning of the *Ode* confirms the struggle for a clear European identity today. The more steps the Union takes to define itself against the outside world, the more symbols it adopts to confirm its separated position, the further it strays from the "universal expression of faith" of Beethoven and Schiller (Buch, 2003, p.265). In a remarkable turn, therefore, the European anthem is itself a critique of the problems facing Europe today. In 1977, Maynard Solomon wrote: "If we lose the 'dream' of the Ninth Symphony, we will have nothing left to balance against the crushing terrors of modern civilisation, nothing left to set against Auschwitz and the Vietnam War as a paradigm of human possibilities" (p.349). Like so many before, Solomon invokes the moral value of transcendental art. But as Cook returned: "in referring to the Ninth Symphony as a 'dream', Solomon comes dangerously close to saying that we need something to believe in, even if we don't believe in it" (p.102).

This is the crucial point: the Ninth Symphony is a dream for Europe. A symbolic ideal, the European anthem embodies the spirit of the European project, standing for harmony, history, unity. The symphony embodies the familiarity of an artefact known to European tradition, but one that is also sufficiently complicated by its uncomfortable association to the Nazi period. Perhaps this complexity is precisely what is recognisable to Europe in the twenty-first century: a continent looking to the future which cannot quite rid itself of the past. Of course, the anthem also reveals what Europe is not: Europe neither speaks in one voice nor aspires to speak for all. Nevertheless, the dream holds promise: if Europe can contribute to the universal brotherhood envisioned by Schiller and Beethoven, enact policies of equality and fairness both at home and abroad, it will come closer to legitimising its use of a tune that belongs to the world. Still, the dream is in danger of becoming a nightmare. For many in Europe's political arena, true universality would be a horror: faced with enormous challenges such as migration, climate refugees, and social equality, there are many today who would prefer to keep the gates of Europe closed. Furthermore, tainted by the controversy of its contribution by von Karajan and the commercial ownership of his private estate, the anthem will continue to demand answers as to its rightful position in the Parthenon of European culture. These obstacles are not insurmountable. If Europe can overcome these challenges, the dream of the Ninth Symphony will be a step closer to reality.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This study has shown that, in the two centuries since its composition in 1824, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, *Ode to Joy*, has become a symbol of great political importance to a range of actors. In this thesis, I analysed three cases in history where European intellectuals and politicians have used the Ninth Symphony to advance their ambitions. Guided by the theoretical inputs of Karlsson's typology, the 'ideological use of history', as well as Žižek's theory of 'ideology as an empty container', I argued that narratives about Beethoven's symphony have been woven into the narrative fabric of the German Empire (1871-1918), Nazi Germany (1933-1945), and the continent of Europe today (1971-). Furthermore, I analysed two cases outside Europe, in Rhodesia and China, where the Ninth Symphony was similarly used for political purposes.

In the German Empire, a targeted effort by artists and intellectuals drew a connection between Prussia's victory over France in 1871 and the spirit of Beethoven, even implying that soldiers were uniquely spurred on by the composer. With further backing from political leaders like Otto von Bismarck, Beethoven was consolidated as a key figure leading to the creation of the new Empire. Finally, it was suggested by Richard Wagner that the very purpose of Germany's military/territorial conquest was to wrestle back the cultural hegemony hitherto dominated by France, and that the mission of the German spirit was to spread the culture of Beethoven.

From the onset of the Nazi period, politicians only further advanced the ties between Beethoven and the state, with the Ninth Symphony played for Hitler's birthdays. Moreover, during the war, the Ninth became a primary weapon in Germany's war of culture over occupied territories. Nevertheless, a fundamental issue inhibited the Nazis' from convincingly adopting the Ninth Symphony, namely the incompatibility of their racist dogma with its lyrics. Though attempting to 'resolve' the issue with an even more racist and twisted definition of 'humanity', the episode would only prove the ideological malleability of the symphony.

Following the war, a desire grew for a European anthem and the eventual choice fell on the Ninth Symphony. However, with the issue of 'universality' remaining, Schiller's text was deemed unable to speak for Europe and Europe only. Furthermore, given the multilingual character of the continent, retaining any lyrics was too complicated. In my final argument, however, I posit that the wordless version is precisely what represents Europe today. The adaptation acknowledges that European identity cannot be expressed positively in words, only in musical silence. In order to truly sing of universality, the continent still has much to do.

This thesis challenged conventional ideas about music, by firmly establishing the art form as an important medium for the transmission of political ideas. In doing so, this thesis emphasised the role that music plays in civil society today, as well as in previous centuries. The evidence cementing Beethoven as a composer not only of music but also of political thought encourages others to question the assumption that music is a purely aesthetic experience. Instead, this thesis demonstrates that even the most sublime melodies can carry often heavy political undertones. Furthermore, the analysis specifically showed that Beethoven's Ninth Symphony – a work often exalted as otherworldly – is not immune to such appropriations. In fact, the history presented by this thesis encourages particular critical thought to the symphony's present role as the European anthem.

In light of the findings of this research, subsequent analysis might be done to explore the other works of art that have received political appropriation. In addition to music, one might explore the ways in which statues, paintings, and other pieces have traversed different political uses. For instance, the Elgin marbles possessed by the British Museum and the bust of Nefertiti in Berlin continue to inspire conversations about history and the rightful ownership of art. Moreover, how have these controversial stories contributed to political tensions between Greece and Britain, or Egypt and Germany? How have other works of art been espoused by politicians and thinkers in their efforts to influence or mobilise the masses? Another research topic of interest could concern the other symbols of the European Union. Specifically, how susceptible are the Union's flag, currency, or motto to interpretation like the anthem? An important question is whether political appropriation is unique to anthems. If so, it is in the interest of incumbent powers to research and discover how they can avoid it.

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Appendix

Figure 1:

Illustration of the final scene of "Das Erwachen der Künste", from the Leipzig Illustrierte Zeitung, 28 January 1871; image courtesy of Wien Museum, Inv.-Nr. W 520, CC0, available: *https://sammlung.wienmuseum.at/en/object/248542/*

Figure 2:

The lyric sheet passed around the audience for Bülow's rendition of the Eroica Symphony, rededicated for Otto von Bismarck. The new lyrics praise the Iron Chancellor.
Image courtesy of Brennan, et al. (2020).

Figure 3:

"Voices of Rhodesia" (lyrics)

Rise, O voices of Rhodesia,
God may we Thy bounty share.
Give us strength to face all danger,
And where challenge is, to dare.
Guide us, Lord, to wise decision,
Ever of Thy grace aware,
Oh, let our hearts beat bravely always
For this land within Thy care.

Rise, O voices of Rhodesia,
Bringing her your proud acclaim,
Grandly echoing through the mountains,
Rolling o'er the far flung plain.
Roaring in the mighty rivers,
Joining in one grand refrain,
Ascending to the sunlit heavens,
Telling of her honoured name.