INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ZIZEK STUDIES

ISSN 1751-8229
Volume Six, Number Three

Between Žižek and Wagner: Retrieving the Revolutionary Potential of Music[i]

Tere Vadén, University of Tampere

Introduction

In his foreword to Adorno's *In Search of Wagner*[ii] Slavoj Žižek intimates that Wagner contains a revolutionary potential that has not been spotted or fully brought out yet and that now, "after the exhaustion of the critical-historicist and aestheticist paradigms" (Žižek 2009a: xxvii), is the right, decisive time. Žižek sees the new phase as ideologico-critical, or, better yet, political. While Žižek's determination to enlist even Wagnerian opera in revolutionary struggle is laudable, there are some reasons to suspect the grounds on which his view is based. Žižek's conception of music inherits a tension that characterises his view on the subject, including that of the revolutionary subject, and this tension is, in fact, intensified when it is transposed to the description of music. The underlying question is, can music ever bear the revolutionary role envisaged for it by Žižek? The conception seems to lead to an unhappy choice (correlative to a more general double-bind in the notion of the subject). On one hand, if music is a symbolic form, can it find experiential purchase to move people into revolution? On the other hand, if it is has a direct lifeline to pre-individual experience, can it point towards a revolution that is emancipatory in the Enlightenment sense?

Music as symbols

In order to move closer to these questions, let us begin by noticing how Žižek approaches music in general and Wagner in particular. A recurring theme in the philosophy of music has been the polarization of musical sound either to a pure and direct non-symbolic part of life or experience itself (as in Schopenhauer's notion of *Wille*) or to a corrupt twin of symbolic language introducing a tragic gap between experience and its expression. At the same time, it is precisely this symbolic function that makes possible the psychoanalytic and critical analysis of musical meaning. For Žižek, subjectivity is formed by the violent introduction of a person into a symbolic universe, which functions as the playground of psychological and ideological tensions.[iii] Consequently, the expressivity of musical drama, such as a Wagner opera, is dependent on the (inter-)subjective existence of the symbolic.

In order to emphasise his analytical approach, Žižek claims that in understanding Wagner, rather than consider the work in its historical environment, we should de-contextualize it in order to grasp its universal potential.[iv] It is clear that this kind of de-contextualization and abstraction needs access to a universal medium in order to work and to be intelligible. For Žižek, this universal dimension is formed by the symbolic and subjectual structures, which are strictly correlative[v]: the subject is a structural feature of the symbolic universe and the symbolic is the structure created and upheld by subjects. Consequently, by identifying and analysing these structures it is possible to locate the symbolic tendencies in a musical work in a process that is essentially critique of ideology, that is, a revelation of the unexpressed conditions of expression in the work. This is not to say that while talking about opera Žižek would focus exclusively on the libretti and disregard the music (even though he does argue against the absolutisation of music while interpreting opera). He does analyse the music itself, and that is precisely the point: in order for music to be analysable, to be symptomatic of ideological dead-ends and emancipatory paths, music itself has to have a symbolic structure. Music has to have elements that correspond to the structures of subjects, whether symbolic, psychological, philosophical, ideological or whatever.

However, it is well known that seeing music as representational or symbolic is highly problematic. I'm going to use here John Zerzan's anarchist critique as an example, because he presents the attack on music as symbols without hesitation and interestingly connects it to a wider critique of civilization. Zerzan (1994: 77) begins by pointing out that even though music might have its origin in natural and non-differentiated rhythms, it is quite uncontroversial that today "[M]usic [...] like all art, owes its existence to the division of labor in society." Moreover, music is not only an example of alienated symbolization, it further deepens the alienation by being a way of taming or regularizing tones, for instance, the

human voice: "But if non-rationalized nature is a rebuke to equivalence, a reminder and remainder of non-identity, music, with its obsessive rules, is not such a reminder." (1994: 77) Zerzan sees musical structure as a taming of nature; the more structural, the more alienating. More clearly, the symbolic structures of music are symptomatic of the structures of society; a belief shared by both Žižek and Wagner (who, for instance, writes about the connection between patriarchy and tonal structure in the third section of the third part of *Oper und Drama*).

Here tonal music is, of course, the main culprit. Zerzan writes "As a result of the selection made in the sound continuum by an arbitrarily imposed scale, hierarchical relations are established among the notes" and quotes Schönberg "Tonality does not serve: on the contrary it demands to be served." (1994: 78-79) Again, like above, Zerzan's point is not that tonal music always displays trivial regularity, but precisely that the dynamism and development are controlled by a degree of generalization (as in the sonata form). His conclusion (1994: 79) is straightforward:

> In fact, tonal music is full of illusion, such as that of false community, in which the whole is portrayed as being made up of autonomous voices; this impression transcends music to provide a legitimizing reflection of the general division of labor in divided society.

As a political philosophy Zerzan's primitivist critique of civilization rhymes well with Wagner's anarchistic sensibilities. Indeed, Zerzan grants that there is in Wagner a “tonality of doubt” (1994: 92). However, while Wagner wanted to abolish the church and the state, Zerzan sees that Wagner's methods were wrong, in that Wagner tried to have an effect by completely subordinating the spectator. In terms of music Zerzan wants to go much further: the goal is to de-structuralise and de-civilise music.

Now, this is an interesting goal as such, but at the same time indicative of a false dilemma. In fact, it seems that Zerzan has taken the opponent’s propaganda too seriously. That is, he thinks that the description of symbols as self-identical units of representation that the subject can use at will is, at least up to a point, correct. It is questionable whether symbols ever are fully able to function as the reified or clear-cut entities that Zerzan and the theories he opposes suppose them to be. Naturalistically, symbolic meaning is always built on and out of something non-symbolic preceding it and is in constant danger of falling back to its non-permanent origins. This is particularly evident in the case of musical meaning, which is an unbroken continuum from more or less unreflective and autonomous (animal) sounds to highly sophisticated and intricately structured (human) music, with everything in between.

Even the highest, most structured levels of symbolism (such as logic or mathematics) are vulnerable to non-symbolic and irrational influence – otherwise, once attained, the

symbolic or the civilized would be irreversible, which it obviously isn't. This is also the reason why Enlightenment and the subjectivisation that it entails are projects or processes (even though they are sometimes seen as inevitable or necessary processes). The same goes for the idea of music, say Western classical music, as a tradition that is going somewhere in a series of progressive reactions to what has happened before.

Interestingly, Žižek seems to be somewhat ambivalent here: sometimes he insists on the non-historical ground of subjectivity (Žižek 2007: 34-35), sometimes on the voluntarism of the Enlightenment tasks (Žižek 2009b: 154). These two positions seem to correspond to what Thomas Brockelmann (2008: 118) calls the two notions of subject found in Žižek, the ahistorical structural subject and the subject of labour. In terms of music, this ambivalence means that, on one hand, Žižek uses music as an object of analysis (as in discussing Wagner) with universal and ahistoric appeal and, on the other hand, sees music as a practical part of historical collective situations, with no inherent effectivity of its own. Žižek's interpretation of Kafka's "Josephine the Singer, or the Mouse Folk" in *Living in the End Times* (2010b: 366ff) presents the second case. In this practical and historical role, music and its performance are there in order to establish an egalitarian space. As James Little (2010: 2-3) writes in his description of music as a part of communist culture in Žižek:

> The community brought together by [Josephine's] singing is one without a Master. It is a purely egalitarian space. Whilst here the musical artist provides a *point-de-capiton* for the community, the artist does not occupy a separate social status from anyone else in the community. The mouse folk assemble for her singing, but she is not the main attraction. She provides only the context for their gathering together.

However, in its very existence this ambivalence between universal music and practical-historical music points to the vulnerability mentioned above. For how could historical music exist, if universal music could not sometimes lose its universal, ahistoric quality, and function in the everyday? Or, vice versa, how would universal music be possible if not as a developed and purified link on a continuum from the less universal and less developed forms of music? What does this vulnerability of the symbolic mean, what does it mean for the view of history that sees a revolutionary progression (like the progression in Žižek's often repeated formula of premodern harmony followed by the Christian Event and the materialistic interpretation of that Event)?

Wagner and revolution

Interestingly, Wagner, like Zerzan, sees a fundamental problem of European civilization in its ever increasing division of labour.[vi] Consequently, the remedy can only be sought by decreasing this specialization and division. In his artistic work, Wagner wants to abolish the

division between music and drama, and the various constituents of drama, such as staging and so on. Likewise, the goal of these works is not artistic in the usual sense of the word. Rather it tries to overstep the boundaries of art, religion, politics and mythology in order to create a new collective experience with binding non-individual force.[vii] Furthermore, to be living and forceful, this kind of non-specialized work of "art" has to be intimately connected to a natural environment as experienced by a community living in that environment and using a language that is inspired by that environment; in a word, the work has to be *völkisch*.

What Wagner wanted to do was to radically undermine the modern view of humans as individuals that can and should be rationally and technologically perfected. The Kantian *Weltbürger* of clean categorical tasks and a well-defined worldview was to him a possibility, but a possibility that should be avoided. Wagner was fundamentally anti-modern and believed that only a connection to a non-causally understood nature and its spiritual and erotic powers can provide a way out of the alienation of the modern individual.[viii] In terms of music this means a connection to the human voice and rhythms (which are the common root of music and language, as described in the third part of *Oper und Drama*), in terms of language a connection to the non-urban and non-cosmopolitan language of people that are still connected to a *Heimat*, to work and the soil. In terms of religious or spiritual inspiration, this means a re-reading of, for instance, Christianity through pre-Christian mythology and gnostic sources. Both pre-Christian mythology and gnosticism are crucially non-European in the sense that they are the stuff that European civilization wants to overcome and to purify out of its tradition.[ix] European civilization was for Wagner a dead end, a mechanised and alienated machine without meaning, and the usual tools like science, philosophy and religion, could only dig us deeper into this pit.

In German history of ideas, Wagner is sometimes identified as a precursor of political anarchism.[x] This may sound strange, given the Wagner-Nazism connection, but what it means in fact is that there was a minimal anarchistic streak in National Socialism, too. Like Wagner, certain wings of Nazism wanted to wipe out the the previous civilization in its entirety (including institutions like religion, states, art, and so on) and start with a clean slate. Moreover, this kind of ultra-revolutionary thought was often connected to an organic conception of the movement that ought to overcome civilization. A case in point is Heidegger, who consistently supported Nazism as a movement, even after the war, but was suspicious of it as a functionally and rationally organised Party, even before the war. The idea was that Nazism as a movement will organically and "anarchistically" find the ways in which it will first creatively destroy stale institutions and then creatively support forms of German life – all of this with the guidance of the German spirit, not the dictates or organisational flow-charts of a centrally planned state. This spiritual and *völkisch* anarchism was also the anarchism of Wagner, who was against the state and authorities, but not in terms of the proletariat, but in

terms of the rooted German-speaking and physically-working people. Like the utopian socialists, he was against bourgeois divisions (of labour, between the arts, of religion from science, etc.), and in favour of revolution, but not in terms of the intellect (*Intelligenz*) and consciousness, but rather through the *Volk,* its unconscious rootedness and the necessities of nature.[xi]

This is Wagner's view of the revolution that is needed in Europe: a rejuvenation of earthly and spiritual collective experience against the modern rational and scientific individual. It is also the root to Wagner's antisemitism, in that according to him the stereotypical Jew is unrooted, cosmopolitan, not fundamentally dependent on a particular soil. The goal is that the participant – not a spectator – of the music-drama overcomes his or her individual ego and encounters in the work powers that are greater than the individual or a collection of individuals. In this sense the works are cultic: the point is to participate in the mythic experience, the life of the mythic forces, not to spectate them or to aesthetically enjoy them. The point is not only cathartic, as a cultic event can also spur the participants into violent action. The works result in ideas – not concepts – that do not only describe but also direct life. So we have a classic chicken and egg situation: a revolution is necessary for true Wagnerian art to be possible and that art itself is a condition for the revolution.

Wagner's distrust of specialization and analytical objectification does not concern only the level of artistic form or expression. More important is his belief that in order to gain a living access to non-individual forces, conceptual clarity and analytical control have to be backtracked. This is the root of his anti-modernism, since from the perspective of Enlightenment, such backtracking can only mean regression. The individual subject as the hub of rationality, control, conceptualization and specialization, is thus one of the main obstacles to Wagner's program.

As Pylkkö (2005) argues, the Wagnerian way out of an antagonism, dualism or polarization is to go back to the stage where the two seeming opposites are not yet developed enough to be opposed to each other. This kind of holistic experiential environment does not allow for elementary logic, the law of the excluded middle and so on. For if music-drama for Wagner is a way of overcoming the division of labour between music, drama and so on, it is also a way of mitigating the over-pronounced gap between the subject and object in the modern era. Crudely put, Wagner tried to create a vehicle for collective asubjective[xii] experience that would overcome the ills of over-individualization and a loss of contact to the non-human.

Here the meaning of *Tristan und Isolde* is crucial. What Wagner sought in the *Liebestode* of the protagonists of the work is precisely the dissolution of a modern individual subject, together with the linguistic or symbolic structures that uphold it. Wagner was constantly struggling with the concepts of erotic and altruistic love, and whether one or the

other was the true road to liberation, meaning liberation from modern subjectivity and mechanised civilization. In *Tristan*, at least, the answer is an escape from the rational and individuated, *Dinghaft*, portrayed by what happens during the day, into the undifferentiated and much more forceful night. Tristan and Isolde dissolve as separate individuals, finally unable to take part in the tedious tasks and social roles afforded by the day. To the day, they have to die.

In fact, the dissolution of the individual is described by Wager quite precisely, in three stages. First, the borders of the *Ich*-subjects are pierced by the fascination by and immersion in the *Du*. Then, in the second scene of the second act, a new, asubjective identity is attempted, by way of the word "und" when Isolde sings: "Doch unsere Liebe, heißt sie nicht Tristan und – Isolde? Dies süsse Wörtlein; und, was es bindet, der Liebe Bund, wenn Tristan stürb', zerstöt' es nicht der Tod?"[xiii] Finally, when the asubjective experience has completely dissolved the isolated individuals, they see no way back to the (symbolic) roles of the day, and find the only release in death.

Opera and emancipation

If the dissolution of the subject is Wagner's aim in staging *Tristan und Isolde*, it comes as no surprise that Žižek has to read the work as a failure (as in Žižek 2004), or, maybe, in his most generous moments, as the fruitful description of a problem that remains unsolved by Wagner himself (as in Žižek and Dolar 2002). If the point of the work is the dissolution of the *Ich*-subjects of Tristan and Isolde first into a *Du* and then into an "*und*" and finally to the full "abyss of the night", then Žižek as a card-carrying Enlightenment philosopher can not agree with it. This is not to say that Žižek's own nuanced analysis of the work is not interesting, not even that it couldn't be right, just that in effect it is the only possible, if Žižek is to stay consistent with his overall program. The failure is that *Tristan* presents a solution to alienation that discards the subject, something that Žižek sees not only as regressive but also as impossible. So, in response he has interpreted both *Meistersinger* and *Parsifal* as potential resolutions to the failure of *Tristan*, and also imagined other possible endings for the opera.

However, this simple disagreement between Wagner and Žižek on the selfless nature of love as a redeemer has a wider consequence. In fact we are at the crucial watershed here. For both Wagner and Žižek want to overcome the alienation of modern industrial society. And they want to do it in similar ways, by creating collective experience and action that binds the individual. Here is how Žižek describes his ideal in *Living in the End Times* (2010b: 381):

> egalitarian communism in music: a music which shifts the listener's attention from the great Theme to its inaudible background, in the same way that communist theory and politics refocus our attention away from heroic individuals to the immense work and suffering of the invisible ordinary people.

So the question becomes, can ceremony possibly play a role in politics, and furthermore, a role that is not fundamentally totalitarian? Again, both Wagner and Žižek with an enthusiastic yes. Here is Žižek (2010b: 378), again[xiv]:

> This is how we should answer the reproach that 'communism' is being used here as a magic word, an empty sign lacking any precise or positive vision of a new society, merely a ritualized token of belonging to a new initiatic community: there is no opposition between liturgy (ceremony) and historical opening: far from an obstacle to change, liturgy keeps the space for radical change open.

So the decisive difference between Žižek and Wagner is the nature of the collective experience. For Wagner it is asubjective, undermining the control and role of the subject, while for Žižek it is subjective precisely in the sense that the collective experience is formative of subjectivity. So who is right? I think there is a fairly straightforward way of deciding.

We have to follow Žižek in asking – without irony or any other safety-nets – is it even in principle possible to conceive that today an egalitarian battle would be provoked by the performance of an opera? Probably that possibility is precluded by the social conventions of opera performances if not by the libretti and music of the operas themselves. So where is the revolutionary potential located? Do we assume that the non-hierarchical and collective potentials of music somehow seep into our experience and saturate it so that eventually, in a Heideggerian mode, after a long wait of centuries something will grow? Or do we suppose, like Žižek, that by ideology-critically analysing the symbolic meanings of an opera – or any other musical performance – we become to realise the space that opens for free collective action?

But is this role – the object of analysis, at best a source of insight – for music or music-drama not a little bit disappointing? The performance of music just gathers people together for a collective event that ultimately has other functions and the music played does not contribute directly to those functions, is just serves as the opening of the space and time for them. It is also telling that in order to bring out this space of collective action, Žižek, and Lacanian psychoanalytic theory in general, has to device ever more byzantine structures of the subject and the subjective, along Lacan's famous motto that the subconscious is structured like language. This ever more precise and sophisticated theory of the subject and subjectivisation is indicative of a ever more strict and atomised division of labor in society.

The problem is that music here becomes instrumental, idealistic, if you wish, not immanent and material in its own right, not effective. In contrast, if Wagner himself is right,

then the final act of *Tristan und Isolde* can not be symbolic in any of the senses of the word. It can not be a metaphor, it can not be something to be received and interpreted, much less analysed.

What all of this means is that the polarity of music as pure experience or music as symbols presents us with a false choice. The underlying premise of the choice is that music has to be given either this or that task. But what if music refuses this division of labour, this specialization into either pure experience or to symbolic structure? Indeed, the revolutionary potential assigned to music-drama by Wagner and by Žižek (and to music in general by Zerzan) is possible only if music as such has access to both at the same time.

In the case of language, it has become clearer and clearer that there is no clear break between human language and animal sounds. Given the rich variety of calls and cries in the animal world, it is little wonder that scientists widely agree that some animals do posses rudimentary symbolic language. Consider the putty-nosed monkey with its three distinct warning calls ("predator-in-air", "predator-in-tree", "predator-on-ground").[xv] These calls do not work as reflexes on visual or other sensory stimuli, but are generalised and contextualised, i.e. "symbolic". Similar observations have been made with regard to dolphin and whale "languages". This points to the fact that there exists an unbroken continuum from unreflective and involuntary sounds through rudimentary communication and symbolism to the fully fledged human symbolic language.

This species-wide continuum corresponds roughly to the intra-individual continuum. It is obvious that human "language" is not always symbolic. The first sounds made by a new-born can hardly be classified as language. However, at some point in the typical development of a child a mature proficiency is acquired. This means that in nature or, should we say, materialistically, symbolic language develops out of something that is less-than-symbolic, whether we want to call it language or not. Likewise, in naturalistic (and non-Chomskian) cognitive science, it is usually thought that full-fledged conceptual and representational structures emerge through processes of learning from a more primordial level of non-conceptual and non-representational content.

There is no reason to think that the same kind of continuum would not describe music. In fact, if we take on board the Wagnerian idea that music and language share the same source, the same *Urwurzel*, the continuum is more or less necessary. Music, like language, is a continuum from non-distinguished and non-descript sounds through more developed and controlled tones into the fully rationalized and analysed structures of tonal music, dodecaphony and so on, where the sounds have not only a distinct identity but also an intersubjective heritage and tradition that lends ground to symbolic interpretation.

And here, finally, we have some hope for the emancipatory potential of music, music itself, not music as symbolic or representative of something else. If symbols, representation

and concepts are more or less defined and crystallized structures built out of undifferentiated and non-individual experience, then the life and movement of this experience can, at least in principle, have a direct effect on the meaning of symbols and concepts. That is why music can change the meaning of our symbols and concepts and action, without recourse to rational argumentation. Likewise, music can affect the human being in ways that the rational subject can not control, and this is – paradoxically or not – good for the purposes of liberation.

The breaching of the division between subject and object, and the demolition of the division of labour between different areas of experience can also be seen as one reason for the non-specific nature of music in the sense that a piece of music can relatively easily take different connotations. For instance, a piece of music does not have to be composed with revolutionary aims in mind in order to function as a call for revolution or as something that opens up the space for collective action. This is well known by ethnomusicologists, who have charted the paths of specific melodies which in many cases are thought to be equally "original" or "indigenous" in many places through which they have traveled. Likewise, the national anthems of certain countries have started in less exalted and national circumstances.[xvi] As a cinematic example, one can think of the use of Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* in the movie *V for Vendetta* (McTeigue 2006), where it signals an anarchistic act of anti-national destruction and liberation from totalitarianism, certainly in overt contradiction with both what Tchaikovsky tried to achieve when he was commissioned to write the piece and its object of celebration, the defence of Moscow against Napoleon. It is also noteworthy that often in uprisings and popular revolts the emphasis is not so much on the kind or origin of the music involved, but on how it is played and by whom.[xvii] Music is certainly not thought to be spectated or passively consumed, but produced by the participants themselves in unity with what is going on in the protest or revolt, as the case may be. Emblematic melodies and songs are adopted and discarded quickly, and there seems to be a constant outpouring of popular songs.

If we discard the false choice of music either as symbols or as direct experience, what does that mean in terms of political philosophy? At least we lose the possibility of using an analysis of music as a royal road to the underlying symbolic structures. The (musical) situation is much more messy and the reasons why certain melodies or songs are effective in forging collectives is on a level that is not accessible to ahistorical analytic and structural thought. On the other hand, the Schopenhauerian hope, also shared by Zerzan, that music could, if rightly understood, be a direct absolution from alienated individuality and civilization, also becomes suspect. Music, whether tonal or not, is a mixed bag of experiential energies whose influence on a social situation or an individual can not be precisely predicted or controlled.

i An earlier version of this article was presented as "Music as symbols: how corrupted is it?" in the inaugural conference organized by the Music and Philosophy Study Group of the Royal Musical Association in London, July 2. 2011. I want to thank the organizers and participants for important comments and criticism.

ii Adorno (2009).

iii In *Opera's Second Death* (Žižek & Dolar 2002: 112) Žižek explains the matter like this: in order to become a member of society, the individual will have to will the inevitable, choose freely the imposed (his/her part in society). This forced choice is possible only as symbolization, bringing the fated event into a symbolic universe.

iv " [...] historicist reductionism and abstract aestheticism are two sides of the same coin: a work is eternal not against its historical context, but through the way it answers the challenge of its historical moment. One needs to abstract from historical trivia, to decontextualize the work, to tear it out of the context in which it was originally embedded." (Žižek 2010a: 3), see also Žižek & Dolar (2002: viii).

v The question of symbolism and subjectivity is not clear-cut. For instance, Adorno's (2009) views seem to be located on an axis that cuts through polarization presented above. For him, technology is something that submerges the creative subject under its sway. At the same time, he insists that musical progress can be objectively discussed. The measure for progress seems to be a kind of musical ability that is akin to technological prowess. Consequently, as Pylkkö (2005) argues, in opposing technological alienation, Adorno owes us an explanation how good progress (e.g., musical ability) can be separated from bad progress (alienating technology).

vi The presentation of Wagner here follows closely that by Pylkkö (2005).

vii In this Wagner is closer to Heidegger than to Nietzsche. Heidegger also sought a way to overcome liberalistic individualism through an experiential field of meaning that could overcome the flight of the gods, and his methods also included the abolition of the division of labor between philosophy and poetry. For Nietzsche, who was much more sceptical and naturalistic, the attempt to mitigate the ill effects of modern specialisation might have sounded good, but the drive towards a mythologisation and re-enchantment of the divine would have sounded suspicious.

viii In this sense Žižek is right in wanting to decontextualise Wagner. For instance the main problem in *Ring,* the problem of humankind and nature, is not a historical problem in the sense that it could or should be contextualized to the 19th century.

ix If it is true, as Nick Land (2011: 166) argues, that "Greek tragedy is the last instance of the occident being radically permeable to its outside" then Wagner's music-drama can be seen as an attempt to reopen this vulnerability.

x See Carlson (1972: 16).

xi "Ihr irrt nun also, wenn ihr die revolutionäre Kraft im Bewußtsein sucht – und demnach durch die Intelligenz wirken wollt [...] Nicht ihr, sondernsondern das Volk, – das – unbewußt – deshalb aber eben aus Naturtrieb handelt, – wird das Neue Zustande bringen [...]"n [...]"n [...]"n [...]"n [...]"n [...]"n [...]"n [...]"n [...]"n [...]"n [...]"n [...]"n [...]"n [...]"n [...]"n [...]", Wagner, "Künstlertum der Zukunft – Zum Prinzip des Kommunismus" in D. Mack, (1974) *Richard Wagner – Ausgewählte Schriften*, Frankfurt am Main: Insel. Cited in Pylkkö (2005: 191).

xii A-subjective meaning something that is non-committal with regard to the distinction between the subject and object, see also Pylkkö (1998)

xiii Cited in Pylkkö (2005: 51-52).

xiv See also the interesting observation by James Little (2011: 9): “In terms of Žižek’s reading of Parsifal we should here note that it is heavily influenced by Hans-Jürgen Syberberg’s filmed version often remembered for its transformation of Parsifal into a young woman at the end of the second act. Žižek reads this transformation as opening a space for a post-patriarchal community or ceremony, effectively allowing the opera to be read as a feminist treatise calling for a new Joan of Arc.”

xv See, e.g., Arnold & Zuberbühler (2008).

xvi Just two examples. The melody of the "The Star-Spangled Banner", the national anthem of the United States of America, started life as a song of a London gentlemen's club, and the Finnish national anthem, credited to Fredrik Pacius, is inspired by an old German drinking song.

[xvii] As Zerzan (1994: 83) notes: "Two basic Renaissance characteristics, specialization of and within the orchestra and the formation of a class of narrowly focused virtuosi, also bespoke a greater division of labor at large. Similarly, new emphasis had been placed on the spectator, and by the late 1500s, music involving no spectacle other than that of men at work, not intended for provoking movement or for singing but made only for being passively consumed, first appeared."

References

Adorno, T. (2009) *In Search of Wagner,* London: Verso. (Orig. *Versuch über Wagner*, 1952.)

Arnold, K. and Zuberbühler, K. (2008) “Language evolution: Semantic combinations in primate calls.” *Nature* 441(7091): 303.

Carlson. A. (1972) *Anarchism in Germany,* Metuchen: The Scarecrow Press.

Land, N. (2011) "Art as Insurrection" in R. Mackay & R. Brassier (eds.) *Fanged Noumena. Collected Writings 1987-2007*, Falmouth: Urbanomic.

Little, J. (2011) "Philosophico-Musical Vision: Badiou, Žižek, and Music," *International Journal of Žižek Studies*, Vol. 5, no. 2: 1-14.

McTeigue, J. director (2006) *V for Vendetta*, Burbank, CA: Warner Brothers.

Pylkkö, P. (1998), *The Aconceptual Mind. Heideggerian Themes in Holistic Naturalism*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Pylkkö, P. (2005) *Richard Wagner ajattelijana,* Kiel: Uuni.

Zerzan, J. (1994) *Future Primitive,* New York: Autonomedia.

Žižek, S. and Dolar, M. (2002) *Opera's Second Death,* London: Routledge.

Žižek, S. (2004) "Why is Wagner Worth Saving?" *Journal of Philosophy & Scripture,* Vol. 2, no. 1: 18-30.

Žižek, S. (2009a) "Foreword: Why is Wagner Worth Saving" in T. Adorno, *In Search of Wagner*, London: Verso.

Žižek. S. (2009b) *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce,* London: Verso.

Žižek, S. (2010a) "Brünhilde's Act," *The International Journal of Žižek Studies*, vol. 4, no. 0: 1-44.

Žižek, S. (2010b) *Living in the End Times*, London: Verso.