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The Reception of Plainchant A MUSICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND THEOLOGICAL EXPLORATION

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THE RECEPTION OF

Plainchant

A MUSICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND THEOLOGICAL EXPLORATION

PhD Thesis by

BERNARD SALTER

This thesis is dedicated to

my wife

Dee

my daughters

Theresa and Elisabeth

and my grandsons

Daniel, Alexander and Gruffydd

with grateful acknowledgements to my supervisors

Prof Bennett Zon

and

Prof Pete Ward

as well as to all my participants and informants named or quoted within

TITLE PAGE ILLUSTRATION

 - a page from a Sarum Missal housed in the library of Chetham's Hospital, Manchester (right), the oldest public library in the English-speaking world.

The page shows part of a rite for Ash Wednesday; the prayer in the lower half of the page begins: -

Deus qui non mortem sed penitentiam desideras [peccatorum]: fragilitatem conditione humane benignissime respice: et hos cineres ...

O God who desires not the death but the penitence of sinners, look favourably on our mortal state, and these ashes .....

ABSTRACT

This thesis (describing an exercise in Qualitative Research) explores the reception of plainchant through the minds of 30 participants and other informants. The participants were sent three Tracks of recorded plainchant and asked to comment upon them in a structured way. The tracks are referred to in the thesis as Track A, Track B and Track C. The other informants, including published writers and other professional exponents gave their views on plainchant more generally, with reference to specific chants of their own choosing. A primary point is made: that the 'ancestral home' of plainchant is the Christian Church; it is therefore to be expected that the emphases are both musical and theological. The thesis is structured in such a way as to reveal the views of the participants and others in respect of (a) memory – the way in which this music takes them 'back' in time through their own memories and to a sense of the long history of the Church; (b) serenity (a word used by more than one participant) signifying the sense of 'inner calm' generated by the music; and (c) transcendence – the way in which this kind of music evokes in some people the awareness of a 'higher reality', and seems to take them 'beyond the confines of daily life'. Reference is made to the 'double hermeneutic' which this type of research entails, as I (the researcher) seek to make sense of the way in which the participants and others make sense of the phenomenon of plainchant. Reference is also made to the notion of 'invitational rhetoric', as I (the writer) invite the reader to enter into the minds of the participants and others, and to see the phenomenon of plainchant as they see it – or, rather, to hear it as they hear it. An outline of the structure is as follows: -

The Introduction includes some comments about the possible origins of plainchant, although, as I point out, the history is decidedly obscure. A review of relevant literature indicates that much recent work on plainchant is concerned with areas which are very different from the specific focus of this thesis; but the review also includes reference to work on my main subject areas of Memory, Serenity and Transcendence. The Methodology chapter defines the research method as Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) with references to the 'double hermeneutic' and 'invitational rhetoric' as briefly described above. In the three 'main' chapters (4, 5 and 6, based on a, b and c above) there are numerous references to the philosophy of music, its links with theology, with emotions and even with cognitive science. The Conclusion focusses on the words of one informant about 'the life of the Spirit', and

also takes up references (found at various earlier points) to one particular chant known as *Tonus Peregrinus* (the 'wandering tone'): recent work has indicated a possible Hebrew origin for this tone; but the element of 'peregrination' is also present in the thesis itself, as I try to draw together the various strands of thought presented by my participants and informants, which lead us at some points well beyond the areas which might be expected, including mention of quantum physics and comments about 'the nature of time'. Further work is clearly needed to develop these links in more detail. The reception of plainchant has proved to be a mine of unexpected treasures. My wording at times might seem florid; but music is an art with strong links to poetry and the visual arts; music also depends a good deal on repetition (as poetry sometimes does); and so 'melismatic' (rather than 'minimalist') language seems entirely appropriate in this context.

Biblical quotations are from the *New Revised Standard Version, Anglicized Edition with Cross-References and Apocrypha/Deuterocanonical Books*, HarperCollins, 2007, except in a few cases where another translation is specified in a footnote, and where one of the following abbreviations may be used: -

KJV	King James Version	1611 sometimes described as the 'Authorised' Version in 17th century language
RSV	Revised Standard Version	1952 sometimes known as the scholar's Bible, addressing God as 'thou'
NEB	New English Bible	1970 using 'modern' English, addressing God as 'you'
TEV	Today's English Version	1976 sometimes known as the 'Good News Bible' using 'standard, everyday, natural English'
NIV	New International Version	2011 using 'contemporary' language
NKJV	New King James Version	2020 using more 'traditional' language but, even so, addressing God as 'You'

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1
INTRODUCTION

1.1   PREFACE

This thesis is concerned with the way plainchant is received, appreciated, enjoyed,[1] in contemporary society, mainly by those who listen to recordings of performances, but also in some cases by those who hear or perform it live, or are involved in the making of such recordings. I have aimed to discover why recordings of plainchant have become so popular in recent years, asking: How do my informants *respond* to plainchant? What is the music's *affective* dimension? What *emotional and spiritual resonances* are found in plainchant by both performers and listeners? My use of the terms 'affective' and 'emotional' is clarified at the beginning of Chapter 3 below.

This Introduction gives an overview of the main themes implied by my title, sub-title, and the three main evidence-based chapters. After this preface, under the general heading of Music and Emotion, I raise the psychological issue of why people listen to music at all; I then outline in some detail the theological background, and refer to the way in which the earliest chants clearly developed within a Christian context.

The thesis is based on an empirical study, involving 30 participants as well as other informants. The participants were asked to listen to three specific tracks of recorded plainchant (see Chapter 3, section 3.B.1); and (based on their comments) the thesis aims to show that plainchant has a special role, within the broader category of sacred music, in directing those who experience it towards an encounter with spiritual truths, both in relation to the cultural history of the Christian experience, and in relation to their own inner search for meaning in life. Listening to, or performing, plainchant evokes in the minds of people such as my informants, memories, pictures, emotions (of various kinds) and glimpses of *the divine*. I suggest that plainchant, because of its ancientness, its simplicity and its continuing appeal, facilitates in a poignant way a bridge (at least in Western cultures) between humanity and the divine. My participants

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[1] I have added these additional terms since one interviewee asked me to explain what I meant by 'reception'. Theories of 'reception' are discussed in Chapter 2. See also C.J. McElroy, *The 'Treasury of Sacred Music': A Hermeneutical Investigation into the Reception of Chapter Six of 'Sacrosanctum Concilium' in England,* Liverpool University PhD thesis, chapter 3, pp 75ff.

can be classified and distinguished in various ways (by age, professional profile, etc –
see Chapter 3) but also more obviously they can be classified into (a) those who
profess a current religious allegiance, and (b) those for whom spiritual experiences
can only be gained outside the realm of formal religion. But within both these
categories there are those who undoubtedly appreciate, and have articulated, the
spiritual value of plainchant. The broad areas on which their comments focus might be
crudely labelled with the headings below.

1.2.   BACK, IN, and UP

BACK implies the way that people feel directed back to chant's ancient origins in the
early history of the Christian Church. One participant described plainchant as 'early
music written about 600 CE and dedicated to St. Gregory'.[2] This is an historical
misconception: plainchant was not written down until several centuries later, and the
connection with Pope Gregory the Great is known to be somewhat tenuous.[3] But it
seems clear that recitation of the Psalter was a feature of Christian worship which was
fully established by the fourth century CE; the psalms would be *said* or perhaps *sung*
on a monotone with slight inflexions; and it is from these beginnings that the more
elaborate 'Gregorian' plainchant developed.[4]

IN suggests that people's thoughts are drawn deep down into their own psychology.
Their memories are often related to childhood experiences which have affected them
(for good or ill) throughout their lives to date. I asked my participants to consider what
'pictures' were brought to mind by the plainchant tracks to which they listened, and
from these, various emotions were brought to the surface. Emotions such as
'excitement', 'calmness and serenity' and 'an overwhelming feeling of joy' were
mentioned.[5]

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[2] This was Ann. Throughout the thesis, participants are normally referred to by the pseudonyms they themselves
were asked to choose. In cases where a participant did not choose a pseudonym, I chose one for them. On the
issue of anonymity, see B. Saunders et al., 'Anonymising Interview Data: Challenges and Compromise in Practice,
in *Qualitative Research,* vol. 15, no 5, 2015, pp 616-632.
[3] See R. Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music,* OUP, 2010, vol.1, pp 4ff.
[4] See Section 1.5.3 below. The words *said* and *sung* appear in italics because the Latin verb *dicere* can have either
meaning.
[5] This is a composite quote from participants David, Elsa and Mr Bucket.

UP creates a sense of a higher spiritual realm. This of course could be true of many genres of sacred music, or even of some items of secular music; but some of my informants say that plainchant is a form of music which best performs such a function. One of my participants, when I invited him to be involved in the project, said, 'Yes, indeed - plainchant elevates the soul'.[6]

Throughout the thesis I explore these responses, showing how plainchant can point people (a) towards the past (in Chapter 4), (b) down into their deeper emotions (in Chapter 5); and (c) towards an awareness of some kind of higher realm, beyond the world of earthly existence (in Chapter 6). All of my participants – including the small minority (10%) without religious allegiance – seemed to perceive that the ancestral home of plainchant is within the context of Christian worship.[7] It therefore makes sense for me to see plainchant through the lens of Christian faith and worship. So, referring again to the notions of back, in and up, it can be said that worship takes the believer *back* in time, because of the ancientness of the ritual; it also leads the believer to look *inwards* – inside himself or herself – particularly in the process of confession and absolution; and it lifts the worshipper *up* 'out of this world' to the contemplation of a transcendent reality known as 'God'.[8] (I tend to use quotes, or sometimes italics, for words such as 'God' and 'the divine' because, although they make sense within a context of faith, they can easily be misunderstood by those who do not share such an outlook). The perceived nature of this 'reality' will be discussed further as the thesis progresses, particularly in Chapter 6.

1.3.0 MUSIC AND EMOTION

The way people respond to plainchant inevitably raises issues of music and emotion. Further references to the literature on this topic will be found in Chapter 2 (see section 2.2). In current research, it is a vast field of study incorporating aspects of neuro-science, ethnomusicology, philosophy, psychology, education, therapy and sociology. This thesis applies aspects of these disciplines to plainchant, considering issues

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[6] This was Frank

[7] The phrase 'ancestral home' is used a number of times throughout this thesis. An explanation of its use is given at the end of section 3.C.2 under the sub-heading of 'Languaging' – see p. 127.

[8] The phrase 'out of this world' was used by Mr Bucket; see Chapter 4, section 4.4.3, below.

associated with meaningful listening to music. Here I touch on a few broad points underpinning this dissertation.

1.3.1 Why listen to music?

We may well ask, 'Why do people listen to music at all?'. The literature suggests that one of the primary reasons is that music-listening is therapeutic, in a variety of ways. For Mark Reybrouck and Elvira Brattico the connection between music and the reward system makes music-listening a gate towards not only *hedonia* but also *eudaimonia*, namely a life well lived and full of meaning – a life that aims at realizing one's own *daimon* or true nature.[9] Listening to music is also a common method of regulating unpleasant emotions such as sadness and anxiety.[10] Music can influence the emotional state of human listeners and has also been used therapeutically with a variety of captive species including pets.[11] Facial electromyography reveals that happy-sounding music induces more zygomatic activity than sad-sounding music.[12] Music-listening can help to alleviate the effects of stress and anxiety: it has been reported that (in the context of surgery) …

> … listening to relaxing music … predominantly affected the autonomic nervous system (in terms of a faster recovery). … These findings may help better understanding of the beneficial effect of music on the human body.[13]

1.3.2 Perception and Theory

Several of my participants said that their emotional response when listening to plainchant is affected by practical circumstances such as the quality of the performance or of the recording. For example, Joanna preferred Track C because it

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[9] See M. Reybrouck and E. Brattico, 'Neuroplasticity Beyond Sounds: Neural Adaptations Following Long-term Musical Aesthetic Experiences', in *Brain Sciences,* vol. 5, no 1, 2015, pp 69-91. These authors argue, further, that 'music-listening, even when conceptualized in this aesthetic and eudaimonic framework, remains a learnable skill that changes the way brain structures respond to sounds and how they interact with each other'. So, there is an educational benefit too.

[10] See J.H. Khan et al., 'Regulating Sadness: Response-independent and Response-dependent Benefits of Listening to Music', in *Psychology of Music*, vol. 50, no 12, 2021.

[11] See C.T. Snowden, 'Animal Signals: Music and Emotional Wellbeing', in *Animals,* vol. 11, 2021, p. 2760.

[12] Zygomatic refers to movement of the cheek-bone, in smiling or other facial expressions. See S. Khalfa et al., 'Role of tempo entrainment in psychophysiological differentiation of happy and sad music', in *International journal of Psychophysiology*, vol. 68, no 1, 2008, pp 17-26.

[13] See M. V. Thoma et al., 'The Effect of Music on the Human Stress Response', in *PLOS One*, vol. 8, no 8, 2013, e70156, p. 1 (Abstract). The 'relaxing music' used for this study was the *Miserere* by Allegri.

'was the best executed and recorded'. Nicola Dibben helps to elucidate this point when she writes that listeners' aesthetic appreciation of music is not greatly affected by 'the cognitive reality of large-scale hierarchical structures'. She expresses concern that 'the listening subject' should not be 'deleted in favour of an apparently objective reading of musical structure'. For her, it is preferable that musical structures should be read in terms of social meanings. She declares that …

> …. the way in which the relation between music perception and music theory has generally been conceived is that, whereas music perception and cognition [involves a study of] what listeners hear, music theory persuades the listener of what they might hear.[14]

Dibben comments favourably on Levinson who argues that music is heard on a 'moment-to-moment' basis; thus, he effectively 'rehabilitates the untrained listener, and attempts a …veridical account of the listening experience'.[15] For Dibben, musical 'material' operates in two dimensions (1) 'intra-opus' – to do with relationships within a particular piece (as when one of my participants commented: 'I … liked the simplicity of the single voice and the pace of this track. I liked the contrast and responsorial element with the treble voices');[16] and (2) 'extra-opus' – involving reference to other specific or generic works and styles, or indeed (one might add) to extra-musical associations, such as the many memories stored up by my participants, as reported in Chapter 4. Dibben refers to Lucy Green and Max Paddison, who 'draw on' the writings of Theodore Adorno, and …

> … suggest that musical materials are heard in terms of their historical usage, such that if they have been associated with particular social (or musical) contexts or functions, those meanings remain when they are used outside of those locations. An often-cited example [says Dibben] … is the American detective series *Kojak*, in which, among other motifs and associated meanings, the use of brass instruments signifies predatory behaviour (because of the

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[14] See N. Dibben, 'Music Materials, Perception, and Listening', in (eds) M. Clayton et al, *The Cultural Study of Music*, London: Routledge, 2nd edition, 2012, ch.30, pp 343ff.

[15] See J. Levinson, *Music in the Moment,* New York: Cornell University Press, 1997.

[16] Participant CP, commenting on Track C.

historical use of brass instruments in hunting calls), and is associated with masculinity (owing to the hunting reference, but also to other musical and film contexts in which this figure accompanies the appearance of the male hero).[17]

This concept can readily be transferred to the realm of plainchant in the context of Christian worship, where its ancientness can be a symbol for the timelessness of 'divine compassion'.[18] Dibben concludes by calling for a 'conceptual shift' – one which would allow 'studies of perception to take into account the social and physical mediation of listening'.[19] It is her emphasis on listening which feeds into a principal plank of this thesis.[20]

1.3.3 'Sad' Music

A vexed question, raised by Stephen Davies, and about which there has been much debate in recent years, concerns why some people appear to prefer music that many would regard as 'sad'.[21] But the whole notion of sad-sounding is very subjective: musicians and other listeners might differ in their opinion of (for example) Barber's

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[17] See Dibben, 'Musical Materials' (as above), p. 346. See also L. Green, *Music on Deaf Ears: Musical Meaning, Ideology, and Education,* Manchester: University Press, 1988; and M. Paddison, *Adorno, Modernism, and Mass Culture: Essays on Critical Theory and Music,* Amersham, UK: Kahn and Averill, 1996.

[18] The literal meaning of compassion is 'suffering with'. The notion of divine compassion is a Christian concept related to the belief that God was incarnate in Jesus, and that therefore the suffering of Jesus was an expression of the suffering of God. See *Hebrews* 2:17f, 4:15 and *1 Peter* 1:14ff.

[19] See Dibben, 'Musical Materials' (as above)*,* p. 352.

[20] My use of the term 'plank' is not arbitrary: the term 'armonia' (as used by Plato) does not mean 'harmony' in anything like the modern sense: rather it refers to the glue which was used to fix together the planks of a ship, and consequently to that which makes a melody pleasing, if the notes hang together well.

[21] See S. Davies, *Musical Understandings and Other Essays on the Philosophy of Music,* New York, Oxford University Press, 2011; reviewed by S. Trivedi in *Analysis*, vol. 72, no 4, 2012, pp 857–859. Davies suggests that to call some music sad, and some music happy, is objective and literally, not metaphorically, true. But elementary biology tells us, contra Davies, that music is without life and mental states, and so cannot be literally or really sad. Others (see, for example, J.K. Vuoskoski and W.F. Thompson, 'Who Enjoys Listening to Sad Music and Why?' in *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, vol. 29, no 3, 2012, pp 311–317) suggest that in many cases, listeners do not react to sad music with exclusively negative, but rather ambivalent emotions of positive and negative valence, and also with other positive emotions such as wonder or peacefulness. It has been found that individuals who score high on measures of empathy or openness-to-experience are particularly likely to enjoy sad-sounding music, as are introverts and people who score high on a measure of 'absorption'. For this view, see O. Ladinig and E.G. Schellenberg, 'Liking Unfamiliar Music: Effects of Felt Emotion and Individual Differences', in *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, vol. 6, 2012, pp 146–154. See also S. Garrido and E. Schubert, 'Adaptive and Maladaptive Attraction to Negative Emotions in Music', in *Musicae Scientiae*, vol. 17, 2013, pp 147–166. Music training is also predictive of intense emotional responding to sad-sounding music: see M. Park et al., 'Differences Between Musicians and Non-musicians in Neuro-affective Processing of Sadness and Fear Expressed in Music', in *Neuroscience Letters*, vol. 566, 2014, pp 120–124. See also section 5.5c below.

famous Adagio (in B-flat minor): is it sad or (more positively) peaceful? And all this is particularly problematic in the context of plainchant: to modern ears this genre might be considered by some to be sad because of its use of modes that tend to resemble the minor modes of modern usage;[22] but in fact, often, this music is not sad. Of the three tracks which I sent to my participants, one (Track B) was related to Christmas, and another (Track C) to Easter; several participants stated that the latter reminded them of 'the joy of Easter'.[23] And, as indicated in the writings of Guy de St Denis (14th century), the whole issue of the 'moods' of particular chants post-dates the establishment of much of the plainchant repertoire.[24]

1.3.4 The musical orgasm

Several participants make reference to the 'chills' or 'thrills' which can be engendered by music. For example, Edingale writes that Track C 'sends a feeling akin to a "shiver" down the top of my spine'. It is not unknown for some music, in certain circumstances, even in the context of worship, to give the sort of pleasure that is comparable with sexual enjoyment; and the history of eroticism in music goes back a long way. If it is true (as claimed by Hans Küng) that 'God's will is Man's wellbeing', [25] then music, when it contributes to such a sense of wellbeing may be seen as an aspect of mediation of the divine. Wellbeing and pleasure are not synonymous, but the latter can undoubtedly contribute to a sense of the former. The pleasure to be derived from music will vary enormously from one person to another, and may not always be thought of as a legitimate element in worship. There is a strand of Christian theology, going back to Augustine's interpretation of St Paul, which condemns some forms of pleasure, and particularly physical pleasure, as inimical to the Christian life; this is based on a dualistic approach which sees the physical world as essentially evil. But

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[22] Modes 1 to 4 are the ones which most resemble modern minor modes. Modes 5-8 employ a major third, but Modes 7 and 8 have a flattened leading note, which may also contribute to a 'minor-sounding' effect.

[23] This actual phrase was only used by CP; but the notion of Easter joy was reflected in the comments of Marian, Peter and nine other participants.

[24] See C.J. Mews et al., 'Guy of Saint-Denis on the Tones: Thinking about Chant for Saint-Denis c. 1300' in *Plainsong and Medieval Music,* vol. 23, no 2, 2014, pp 153-178. The eponymous Guy has been tentatively identified with Guy of Chartres, abbot of Saint-Denis (1326-42); his core conviction was that chant modes each have an affective attribute, and need to be chosen according to the subject matter of the text being sung. Guy criticized the practice of choosing modes sequentially in liturgical offices. This implies that such a practice was common without regard to any perceived 'moods' of individual chants.

[25] See H. Küng, *On Being a Christian,* tr. E. Quinn, New York: Doubleday, 1976. See also 'A Short Excerpt', at https://forum.evangelicaluniversalist.com/t/on-being-a-christian-hans-kung/5080

there is another strand, usually described as 'Irenaean', which adopts a much more positive attitude towards the physical world and sensual pleasure.[26] The field of eroticism in music has been explored by Bonnie J. Blackburn, who has written of 'the lascivious career of B flat', explaining that in medieval and early modern terminology the use of the term 'b-molle' suggested the 'soft, feminine' qualities of this note, in contrast with the 'hardness' and 'masculinity' of b natural (b-quadro, or 'the square b').[27] Blackburn refers to a Cistercian treatise by John Wylde who states that 'soft B …appears to allude to the chromatic genus, which because of its infamous softness and lascivious progressions, is rejected from use in the church'.[28] However, in church today, the thrilling organ and choral sounds of (for example) the *Messe Solennelle* by Jean Langlais (1951), can give rise to the physical 'tingle effect' of extreme pleasure. Even the much simpler music of Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924) can create similar effects: one example is the *Sanctus* of his Communion Service in B flat (shown below as Ex. 1.1).

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[26] See M. C. Steenberg, *Of God and Man: Theology as Anthropology from Irenaeus to Athanasius,* London: T and T Clark, 2009, pp 33ff.

[27] See B. J. Blackburn, 'The Lascivious Career of B flat', chapter 1, in B. J. Blackburn and L. Stras (eds), *Eroticism in Early Modern Music*, Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2015, pp 19ff.

[28] See J. Wylde, *Musica Manualis cum Tonale,* ed. C. Sweeney, Corpus Scriptorum de Musica, no 28, American Institute of Musicology, 1982, p. 69.

Ex 1.1 – Excerpt from Communion Service in B flat by C.V. Stanford[29]

This looks very simple, even naïve, on the page; but in the context of a cathedral Eucharist when it is well sung and played, its effect (even when one knows that the modulation is coming) can be remarkable: spiritually it can uplift the worshipper to a *heavenly realm* whilst at the same time providing the physical thrill mentioned above; and this has nothing to do (or does it?) with the fact that the modulation is achieved by a change from B-flat to B-natural![30] The phenomenon of 'chills' crops up several times in my evidence-based chapters (see, for example, Chapter 5, section 5.2).

1.4.0 MUSIC, THEOLOGY and SPIRITUALITY

These topics are vitally important for this thesis, and yet the relationships between them are somewhat elusive. In the ensuing sub-sections, I approach them from several different angles in the hope that some clarity might eventually be reached. The issues of *what we can know* and *how we can know it* will be taken up in Chapter 3, in

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[29] See C.V. Stanford, 'Morning, Evening and Communion Service in B-flat', opus 10, for mixed choir and organ, London: Novello, 1902.

[30] There is a similar effect (using the same G major chord, after a long dominant pedal in the home key of E flat major) at one point in C.H.H. Parry's *Blest Pair of Sirens* (1887)*,* London: Novello & Co., 2004.

the section on epistemology, where I bring out the notion of invitational rhetoric.[31] But in this current chapter, I seek to set out some historical context, to provide a basis for the strong emphasis on theological issues throughout the whole thesis. I ask, first of all, 'What is Theology?'; then I discuss the relationship between Music and Theology; thirdly I consider the relationship between Theology and Spirituality, and go on to explore Encounters with the Sacred. This is all important and relevant because of the strongly theological nature of the responses of several of my participants to the plainchant tracks: ten participants made comments of a theological nature, even before they came to my question on any possible spiritual significance of the chants. For example: -

Dawn wrote that 'a monastery came to mind … a holy place, sacred and intimate where one can meet with a higher presence in an act of simple listening and worship'. For Mary, plainchant is 'briefly, sung prayer'.

For Joanna, 'the way that phrasing encourages regular breathing is an aid to contemplation and prayer'.

Such comments as these will be examined in more detail, particularly in Chapter 6.

1.4.1 What is Theology?

Theology is literally the study of God, but in practice it is the study of what people through the ages have said and written about their experiences of the divine. The theology which underpins this project is biblical, exegetical, philosophical, practical and (at one point) apophatic. I explain my use of these terms, and their relevance in respect of my participants' comments, in Chapter 3, section 3.C.1.

Johannes Zachhuber states that theology is [literally] 'God-talk' but sometimes more than that and sometimes less. It can include questions such as: -

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[31] See section 3.C.2.

> What does it mean to speak of God and how could this ever be possible? Why does it matter that we try [to do so], even in the face of the apparent limitations inherent in any attempt at God-talk?[32]

Zachhuber adds that theology can also include 'scriptural exegesis which has always been central to the discipline of theology and is today usually conducted in a historical-critical key'. Theology (he notes) is not restricted to the Christian sphere, because of 'the fact that questions about God have been asked before and beside Christian theology'. But in the specifically Christian sense it is often described in words derived from Anselm of Canterbury, as 'faith seeking understanding' (see below). And, for further clarification, Zachhuber states that theology ….

> …. does not argue from first principles or *a priori*; it is not a science without presuppositions. Yet it is not uncritical either. It encompasses an investigation of claims made by individual believers as well as those uttered by the faith community and, in doing so, affirms as well as critiques; it clarifies; it deepens; and it corrects.[33]

It is in the light of these definitions that I make a number of refences to both the Christian and the ancient Hebrew scriptures (and to other writings based on them) throughout this thesis.

One of the problems for theology is that, historically, it has been encumbered with a high degree of anthropomorphism and literalism. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) famously referred to theology as 'the queen of the sciences', and some would still like to regard it in this way.[34] The implication here was that theology dealt with matters which could be *known* or even *proved* in the same way that scientific matters were believed to be knowable and provable. But this is certainly no longer the case with theology, and it is now widely recognized that science (also) contains a considerable

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[32] See J. Zachhuber, 'What is Theology? Historical and Systematic Reflections', in *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, vol. 21, no 3-4, 2021, pp 198-211.
[33] See Zachhuber, 'What is Theology?' (as above), p. 200.
[34] See Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* tr R.E. Brennan, Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1946, Q II, art. 2, 'The Trinity and the Unicity of the Intellect'. See also E. Oliver, 'Theology: Still a Queen of Science in the Post-modern Era', in *In die Skriflig,* vol. 50, no 1, 2016, at http:// dx.doi.org/10.4102/ids. v50i1.2064.

degree of uncertainty. The traditional arguments for the existence of God began with Anselm of Canterbury (c.1033-1109), who used the phrase '*fides quaerens intellectum*' (faith seeking understanding).[35] His spirituality – his spiritual convictions – told him of the reality of God, and his theology began at this point, when he sought to understand such a reality. His *ontological argument* has long since ceased to be regarded as a valid proof of God's existence; and indeed, for Paul Tillich, to say that God 'exists' is to deny his reality as 'Pure Being'.[36] In 1930 F.R. Tennant coined the term 'certitude' to refer to a subjective conviction that God was real (real to the believer), even though there could be no (objective) certainty in such matters.[37] From some of my participants' comments, I deduce that this is the kind of conviction (certitude not certainty) which pervades the thoughts of many intelligent believing Christians today. David, for example, acknowledges that the Reality addressed in worship is 'undefinable'; but yet the music (especially plainchant) gives him 'a sublime sense of the infinite'.

1.4.2 Music and Theology

In 2011, Bennett Zon wrote that 'music and theology remain largely separate disciplines, despite sharing a long and frequently inter-related history'.[38] Carol Harrison and Bennett Zon, both working in Durham, and considering the close relationship between the two disciplines, had already used the neologism 'interdiscipline',[39] and Zon refers to a definition of this term as 'the unifying perspective on what happens at the intersection of two or more fields'.[40] Several writers in recent years have used the term 'theomusicology'.[41] Jeremy Begbie has asserted that 'music

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[35] See *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works* (Oxford World's Classics), Victoria, Canada: AbeBooks, 1998, *Works*, 87, Proslogion 1, 'For I Do Not Seek to Understand so that I may Believe; but I Believe so that I may Understand.' See also D. K. McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms,* Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996, p.104.

[36] See P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology,* vol. 1, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951, pp 234-279.

[37] See F.R. Tennant, *Philosophical Theology*, Volume 2 (1930), Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1969.

[38] See B. Zon, 'Dazzled by Breakthrough: Music Theology and the Problem of Composing Music in Words', in *Journal of the Royal Music Association,* vol. 136, no 2, 2011, pp 429-435.

[39] See C. Harrison and B. Zon, 'The Interdiscipline of Music Theology', in A. Amin and M. O'Neill (eds), *Thinking About Almost Everything: New Ideas to Light Up Minds*, London: Profile Books, 2009, pp 52f.

[40] See W. McCarty, 'Looking Through an Unknown, Remembered Gate: Millennial Speculations on Humanities Computing', Lansdowne public lecture, preliminary version of article in *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews,* vol. 26 no 3, 2001, pp 173-182.

[41] See J. M. Spencer. *Theological Music: Introduction to Theomusicology,* New York: Greenwood Press, NY, 1991. See also J. Karpf, 'The Possibility of Theomusicology: William Bradbury's Esther, the Beautiful Queen, in *Religion and the Arts*, vol. 16, no 1-2, 2012, pp 1-28.

can enrich our theological wisdom about time – time as intrinsic to God's creation';[42] and Andrew Love has observed that 'the nature of musical improvisation provides a universal locus for Christian hope'.[43] Such writers seem to suggest that the study of the common ground between music and theology responds to an 'increasingly sceptical' audience, by 'offering an alternative theoretical framework in which notions of mystery, transcendence and sacramentality can inform critical investigation'.[44] This modern critical approach does much to expand awareness of the common ground between music and theology. For the purposes of this thesis, however, since much of the literature is concerned with the *relationship* between the two disciplines, I find it necessary to continue to regard them as separate, albeit with much in common, especially when dealing with the ineffable.

Thus, unlike Maeve Louise Heaney, I find it difficult to speak of 'music **as** theology' (my emphasis); but I agree with Heaney's fundamental contention that music can ….

> … offer us, at the very least, a form of understanding of our faith, and perhaps even an aid in attaining and entering into that faith; [and] … that music offers a form of approach to, or comprehension of faith that is different to our linguistic and conceptual understanding of the same…[45]

I am also enthusiastically sympathetic to the views of David Brown and Gavin Hopps, who explore 'the ways in which music can engender religious experience, by virtue of its ability to evoke the ineffable and affect how the world is open to us'.[46] These authors present the view that …

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[42] See J. Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time*, Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 271.

[43] See A. C. Love, *Musical Improvisation, Heidegger and the Liturgy: A Journey to the Heart of Hope',* Studies in Art and Religious Interpretation, no 32, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, Ltd, 2003, p. 221.

[44] See Harrison and Zon, 'The Interdiscipline of Music Theology' (as above), p.53.

[45] See M. L. Heaney, *Music As Theology: What Music Has to Say about the Word,* Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2012, Kindle edition, p. 1.

[46] See D. Brown and G. Hopps, *The Extravagance of Music,* Springer International Publishing, 2018, publisher's introduction at https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/The_Extravagance_of_Music/y43btQEACAAJ?hl=en

> …. even in the absence of words, classical instrumental music can disclose something of the divine nature that allows us to speak of an experience analogous to contemplative prayer.[47]

It is clear that the music mentioned here is not specifically plainchant, but this chimes in with the views of some of my participants. For example: -

- Peter declares his belief that 'all music [has] a spiritual significance in that it is one of the principal mediums which penetrate the soul and thus impacts upon the whole person'.
- Tim, speaking of relaxing the mind, states that 'a Haydn String Quartet can do it for me!', and
- Edingale describes a 'strong physical reaction [to] some of Elgar's or Walton's "pomp" music'.

It will be clear from many of my participants' comments below that both disciplines (music and theology) can help the human person to be aware of the divine, and of ineffable truths. Theology uses words, but because it is dealing with the ineffable, it has to rely on metaphor and analogy. This is nothing new: a recent article by Ligita Ryliskyte points out that 'the metaphoric process is a hidden "substrate" of analogy in [the work of] Aquinas'.[48] The same article makes clear that, even more so today, both analogy and metaphor are needed to speak credibly and efficiently of the Mystery of God. The writer refers to a comment of Karl Rahner (1904-84) suggesting that '"God" is an almost ridiculously exhausting and demanding word'.[49] So, whilst theology uses words, music (interpreted and analysed by musicology) uses sonic effects, which are not as specific as words, but which (arguably) can more effectively help humans to be aware of higher (or spiritual) realities. There are many examples of how this works in music through the ages, quite apart from plainchant. Two examples I would give are

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[47] See previous footnote. The authors speak of 'the mutual resonances between theology and music', but they do not equate or merge the two disciplines; see also C. Schwöbel, 'Mutual Resonances: Remarks on the Relationship between Music and Theology', in *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, vol. 20, no 1, 2020, pp 8-22, responding to Brown and Hopps.

[48] See L. Ryliskyte, 'Metaphor and Analogy in Theology: A Choice between Lions and Witches, and Wardrobes?', in *Theological Studies,* vol. 78, no 3, 2017, pp 696-717, esp. p. 700.

[49] See K. Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, tr. W. Dych, New York: Seabury, 1978, p. 51.

(1) from J.S. Bach's Cantata *Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit* (God's time is best) in which the composer vividly portrays the contrast between the *old* covenant and the *new*; and (2) from Messiaen's *La Nativité du Seigneur* (a suite of nine pieces for organ), where, most powerfully in the final movement ('Dieu parmi nous') the composer paints a musical picture of a God of power and might coming down to earth.

Plainchant, perhaps more than any other genre of music, seems to embody for many people a link with the divine. I have found that in each of the three main chapters of this thesis (in 4, 5 and 6, but particularly in the latter) theological issues come to the fore: people have said to me that plainchant is a kind of music which enables them to experience a sense of 'being with God'[50] and that the singing of chant can 'take the singers on a journey to a state of forgiveness'.[51] One participant stated that 'it allows you to be in touch with higher forces and your inner self'.[52] Both music and theology are examples of human attempts to reach beyond the normal parameters of human understanding. But we must note that attentive listening is fundamental to the appreciation of both musical and theological truths – the one can be used as an analogy for the other.[53] The logic of my approach is connected to three intersecting issues relating to the 'ancestral home' of plainchant, the nature of Christian worship, and common themes expressed by the participants. These intersecting issues can be summarised as follows: -

Firstly, the ancestral home of plainchant is Christian worship, which evolved out of Jewish worship as in (for example) the recitation of the *Psalms* and in the fact that early Christian preachers saw Jesus as the fulfilment of many of the ancient Hebrew scriptures, known by Christians as the Old Testament (classical exposition of this notion is presented by Barnabas Lindars.[54] Secondly, explicating the Eucharist (the heart of Christian worship) as an expression of *covenant* requires reference to OT passages which express both the giving of the various covenants, and human failures

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[50] This phrase was used by participant Holly, supported by Rowan Williams who makes the same point in more elaborate language (see section 1.4.5 below).

[51] This was a phrase used by informant Fr Peter Allan, CR.

[52] This was Craig.

[53] As described by participant CP.

[54] See B. Lindars, *New Testament Apologetics,* London: SCM Press, 1961. Further references to the notion of 'covenant' are found in Chapter 3 below (sections 3.A.0 and 3.C.1) as well as in Chapters 4 and 6.

to abide by them. Worship includes (as well as the back, in and up elements) a further ingredient which is of supreme importance and which can be expressed by the word *out.* The liturgical phrase which led to the title 'Mass' is *Ite, missa est*: this is sometimes translated into modern English as 'Go in peace' but literally it means 'Go, it is sent', or 'Go, the dismissal is made'. Whatever the literal meaning of *missa est* may be in this context, there is clearly an implication that the group of people which has gathered to celebrate the Eucharist is now being *sent* to live out the meaning of the sacrament in their lives, by proclaiming the Gospel and by serving others.[55] And thirdly, my participants have clearly perceived spiritual truth in this experience, and have led me to explore many examples of various *out-workings*, by their references to ancient places of worship and religious communities, including the work which was done for the benefit of broader society.[56] Through the lives of some of my participants, this kind of work has taken place in the very recent past (for example Peter's work in managing a hospice) and continues in the present (for example Holly's work as a youth leader). All the information which the participants have given me (or that I have gleaned) stems from their responses to my questions on plainchant.[57]

1.4.3 Theology and Spirituality

Listening to the three tracks of plainchant has encouraged many of my participants not only to an increased appreciation of this genre of music, but into explorations of various aspects of theology and spirituality: to think about 'the holy or the Holy, whatever that might mean' as one participant (Mark) put it. It will be noted that my subtitle mentions theology, and my research questions refer to spirituality. These two topics are closely related but also different. In short, theology is an intellectual exercise (as described above), whereas spirituality is more related to the emotions: it is, fundamentally, the conviction that there is more to life than the purely physical aspects of the world around us. The Greek word πνευμα (pneuma) means spirit or wind; and there is a Hebrew equivalent, transliterated as *ru'ach*, a word which has an onomatopoeic quality, reflecting the ancient belief that 'the spirit (or breath) of God swept over the face of the

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[55] The connection between the meaning 'dismissal' and the 'deeper' meaning of 'mission' was also discussed by Benedict XVI (without making an etymological claim) in his *Sacramentum Caritatis*, Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2007. See esp. paras 43-51.

[56] For example, the Cistercians with their 'engineering' work: see Chapter 4, section 4.4.3.

[57] Because they are modest people, my participants have not trumpeted the actions which follow from their Christian commitment, but the careful reader will be aware that such activities are implied if not stated baldly.

waters' in the early stages of Creation.[58] Spirituality is therefore linked historically with the notion of a divine spirit, or Spirit, which, as it were, underlies all physical existence. In some religious traditions, inanimate objects are believed to have spirits, but in Christian thought the notion has tended to be confined (perhaps wrongly) to the human realm. In recent work, Philip Sheldrake defines spirituality as a quest (sometimes) for 'the sacred', but also, more generally in relation to a search for meaning and for a 'fully integrated approach to life': he speaks of 'the development of the non-material element of a human being which animates and sustains us'.[59] In a similar vein, Louise Nelstrop details the three main approaches to spirituality (theological, historical and anthropological) that are found in academic and popular literature.[60] On a broader canvas (though not the main concern of this thesis) we find references to spirituality in relation to business ethics, family matters and leadership in general.[61] So, in the context of Gregorian chant (with its ancestral home in Christian liturgies), spirituality can be taken to refer to an awareness, however strongly or weakly, of the divine Reality of which Christian theology speaks. All my participants (as will be seen) reveal elements of spirituality in one way or another, and, in my analysis (particularly in Chapters 5 and 6) I seek to explicate and to show respect for all these elements.

1.4.4 Encounters with the Sacred

I have referred in the previous section to Mark's comment that plainchant is 'associated …. with prayer and a sense of "the holy" or "the Holy" whatever that may mean'.[62] This is further explored in Chapter 6 (section 6.2). Another phrase sometimes used in this context is 'the sacred'. Mark (when approached in conversation) told me that he did not see any clear distinction between the words *holy* and *sacred*. I asked Mark to put his thoughts in writing, and this was the result: -

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[58] See *Genesis* 1:2.

[59] See P. Sheldrake, *Spirituality: A Brief History,* New York: Wiley and Sons Ltd, 2013, Chapter 1. Sheldrake is mainly concerned with Christian spirituality, but in his final chapter he acknowledges the effects of globalization, and argues for an inter-faith (and broader) approach.

[60] See L. Nelstrop, 'Spirituality', in *Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Religion,* published online 2021.

[61] See (a) R.G. Rocha and P.G. Pinheiro, 'Organizational Spirituality: Concept and Perspectives', in *Journal of Business Ethics,* vol. 171, no 2, 2021, pp 241-252; (b) A. Mahoney, 'Religion in Families, 1999-2009: A Relational Spirituality Framework', in *Journal of Marriage and Family,* vol. 72, no 4, 2010, pp 805-827; (c) B.S. Pawar, 'Leadership Spiritual Behaviours toward Subordinates: An Empirical Examination of the Effects of a Leader's Individual Spirituality and Organizational Spirituality', in *Journal of Business Ethics,* vol. 122, no 3, 2014, pp 439-452.

[62] See section 1.4.3 above.

> I suppose I was thinking about something that inspires a sense of awe. Thinking about Moses and the burning bush, he was instructed to remove his sandals because 'the place where you are standing is holy ground'. I used the word holy both with and without a capital I think because, thinking about Moses' holy ground again, if the ground was sacred then he was in the presence of the holy; but if God was in the burning bush, then he was in the presence of the Holy. So I have used sacred and holy almost as synonyms in that last sentence I think. To me, they are, if not synonymous, then very closely related in that I think of something that is holy as being 'set apart for God' ('you are a holy people') which is also, as I understand it, what sacred means.[63]

An important plank of biblical theology is that *the divine* or *the sacred* is perceived either in dreams or through the physical realities of the everyday world. Terminologically, *the sacred* has been in common use for many decades; for example, in 1957, Mircea Eliade (1907-1986) published *The Sacred and the Profane* referring to the antithetic nature of the two concepts.[64] Like Mark, Eliade also refers to the image of the burning bush.[65] The term *sacred* is more commonly used as an adjective, and can be applied to many nouns such as books, artefacts, spaces, times, and objects in the natural world. For primitive peoples, almost anything could be imbued with the quality of sacredness, including stones, trees and charismatic leaders. There were sacred enclosures or shrines, such as Stonehenge perhaps. In the modern world, a church, especially an ancient one, might be regarded by some as a place 'where prayer has been valid',[66] or whose door is a threshold between the profane and the

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[63] Participant Mark, by email, 25th August 2023. The biblical references are *Exodus* 3:5 ('holy ground') and *1 Peter* 2:9 ('holy people').

[64] This author acknowledges his indebtedness to R. Otto (1869-1937) whose famous work *Das Heilige, Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen,* was first published in 1917, and translated into English as *The Idea of the Holy*, *An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational,* New York: Oxford University Press, 1923. It has been described as one of the most successful German theological books of the 20th century, has never gone out of print, and is now available in about 20 languages. Otto defines the concept of the sacred as that which is 'numinous'– a 'non-rational, non-sensory experience or feeling whose primary and immediate object is outside the self'. He coined this new term based on the Latin *numen* (deity). Otto's work has been acknowledged as inspirational by later theologians including M. Heidegger and K. Rahner.

[65] See *Exodus* 3:1-6. See also R.S. Ellwood, 'Eliade, Mircea', in D.A. Leeming et al. (eds), *Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion*, Boston, Mass: Springer, 2010.

[66] TS Eliot: Little Gidding, see for example http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/08893670701714464

sacred. For others however, the cosmos is now desacralized, to the extent that such old religious beliefs and customs have little or no value. Throughout the history of humanity there have been, and there will continue to be, countless occasions when *encounters* occur between the human and the divine. The primary way in which the early Christians remembered Jesus was through a re-enactment of his Last Supper on the night before he died. And when one strips away all the mystery, and all the religion that has attached itself to this event over the centuries, one finds that the basic sacred objects are a table, a cup and a plate, as in the course of that simple meal, Jesus declares, 'This is my Body', and 'This is my Blood'.[67] So, the nature of the sacred in mature Christian thought, is located here and now, in bread, wine, and the most ordinary things of our world. Christian liturgy, primarily the celebration of Mass, is the cradle in which plainchant was nourished, and in which it has continued to thrive.

1.4.5 'Being with God' [68]

It will also be seen in Chapter 6 (section 6.4) that one participant, Holly (a former Nun) refers to plainchant as 'a profound and primal way of praying and of being with God'. The phrase 'being with God' is also used in a slightly amplified way by Rowan Williams when he states that 'to listen seriously to music and to perform it are among our most potent ways of learning what it is to live with and before God'.[69] These phrases seem to convey a particularly strong experience of the *presence* of the Divine – an experience described by I.T. Ramsey (a former Bishop of Durham) as one of 'disclosure' (see section 6.12 below).[70] Such an experience could equally well be called an encounter. Throughout the Hebrew scriptures there are many descriptions of such an experience. For example, the story of Jacob's Ladder is an aetiological legend, designed to explain the origin of the Canaanite shrine at Bethel – a name

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[67] See *1 Corinthians* 11:23ff (the earliest record), *Mark* 14:22ff, *Matthew* 26:26ff, *Luke* 22:19.

[68] Though I have used a new section heading, I see this section as a continuation of the previous one.

[69] See J. Arnold, *Sacred Music in Secular Society*, Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2014, p. 89 (interview with Rowan Williams). Arnold's book (referred to below as Arnold, *Sacred Music*) is based on interviews with noted figures associated with the world of sacred music, whom he lists in alphabetical order as follows: Harry Christophers, Stephen Farr, James MacMillan, James O'Donnell, Peter Phillips, Robert Saxton, Roger Scruton, Francis Steele and Rowan Williams. Arnold was himself a member for many years of St Paul's Cathedral Choir and of *The Sixteen.* Rowan Williams (b. 1950, now Baron Williams of Oystermouth) is a former Archbishop of Canterbury (2002-2012) and now Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge.

[70] See J. Astley, 'Ian Ramsey and the Problem of Religious Knowledge', *Journal of Theological Studies,* vol.35, 1984, pp 414ff. This article contains over 100 occurrences of the term 'disclosure'.

meaning *house of God*.[71]   The image of the ladder is a very clear metaphor for a link between earth and heaven, between the profane and the sacred; but, as a result of the link, that which was previously just an earthly location becomes sacred. Such imagery is also found in other cultures.[72] Another example is found in *Exodus*, where Moses climbs up Mount Sinai (without the aid of a ladder!) to meet God face to face. Then God gives Moses the Law, which remains the basis of the Jewish faith to this day. The Law (*Torah*) is not regarded as a burden, but as a gift, whereby God enables his people to live in a way that pleases him.[73] The Mosaic emphasis on food regulations also finds echoes in other traditions.[74] But in the Christian tradition Law is superseded: 'The law … was given through Moses [but] grace and truth came through Jesus Christ', so 'we are not under law but under grace'.[75] A final example is from the time of King David, and his son Solomon, when the Temple was built in Jerusalem, so that God might have a dwelling amongst his people. For the Psalmist this was *par excellence* a meeting place between humanity and God: 'I had rather [he says] be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than live in the tents of wickedness'.[76] Yet the rituals of the Temple came to be seen by some of the prophets as alien to God's will, because they were not accompanied by social justice and concern for the poor. The first chapter of *Isaiah* contains a long tirade, beginning 'What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the Lord' and ending 'seek justice, correct oppression, defend the fatherless, plead for the widow'.[77] And Jeremiah, in praising the deeds of the good King Josiah, says, 'he judged the cause of the poor and needy…. Is not this to know me? says the Lord'.[78] These biblical examples illustrate the ancient Hebrew belief in a God who reveals himself to his people, and, in return, expects their obedience to his

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[71] See *Genesis* 28:10-22, and S.H. Hooke, 'Genesis', in M. Black & H.H. Rowley (eds), *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, London: Nelson, 1962, paragraph 164a.

[72] See, for example, J.G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, London: Oxford University Press, 1890, chapter 11; and chapter 46, section 2. Frazer (1854–1941) carried out a wide-ranging, comparative study of mythology and religion, attempting to define the shared elements of religious belief and scientific thought. His main thesis is that old religions were fertility cults that revolved around the worship of, and periodic sacrifice of, a sacred king. This king was the incarnation of a dying and rising god. Frazer claimed that this legend was central to almost all of the world's mythologies and asserted that man progresses from magic through religious belief to scientific thought. Frazer's work was subsequently regarded as highly significant by such writers as R. Graves, W.B. Yeats, T.S Eliot, and L. Wittgenstein.

[73] See, for example, http://www.onetorahforall.com/Studies2013/NotABurden.html

[74] See Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (as above), chapter 21, section 2.

[75] See *John* 1:17 and *Romans* 6:15.

[76] *Psalm* 84:10.

[77] *Isaiah* 1:11-17

[78] *Jeremiah* 22:16

laws. But, in the prophetic tradition, it is not primarily ritual but justice which is equated with knowing God. This is relevant particularly for those of my participants who appreciate the notion of Covenant, and those who have devoted their lives not only to worship but to active service of others, as will be seen below.[79]

1.4.6 Music and Spirituality

On this topic, scholarly articles abound.[80] An article by Alexandra Coghlan quotes John Gilhooly, Director of Wigmore Hall, London, who has recently referred to the concept of holistic life saying that: -

> Everyone is innately musical. I see the difference music makes when we go into schools: children light up; we see that confidence, that ability to express themselves grow. Creating that kind of well-rounded citizen equipped to thrive and make the world a better place – that's right there for the taking.[81]

The implications of remarks such as this will be examined in some detail, particularly in Chapter 5 below, when participants say things like 'putting external worries into proportion through link with so many past generations' and 'thoughts of things beyond day-to-day matters'.[82] Such remarks illustrate spirituality in its broadest sense – the belief that there is more to life than the physical phenomena which can be seen in the natural world. Most people appreciate this. Even a militant atheist experiences love and gratitude at the birth of his/her own child. Qualities such as courage and patriotism are closely linked with physical experiences, and yet transcend them; they can therefore be regarded as *spiritual* as opposed to merely *physical* realities. Villani et al (2019) make a similar distinction to the one I am making here, using the terms 'spirituality' and 'religiosity', and using the former to refer to people who do not have any overtly 'religious' allegiance but who have a sense of 'subjective wellbeing' or an

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[79] See sections 3.A.0, 3.C.1, 3.C.4, 4.2.2, 4.3 and 6.2.

[80] See, for example, (a) P.L. Lauzon, 'Music and Spirituality: Explanations and Implications for Music Therapy', in *British Journal of Music Therapy*, vol. 34, no 1, 2020, pp 30-38; (b) M.M. Miller and K.T. Strongman, 'The Emotional Effects of Music on Religious Experience', in *Psychology of Music*, vol. 30, no 8, 2002, pp 8-27; (c) J. Penman and J. Becker, 'Religious Ecstatics, "Deep Listeners," and Musical Emotion', in *Empirical Musicology Review*, vol. 4, no 2, 2009, pp 49-70.

[81] See A. Coghlan, 'How to Save Music for All', in *The Sunday Times CULTURE Magazine,* 26th February 2023, p. 16.

[82] The participants here were Danielle and Elsa, both of whom claimed 'no religious allegiance'.

'inner strength' linked with a sense of purpose in life.[83] A similar distinction is made by Van Capellan et al (2014) who establish a link between spirituality (as opposed to religiosity) and 'positive emotions' such as awe, gratitude, love and peace.[84] Such is spirituality in its most general sense.

But in the context of a religious faith, spiritual issues are of primary importance. For example, Dawn speaks of a 'deep sense of reverence for God'; and Sacristan writes, 'I enjoy silence to nurture my spirituality, but listening to Plainchant I have a sense of being alone and at peace despite the rush of the world around me'. As Jacob Neusner states, Christianity was born out of Judaism,[85] and its traditional language owes a lot to the various concepts of God developed by the ancient Hebrews, such as the notions of a God of Thunder, a God of Armies, a God of power and might.[86] Yet Christianity brought with it a radically new concept of God – that of a God who becomes flesh, who loves the 'world' and identifies himself with the human race, to the point where he suffers and dies to redeem it. As my participant Peter remarked, the Gospels relate that at the death of Jesus, the curtain of the temple (symbolising the separation of human and divine entities) was torn in two.[87] It follows from this that there is no longer any such separation: divine and human entities are united. As we humans learn more about the physical world, and immerse ourselves more deeply in it, we can become more deeply aware of its wonders and of its sacredness. Such awareness has traditionally been expressed in the *myth* of Creation; we do not need to take this in any sense literally, to feel that it helps to express our sense of gratitude and amazement that anything exists as it does – that anything *is* as it is.[88] It will be seen, as this thesis progresses, that plainchant has a significant role in promoting this kind of spirituality.

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[83] See D. Villani, A. Sorgente, P. Iannello and A. Antonietti, 'The Role of Spirituality and Religiosity in Subjective Wellbeing of Individuals with Different Religious Status', in *Frontiers in Psychology,* vol.10, 2019, at https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01525

[84] See P. Van Capellan, M. Toth-Gautier, V. Saroglou and B.L. Fredrickson, 'Religion and Wellbeing: The Mediating Role of Positive Emotions', in *Journal of Happiness Studies,* vol. 17, 2014, pp 485-505.

[85] See J. Neusner, 'Judaism and Christianity', in *Cross Currents*, vol. 39, no 1, 1989, pp 10-20, esp. p. 12; see also R. Denova, 'The Separation of Christianity from Judaism, in *World History Encyclopedia,* at https://www.worldhistory.org/article/1785/the-separation-of-christianity-from-judaism/

[86] See, for example, *Exodus* 19:19 and *Job* 37:2 (God of Thunder); *1 Samuel* 3:11 and *1 Chronicles* 11:9 (God of Hosts, i. e. armies); *Exodus* 32:11, *Esther* 10:2 and *Psalms* 106:8 (God of power and might).

[87] See *Mark* 15:38.

[88] This last phrase is used both by L. Wittgenstein and I.T. Ramsey.

1.4.7 Recent Literature on the Bible

Still under this major heading of 'music, theology and spirituality', I turn now to the importance (for any viable theology in the twenty-first century) of a critical approach to biblical texts. Recent biblical criticism comes into the same category as any other recent academic material, and therefore must be acknowledged. Since the primary context in which plainchant developed was the Christian Church, a prominent literary source (for any theology related to plainchant) must be the Bible. Critical study of this ancient literature has advanced greatly in recent decades.[89] With regard to the Hebrew scriptures, approaches have moved through three stages:

(a) the 'pre-modern' approach, when everything was taken as more-or-less literally and factually true: 'pre-modern' in this context refers to anything prior to about 1924, when Burnett Hillman Streeter inaugurated a 'modern' approach to the Gospels; [90]

(b) the 'modern' understanding, when it was recognized that some of the stories were 'myth' but that the authorship of various passages could be established, and that archaeology could partly vindicate some of the 'factual' aspects of the narrative: two important scholars of the 'modern' period were Gerhard von Rad (1901-1971), and Martin Noth (1902-1968);[91]

(c) the 'post-modern' approach, where it is now recognized that questions of authorship and date will never be answered, and that the value of the texts lies in their narrative qualities and existential significance for readers.

There has been a similar development in New Testament study:[92]

(a) earlier work sought to establish the factual reliability of the authors: in that stage of N.T. study, it was believed that there were written sources behind each of

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[89] See J. A. Goldingay, 'Pre-Modern, Modern, and Postmodern in Old Testament Study', in J.D.G. Dunn and J.W. Rogerson (eds), *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible,* Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans, 2021, pp 13-20.
[90] See B.H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins treating of the Manuscript Tradition, Sources, Authorship and Dates*, London: MacMillan, 1924.
[91] See G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology - Its History and Development*, London: SCM Press Ltd, 1985; see also M. Noth, *The History of Israel*, London: A and C Black, 1958. Both of these scholars developed the concept of the 'deuteronomic' history – the view that the various sources (written and oral) behind the books of *Samuel* and *Kings* were redacted in the seventh century BCE in the light of the understanding of divine justice seen in the Books of *Deuteronomy* and *Jeremiah*. Put very briefly, this refers to the notion that God is concerned with (a) national politics, and (b) with attitudes towards the poor in society; both of these themes are an integral part of Christian 'spirituality' today.
[92] See J.D.G. Dunn, 'The History of the Tradition: New Testament', in J.D.G. Dunn and J.W. Rogerson (eds), *Eerdmans Commentary* (as above) pp 959-971.

the Gospels, and the 'four-document' hypothesis was developed by B.H. Streeter (1874-1937).[93]

(b) then an emphasis on oral tradition arose: this method of study, known as 'form-criticism' was pioneered by Rudolph Bultmann (1884-1976) who was convinced that the sayings of Jesus (for example) had often been altered in various ways, before being written down. [94]

(c) but the post-modern approach lays considerable emphasis on the creative writing of the evangelists and on the practice of *midrash*: this is the practice whereby older sources (oral or written texts) could be re-written (legitimately in the mind of the author) to serve his polemic interests; this approach, sometimes called 'redaction criticism' is described by Dennis Nineham.[95]

Participant Mark, who 'was brought up in a very conservative evangelical family', when he encountered the writing of Brevard Childs, felt 'liberated…. [and] … pleasantly surprised to find that it was possible to take the text seriously without having to wrestle to somehow make it fit a literalist interpretation'. Childs asserts (among other things) that we cannot get behind the Gospels to 'the mind of Jesus'; but that when the Gospel-writers interpret the suffering of Jesus in the light of the 'suffering servant' poems of Isaiah, they 'bear testimony to the common subject matter within the one divine economy'.[96]

Participant Peter also regards biblical scholarship very positively, writing that: -

The development of our understanding of the nature of scripture in the last 100 years has revealed the Bible to be a much richer source of truth than might previously have been understood. It is hardly news that myth, metaphor and

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[93] See Streeter, *The Four Gospels* (as above). The four-document hypothesis actually refers to sources posited for the Synoptic Gospels, which Streeter designated as Mk, M, L and Q. Streeter adopted what would now be considered a very conservative line on the authorship and historicity of the Fourth Gospel.

[94] See R. Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* (1921), translated into English as *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, New York: Harper & Row, 1963.

[95] In fact, the whole history of the modern approach to Gospel study is outlined by this writer; see D.E. Nineham, *The Gospel of St Mark*, London: Pelican, 1963, Introduction. Whilst this may now seem dated, I do not believe it has been superseded. But one of my informants (Catherine Day) spoke highly of the work of Graham Stanton: see G. Stanton, *The Gospels and Jesus*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989, Second Edition 2002.

[96] See B. Childs, *Isaiah: A Commentary,* Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001, p. 423, quoted in C.R. Seitz and K.H. Richards, *The Work of Brevard S. Childs,* Society of Biblical Literature, 2013, p. 182.

poetry often open up deeper truths than can be expressed literally, although there has been a reluctance in some quarters to accept this approach to scripture. As so much plainsong is directly from scripture (the Psalms in particular) a post-modern understanding of scripture does not in any way invalidate the text; it is just that different hearers / singers will understand the text in different ways.

Participant Stephen, on his approach to the Bible, writes as follows: -

I see the Bible as a major part of the (developing) tradition of the church, all of which derives from and points towards Christ, and it is to be read together with other aspects of tradition such as the creeds and the teachings of the fathers (some of which took a long time to work out). Biblical criticism is a further development which adds a new kind of understanding, and to me this is not incompatible with the view that the New Testament was written and the canon of scripture was selected by the followers of Christ as acts of faith and witness.

Stephen adds (in relation to plainchant) that 'the Hebrew scriptures provided the hymn book of the early church', and that 'chant (however it developed) is another strand of the (developing) tradition of the church.'

Thus, in the above quotations, Stephen reinforces Josef Ratzinger's notion of the continuity between the old covenant and the new.[97] The *old* covenant was based on the *Torah* (as already mentioned in section 1.4.5 above). But Christians believe that a *new* covenant was inaugurated by Jesus of Nazareth, through the shedding of his own blood – the ultimate sacrifice, as a result of which people everywhere and in all time could be reconciled with God.[98] It is this sacrifice which is commemorated in the Mass, celebrated daily, or weekly, or sometimes less frequently in almost all branches of the Christian Church – the ancestral home of Western plainchant.

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[97] See section 3.C.1 below.

[98] The 'full, final sacrifice' was the phrase used by Richard Crashaw (c. 1613-1649), in a poem based on Latin hymns by Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225-1274), and memorably set to music by Gerald Finzi in 1946. The first verse of the poem, with direct reference to the Mass, reads 'Lo, the full, final sacrifice / On which all figures fix'd their eyes, / The ransom'd Isaac, and his ram; / The Manna, and the Paschal lamb. / Jesu Master, just and true! / Our Food, and faithful Shepherd too!

1.5.0 SACRED MUSIC IN THE JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN TRADITION

In the previous paragraph we have seen that Stephen referred to 'the Hebrew scriptures' as including 'the hymn book of the early church'.[99] Many of my participants have recognized the ancientness of plainchant, using phrases such as

'sung worship in the monastic tradition' (Joanna)

'ancient way of Christian worship' (Lanzada)

'feeling of belonging to a centuries old musical and liturgical tradition' (Trebor)

'link with so many past generations' (Danielle)

Two participants expressed similar sentiments more expansively. CP wrote 'plainchant still speaks to us after centuries of use and is an important link to the roots of Christianity'. EH stated that plainchant …

> … has resonances over many centuries and is known to be an expression of faith for centuries. The development of plainsong may have been a way of people showing God their gratitude, obedience and belief in him.

This whole section below (in three sub-sections) gives important background on the use of music (much of which probably resembled plainchant, although we can have very little idea of what any of it sounded like) in worship through the centuries, covering examples and quotations from the Bible (both Old and New Testaments), moving on to specific issues regarding the use of the Psalms (and other OT texts) by the early Christians, and then to the concept of 'cantillation' and the development of melodic formulae – the more obvious precursors of plainchant.

1.5.1 Biblical times

From the earliest times in the Judaeo-Christian faith tradition, music has been closely associated with the praise of God, and with various understandings of the nature of God. Within the pages of the Bible, particularly of the OT, there are many references to music. The fragment known as *The Song of Miriam* is believed by some scholars to

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[99] See also L. Hurtado, "Worship in the New Testament and Earliest Christianity". In *Oxford Bibliographies Online: Biblical Studies*, at
http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195393361/obo-9780195393361-0141.xml.

be one of the most ancient examples of Hebrew poetry to be found in the Bible. [100] It follows a description of the Israelites' victorious crossing of the Red Sea, and the drowning of Pharaoh's chariots and horsemen; the passage reads: -

> Then the prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine (*tôph*) in her hand; and all the women went out after her, with tambourines, and with dancing. And Miriam sang to them: -
>> Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously;
>> horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.

Music became particularly significant in the sixth century BC, in the period of the 'priestly' editors, the compilers of the books of *Chronicles*. Where the earlier Deuteronomic editors had described Solomon's dedication of the Temple without any specific reference to music,[101] the Chroniclers, in their re-writing of the same story, report that…

> …all the Levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, their sons and kindred, arrayed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps and lyres, stood east of the altar with one hundred and twenty priests who were trumpeters; it was the duty of the trumpeters and singers to make themselves heard in unison in praise and thanksgiving to the Lord; and when the song was raised, with trumpets and cymbals and other musical instruments, in praise to the Lord,
>> 'For he is good,
>> for his steadfast love endures for ever',
> the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God.[102]

The New Testament makes very little reference to music: St Paul refers briefly to early Christian practices of singing, in the context of worship, writing: -

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[100] See *Exodus* 15:20f and notes in the following Commentary: G. I. Davies, *Exodus 1-18: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, London: T and T Clark, 2020.
[101] See *1 Kings* 8:1-66 (the whole chapter).
[102] *2 Chronicles* 5:12ff.

> When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for [edification].[103]
> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.[104]

And in the Book of *Revelation* worship in heaven includes continuous singing, as well as much blowing of trumpets.[105] Of the 'four living creatures' it is said that …

> …day and night without ceasing they sing,
> 'Holy, holy, holy,
> the Lord God the Almighty,
> who was and is and is to come'.[106]

And the 'twenty-four elders' as they 'cast their crowns before the throne' sing

> 'You are worthy, our Lord and God,
> to receive glory and honour and power,
> for you created all things…[107]

The scene is vividly depicted in a panel of the famous Ghent altarpiece (see below as Ex. 1.2), a large panel painting by the brothers Hubert and Jan van Eyck, of the early fifteenth-century Flemish school.

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[103] *1 Corinthians* 14:26.
[104] *Colossians* 3:16.
[105] See *Revelation* 8:7ff; 9:1, 13; 10:13.
[106] *Revelation* 4:8. The 3-fold 'holy' is referred to by participant Peter (and others – see Chapter 6 below, esp. section 6.2); in its Latin form, *Sanctus,* it is one of the principal texts of the Mass.
[107] *Revelatio*n 4:11.

Ex. 1.2 – A Scene from the 'Ghent Altarpiece'[108]

1.5.2 The use of the Psalms by the early Christians

Singing (in one form or another), including the recitation (or *cantillation*) of the 150 poems which form the biblical *Book of Psalms* (or 'Psalter' as it is otherwise known today) has always been an important element in Christian worship. The *Psalter* is sometimes known as 'the hymn-book of the Bible'. According to Willem S. Prinsloo, a 21st-century commentator, …

> …. the Psalter is undoubtedly the book of the Bible which has played the biggest part in the liturgy of OT times as well as in the Jewish [tradition] and in the Christian church.[109]

Another exhortation of Paul, to 'pray without ceasing'[110] led many of the early Christian monks to recite the Psalms continuously. Some of these monks lived an 'eremitic' life

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[108] See https://www.google.com/search?q=ghent+altarpieceandsourceid=chromeandie=UTF-8.

[109] See W. S. Prinsloo, 'The Psalms' in J.D.G. Dunn and J.W Rogerson (eds), *Eerdmans Commentary* (as above), p. 364.

[110] *1 Thessalonians* 5:17.

– that of a hermit. James McKinnon refers to the hermit Anthony of Egypt (d.356) and to the cenobitic leader Pachomius (d.346) in relation to Paul's exhortation.[111] McKinnon suggests that during the later fourth and fifth centuries there was a gradual transition from eremitic (solitary) to cenobitic (communal) forms of monasticism, and that …

> … the original Egyptian mode of virtually continuous prayer and psalmody was relaxed, and the day was broken down into set times of common meetings.[112]

According to McKinnon, one can see here the basis of the medieval Office 'Hours' of matins, lauds, terce, sext, nones and vespers, 'with only prime and compline yet to be established'. On the ubiquity of the Psalms, a fourth-century Christian writer refers to them by the name of their presumed author, King David, whose work seems to be experienced at all times and in all places: -

> Even in the fields and deserts and stretching into uninhabited wastelands, [David] rouses sacred choirs to God …. In the monasteries there is a holy chorus of angelic hosts, and David is first and middle and last. In the convents…and in the deserts…. David is first and middle and last. And at night all men are dominated by physical sleep and drawn into the depths, and David alone stands by, arousing all the servants of God to angelic vigils, turning earth into heaven and making angels of men.[113]

1.5.3 Melodic Developments

One participant, Stephen, made particular reference to the melodic structure of chants, before commenting on their emotive qualities. With regard to Track A, he wrote, 'I found the opening …. (down a 4th then back up via a flattened note) a bit unsettling at first'. Commenting on Track B he referred to 'the flattened 7th'. Other comments on

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[111] See J. McKinnon, *The Advent Project*, Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 2000, p. 35.

[112] See J. McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, p.9.

[113] J. Chrysostom, *De poenitentia*, quoted by J. McKinnon, 'Desert Monasticism and the Later Fourth-Century Psalmodic Movement', in *Music and Letters,* vol. 75, no 4, 1994, pp 505-521, esp. p. 509. See also J. Dyer, 'The Singing of Psalms in the Early Medieval Office', in *Speculum,* vol. 64, no 3, 1989, p. 535.

specific melodic features by two professional informants are mentioned below.[114] Stephen was the only participant to make this kind of comment about a chant; but nevertheless, his thoughts deserve to be recognized, and they raise issues about how the chant melodies developed in the early days.[115] This matter is also significant for several others of my participants who value continuity with the early Church.[116]

The issue of the origins of plainchant must inevitably be mainly speculative since there is very little hard evidence available. It cannot be said for certain that the earliest Christian recitation of the psalms entailed any element of music, but it seems likely, based on the NT references and on the above quotation from Chrysostom, that (as Henry Chadwick opines) the monks used 'simple melodic formulae that later constituted the medieval psalm tones'.[117] Recent speculation by a group of liturgical scholars includes the following comment: -

> When the Christians 'came out of the catacombs' and no longer met to pray in each other's houses, they began to make use of more capacious and reverberant venues for their worship. They were faced with a problem of acoustics: how were they to ensure that the proclaimed word would be heard by those gathered? The practice of chanting, or recitation, or cantillation, was a solution to this problem: the singing voice, reciting on a monotone, with variations at the beginnings and ends of phrases, could be projected into a large space more effectively than the spoken voice. [118]

In the early days of plainchant research, Peter Wagner saw the early melodic formulae as deriving from the 'solo psalmody of the Jewish synagogue', which is still preserved in some forms today.[119] But in the 1990s David Hiley cast doubt on this view on the

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[114] See Ex.5.1 in section 5.1 (below) for a comment by P. Allan on the chant 'Tu es Petrus'. See also Ex.5.2 in section 5.2 for a comment by G. Nicholls on an Epiphany Communion chant.

[115] In conversation I asked Stephen if he did this technical analysis before coming to any conclusion about the emotive qualities of the chant. He said, 'it was probably the other way round', so more like a parallel with Anselm's *faith seeking understanding* (see section 1.4.1 above).

[116] See sections 1.5.0, 1.5.2, 1.5.3 above, and 6.5 below.

[117] See H. Chadwick, *Why Music in Church?*, Huntingdon: Church Music Society pamphlet, 1981, p. 4f.

[118] See M. O'Connor, D. Galbraith and A. Warwick, *Worship and Ministry: a workbook for the Certificate in Sacred Music Studies,* Bangor University in association with the Royal School of Church Music, 2008, Unit 1, p. 9.

[119] See P. Wagner, *Introduction to the Gregorian Melodies: A Handbook of Plainsong,* London: The Plainsong and Medieval Music Society, 1901.

grounds that most early Christian hymns did not have Psalms for texts, and that the Psalms were not sung in synagogues for centuries after the Destruction of the Second Temple in AD 70.[120] More recent research, however, on *Tonus peregrinus*, by Mattias Lundberg suggests the possibility of a Hebrew origination of this particular melody, and that it pre-dates the regular Modes 1 to 8, even though it was only added to the Gregorian tonal repertoire at a date well after the eight modes had become established as normal. For Lundberg it is important to draw a distinction between 'modes' and 'tones': whereas the psalm-tones are melodic formulae (the notes which were actually sung) the eight traditional modes are a theoretical classification – a 'grammar' of plainchant. Whilst the psalm-tones may appear to be based on the modes, Egon Wellesz put forward the argument (treated favourably by Lundberg) that the modes were *post factum* constructions of theorists.[121] For Lundberg: -

> The Gregorian system of modes was by its nature exclusive, and the marginalization of *tonus peregrinus* by theorists can be ascribed only to un-idiomatic thinking and a desire for syntagmatic logic. Gustave Reese's understanding of regulation relationships between mode and psalm tone was that 'an attempt was made to reduce to a system a method of determining what psalm tone should be used between two performances of an antiphon'.[122] The conclusions of [Wellesz and Reese] implicitly shed fresh light on one reason why *tonus peregrinus* was excluded from the regular psalm tones. [123]

For Lundberg, there can be no doubt that *tonus peregrinus* was absorbed into the Gregorian repertory after the latter's psalmodic system had been finalized (this is evident from the mere fact that it was never regarded as a 'normal' tone), but this fact

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[120] See D. Hiley, *Western Plainchant: A Handbook,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995, pp 484-5.

[121] See E. Wellesz, *Eastern Elements in Western Chant – Studies in the Early History of Ecclesiastical Music,* Oxford: Oxford University Press for Byzantine Institute, 1947, pp 30–31.

[122] See G. Reese, *Music in the Middle Ages*, New York: W. Norton and Co., 1940, p.162. See also p. 174. Writing later, Van der Werf (*The Emergence of Gregorian Chant – A Comparative Study of Ambrosian, Roman, and Gregorian Chant*, Rochester NY: The Author, 1983, p. 141) did not even exclude the possibility that the theory of the modes was conceived primarily in order to achieve a melodic compatibility between antiphons and their concomitant psalm tones.

[123] See M. Lundberg, 'Historiographical Problems of the *Tonus Peregrinus'*, in *Mid-Ad: Israel Studies in Musicology Online*, 2004, no 3, p. 18. See also M. Lundberg, *Tonus Peregrinus: The History of a Psalm-tone and its Use in Polyphonic Music*, Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2012.

does not necessarily rule out the possibility of earlier Hebrew origins. It is plausible to conclude [says Lundberg] that the *tonus peregrinus* is a formula that is altogether separate from the regular psalm tones: probably older than these, certainly derived from an altogether different source, and possibly preserving its Judaic properties to a greater extent than any other psalm tone.

Some other glimpses into the possible origins of plainchant are provided by Aleksey Nikolsky, who has done some fascinating work on music which pre-dates it. This is too complicated to discuss in detail here, but, for example, he refers to the possible origins of the plainchant Modes VII and VIII when he says that 'our "Mixolydian G" formed the base of a Babylonian system. Prioritization of [the] Mixolydian mode is known in numerous Eurasian folk music systems'.[124] Nikolsky conjectures that 'Mesopotamian music theory must have adopted it from folk tradition and "rasterized" it mathematically, adopting the tetrachord as the formative tool in modal genesis'.[125]

This whole section has sought to provide important background on the development of music in worship within the Judaeo-Christian tradition.[126] Specific reference has been made to *tonus peregrinus*, the importance of which will be made clearer in Chapters 6 and 7 below.

1.6   CONCLUSION

The history of Western plainchant is long and complex, and for our purposes here it has only been necessary to make reference to a few aspects of the story. This thesis is concerned with the reception of plainchant (as typified by my 30 participants and other informants) in the twenty-first century CE. A number of my participants make repeated references to their experiences of Christian worship. For example, Trebor tells us that 'as a boy treble in an RC church choir, the Sunday Masses were usually sung in Gregorian chant'; Mary tells us that she participates 'in plainchant when the

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[124] See V. Belaiev, 'The Formation of Folk Modal Systems', in *Journal of the International Folk Music Council*, vol. 15, no 1, 1963, pp 4-9.

[125] See A. Nikolsky, 'Evolution of Tonal Organization in Music Optimizes Neural Mechanisms in Symbolic Encoding of Perceptual Reality. Part 2: Ancient to Seventeenth Century', in *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 7, 2016, Article 00211.

[126] For a much fuller account, see L.A. Hoffman and J.R. Walton (eds), *Sacred Sound and Social Change: Liturgical Music in Jewish and Christian Experience,* Indiana: Notre Dame University Press, 1992.

congregation are invited to during Mass – e.g. Credo, Marian antiphons, Sanctus, Pater Noster etc'; Dawn says that she understands plainchant 'as a channel to guide worship'; EH pictures 'large ancient abbeys, processing monks, mediaeval worshippers'.

As David Hiley states: -

> Gregorian chant is liturgical chant … sung during Christian services. The term [liturgical] comes from the Greek word *leitourgia …* meaning simply 'service' in the public good [but] understood here as 'the service of God', things done in his service. … Chant functions principally as a vehicle for the ceremonious declamation of sacred Latin texts. … Chanting the texts in a measured, disciplined manner is a good way for the group of worshippers to act together; the more harmonious the singing, the more inspiring the communal act.[127]

The two main characteristics of early Christian worship were celebrations of 'The Lord's Supper' (the 'breaking of the bread' or the 'Eucharist' or 'Mass' as it is variously known) and 'prayer', which may well have included the recitation of Psalms. This passage from *The Acts of the Apostles* (dating probably from the early second century CE) gives a description, possibly somewhat idealised, of 'The Fellowship of the Believers': -

> They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.[128]

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[127] See D. Hiley, *Gregorian Chant,* Cambridge Introductions to Music, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 1f.
[128] See *Acts* 2:42-47 NIV.

Further evidence for the celebration of the Eucharist in the very early days of the Church is found in Christian writings such as the *First Apology* of Justin Martyr (c.100-165), and in the *Didache* (date uncertain);[129] and subsequently many Christian writers emphasised the importance of music in praise of God.

In the next chapter I shall conduct further exploration into the large quantity of literature (mainly from the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries) which relates to the basic themes of this thesis.

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[129] See Justin the Martyr, *First Apology,* ch.66. See also *Didache,* xiv, 2, p.91, quoted in G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy,* (1945), London & New York: Bloomsbury, 2005, p. 106.

2

'Standing on the Shoulders of Giants'[130]

PLAINCHANT STUDIES PAST AND PRESENT

2.0   INTRODUCTION

In order to illustrate the broad range of plainchant studies in recent decades, I first mention some examples of the compendious work that has been done with themes and emphases that are distinctly different from the particular area with which this thesis is concerned. As well as general introductions to plainchant, there have been studies exploring the existence and development of different plainchant repertoires and geographical variants; studies on the construction of the modal system and the development of musical notation; studies analysing the details of specific plainchant works and the uses of plainchant melodies in subsequent musical compositions; studies of plainchant and liturgy; and references to the nineteenth-century revival of plainchant.   An overarching aspect of most of these studies has been an acknowledgement that the ancestral home of plainchant is in the liturgies of the Christian Church, most prominently in the Mass, but also in the various Offices such as Lauds and Vespers. But very little work has been done on the *reception* of plainchant (as described in Chapter 1 above).[131] There is a lacuna here, and fresh studies are needed; my thesis aims to be an early contribution to this area of work. Following on from the general issues discussed in section 2.1 below, the chapter then explores literature on music and emotion, on theories of reception, and more particularly on my three main themes of *back, in* and *up.* Such a review helps to enable me to analyse the responses of my participants and other informants, and to construct a foundation for a viable theology in line with their views.

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[130] This concept (famously used by Isaac Newton) has been dated to the 12th century and attributed to my namesake Bernard of Chartres (d. 1130).

[131] See especially section 1.1 above.

2.1.0 GENERAL ISSUES

2.1.1 Historical Studies

One of the most influential and comprehensive examinations of the social and architectural history of chant is a study by David Hiley based on Worcester Cathedral.[132] Hiley traces the development of Gregorian chant and raises some contentious issues about the connections between the *Gregorian* and the *Roman* traditions. Much plainchant study in recent years has involved specific individual compositions, or categories such as Masses, Offices or Antiphons. Many important studies (on a different path from the present thesis) have used specific manuscripts to trace the processes of composition, and to suggest the likely composers and their influences.[133]

Many historical studies describe and explore moves from oral to written cultures. A recent approach to this issue is taken by Susan Rankin.[134] Noting that 'history can be messy', Rankin refers to the development of music script as 'chaotic' over a fifty-year period of rapid innovation and experimentation. She compares the development of music notation with that of the Carolingian minuscule script. Both (she says) were 'predicated on the correct preparation and performance of the word of God'.[135] Rebecca Maloy, too, deals with questions about the intersection between orality and writing.[136] Sarah Long throws light on oral transmission in her recent exploration of how the movement of both clerics and lay people through different physical and social spaces could be related to the circulation of popular devotional practices cultivated by confraternities.[137] This author demonstrates that religious and spiritual authority (whilst acknowledging basic allegiance to Rome) was 'to a degree' de-centralized.

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[132] See D. Hiley, *Gregorian Chant,* (as above).

[133] See for example, J. Grier on the work of Bishop Stephen of Liège. On the versified Office for St Ansanus of Siena see B. Brand, 'Plainsong New and Old: The Versified Office for St Ansanus of Siena', in *Music and Letters*, vol 98, no 1, 2017, pp 1-31. The new manuscript in question is at Arezzo, in the Archivo Capitolare, Duomo H – c. 1320. Other detailed interventions include: T. Bailey, 'The Ambrosian Trisagion: A More Correct Melody?', in *Sacred Music*, vol. 145, no 2, 2018, pp 50-58, and C.M. Bower on the *Liber [H]ymnorum* of Notker Balbulus, see Britannica online, at
https://www.britannica.com/art/Latin-literature/The-Carolingian-renaissance#ref320569

[134] See S. Rankin, *Writing Sounds in Carolingian Europe*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

[135] See Rankin, *Writing Sounds* (as above)*,* pp 340–53. See also, J. J. Contremi, Review of Rankin in *Early Music History*, vol. 38, 2019, pp 317-321.

[136] See R. Maloy, *Songs of Sacrifice: Chant, Identity, and Christian formation in Early Medieval Iberia*. New York: Oxford Academic, 2020.

[137] See S. A. Long, *Music, Liturgy and Confraternity Devotions in Paris and Tourney, 1300-1550,* Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2021.

Confraternity members were people who worked as merchants and artisans, as well as clerics and students. Popular devotions 'occupied a different space altogether from that of larger and monastic institutions'.[138] For this thesis, however, a more important area is the place of plainchant in Christian spirituality and worship today. Participant Joanna, for example states that she has encountered plainchant in her 'varied experience of singing and of Christian worship'.

2.1.2 Plainchant and Liturgy

Plainchant has its ancestral home in the liturgies of the Christian Church and its ongoing importance to Christian liturgy is manifest in the continued use of chants in the Church's worship. This occurs particularly in cathedrals in the UK; and (elsewhere in the world) festivals are regularly held, in which plainchant is performed in a liturgical context.[139] A significant debate about the development of plainchant in liturgy was initiated in 2000 by James McKinnon. Reviewing McKinnon's contribution to the field, Susan Rankin praised his references to 'the beginnings of Christian celebrations' as the results of 850 years of developing Christian ritual. [140]

Emma Hornby and Rebecca Maloy (having studied the Old Hispanic rites for the season of Lent), write convincingly about the interactions between music, words, rites and theology.[141] In particular they discuss the *threni* (or laments – settings of passages from the Book of *Lamentations)* as well as the *psalmi*, sung before the Epistle, and the wider Easter Vigil traditions of the early Middle Ages. Maloy (referring to Christian worship on the Iberian peninsula) describes 'rituals of great theological and musical richness'; she tells us that …

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[138] See S. A. Long, *Music, Liturgy and Confraternity Devotions* (as above) Summary of Conclusions, p. 209, at https://www-cambridge-org.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/core/books/music-liturgy-and-confraternity-devotions-in-paris-and-tournai-13001550/conclusion/B670F795A18728BBB97CCA361A166169.

[139] See, for example, K. Bolton, 'Plainchant in Tuscany', in *Early Music,* vol. 35, no 4, 2007, p. 683f., describing the highlights of the 'Canto Gregoriano' festival in Florence, 2007, setting plainchant in a proper sacred and architectural context. See also W. Renwick, 'The Gregorian Institute of Canada: Traditions in Western Plainchant', in *Intersections*, vol. 29, no 1, 2009 (Report of a conference at which much plainchant was performed liturgically, and where speakers gave different insights on performance techniques).

[140] See McKinnon, *The Advent Project* (as above)*.* See also S. Rankin, 'Review of The Advent Project', in *Plainsong and Medieval Music,* vol. 11, no 1, 2002, pp 73-98. See also J. Dyer, 'Review of The Advent Project', in *Early Music History*, vol. 20, 2001, p. 279-321.

[141] See E. Hornby and R. Maloy, *Music and Meaning in Old Hispanic Lenten Chants: Psalmi, Threni, and the Easter Vigil Canticles,* Martlesham UK and Rochester NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2013.

> … the creators of the chant texts reworked scripture in ways designed to teach biblical exegesis, linking both [texts and music] to the theological works of Isidore and others. The result is an intricate melodic grammar, closely tied to textual syntax and sound. [142]

Susan Boynton distinguishes between *liturgy* – acts of structured communal worship – and *devotion* – more flexible practices that can be performed by an individual and do not necessarily involve clergy.[143] When people such as my participants listen to plainchant today, it is often in the more private context of what Boynton might call devotion, as when Dawn, listening to the tracks at home, experienced 'a feeling of peace and tranquillity … [and of] … deep reverence for God'. But among my participants there are several who still experience it regularly in more formal liturgical contexts, as when Edingale tells us that he is 'a Catholic who likes Cathedral worship and [who enjoys] participating in plainchant masses'. Music based on, or derived from, plainchant is also heard in liturgical contexts today, as well as in the concert hall; Joanna recognizes in plainchant not only 'an element of liturgical worship', but also 'a source of musical quotation'. Four examples of relatively modern music based on plainchant are as follows: -

- Edward Bairstow, Anthem, 'Blessed City, Heavenly Salem' (1914)
- Maurice Duruflé, *Requiem* (1947)
- Gustav Holst, *The Hymn of Jesus* (1917)
- Olivier Messiaen, 'Dieu Parmi Nous' from *La Nativité du Seigneur* (1936 - 2nd theme)

2.1.3 Revisions and Revival

The word revision often has negative connotations, in contrast with revival, which is seen as positive. For several centuries, plainchant suffered various revisions – some would say 'corruptions' – at the hands of those who wanted it 'simplified' and made 'accessible' for congregational singing.[144] This was not a totally bad thing: Martin

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[142] See Maloy, *Songs of Sacrifice* (as above): Abstract at https://academic.oup.com/book/33615?login=true

[143] See S. Boynton, Chapter 14 in D.J. DiCenso and R. Maloy (eds), *Chant, Liturgy, and the Inheritance of Rome, Essays in Honour of Joseph Dyer,* Martlesham UK and Rochester NY: Boydell Press, 2017; see also S. Boynton, 'Prayer as Liturgical Performance in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Monastic Psalters', in *Speculum*, vol. 82, no 4, 2007, pp 896-931.

[144] See D.W. Krummel, Review of Bergeron, in *Notes*, Second Series, vol. 56, no 1, 1999, pp 151-153.

Luther was one of those who made such adaptations of chants. His chorale *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland* was clearly based on the plainchant hymn *Veni Redemptor gentium,* as illustrated in Ex. 2.1 below. However, it was not until the nineteenth century that the monks of the Abbey of St Peter in Solesmes carried out painstaking paleological work, and were responsible for the production of authentic versions in the form of printed editions and sound recordings.[145]

Ex. 2.1 – Luther's chorale *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland,* and the chant on which it is based

Ex. 2.1a – Luther's Version [146]

Ex. 2.1b – Luther's Version in Modern Notation [147]

Come now, Saviour of the Gentiles, the Virgin's Child whom we acknowledge,
the wonder of all the world, his birth by God ordained.

Ex. 2.1c – 'Veni, redemptor gentium' in the notation of Solesmes [148]

Theories of revival are found in cultural, political and economic spheres, as well as in relation to architecture and music.[149] The 'Gothic Revival' of the nineteenth century was conspicuously evident in architecture, not least in the building of churches. The architectural theory of Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879) was largely based on finding the ideal forms for specific materials and using these forms to create buildings. His

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[147] As found on the Bach Cantatas website, at https://www.bach-cantatas.com/CM/Nun-komm.htm

[148] See *Liber Hymnarius,* Solesmes, 1983, p. 11.

[149] See M. Iyigun et al., 'A Theory of Cultural Revivals', in *European Economic Review*, at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euroecorev.2021.103734. See also D. Acemoglu and J. A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty,* New York: Crown Press, 2012. See also A. Chaudry and P. Garner. 'Do Governments Suppress Growth? Institutions, Rent-seeking, and Innovation Blocking in a Model of Schumpeterian Growth', in *Economics and Politics,* vol. 19, no 1, 2007, pp 35-52.

writings centred on the idea that materials should be used 'honestly'. He believed that the outward appearance of a building should reflect its 'rational construction'.[150]

In England the principal architect of the Gothic Revival was Augustus Pugin (1812-1852), who was explicit about the place of the past in the present, not as an alien, disruptive force but a natural survival, a true principle that could be revived to set the present along the lines that it should have followed. Pugin's vision was specifically related to his work in England, to his belief in 'Englishness' and to his Catholicism. Among numerous publications (mainly on architectural topics) he produced in 1905, a pamphlet entitled *An Earnest Appeal for the Revival of the Ancient Plain Song:* This consists mainly of a tirade against various forms of worship without the use of plainchant, followed by this paragraph: -

> In lieu of this, were the simple Chaunt, as ordered by the authoritative books, the Antiphonals and Graduals of the Roman Church, restored, the people would soon be able to take part in responding to the clerks in the chancel. The Kyrie would be alternate, the Gloria a real hymn of praise, and the Credo would be again a real profession of the Christian faith, not a piece of complicated music, while the 'O Salutaris' would rise from the lips of hundreds, and ascend with the incense to the throne of grace.[151]

2.1.4 Music as Literature

Some of the relevant nineteenth-century literature is actually in the form of musical notation. The neo-classical Cecilian Movement in church music promoted a restoration of older styles, particularly the use of plainchant. The movement was of German origin, and its aims were promoted particularly by the priest-musician Franz Xaver Haberl (1840-1910) who created an edition of liturgical chant which was (he claimed) a restoration of a seventeenth-century Medicean edition, derived from Palestrina. This edition was published by Pustet of Ratisbon in 1868, and was declared by Pope Pius IX to be authentic, and authorized for use in the Liturgy. However, this style of chanting

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[150] See K. D. Murphy, 'Memory and Modernity: Viollet-le-Duc at Vézelay', Pennsylvania: State University Press, 1999.

[151] See A.W. Pugin, *'An Earnest Appeal….'* in *Catholic World,* vol.83, no 493, 1906, pp 109ff. and at http://modernmedievalism.blogspot.com/2012/10/pugin-earnest-appeal-for-revival-of.html, para 14.

was rather stilted and inflexible. During the same period, work had been going on at Solesmes in the newly restored Abbey of St Peter, under the direction of the Abbot, Prosper Guéranger, and two particularly musical monks, Joseph Pothier and André Mocquereau. These scholars favoured a much more flexible interpretation of the chants. The story of the monks of Solesmes is told by Katherine Bergeron, who sees Dom Pothier as the visionary committed to promoting presentation copies 'pleasing in the eyes of God and man', with Dom Moquereau as his scholarly co-worker.[152] One reviewer agrees with Bergeron's disapproval of the Pustet editions, describing them as 'nasty, the Church Unenlightened at its most grotesque'.[153] For another reviewer, the leading characters emerge as men of their times,…

> … enchanted (as it were) by the kinds of Romantic visions that held sway only in that age and in that place, decadent in that, like all of us, they were ultimately undone by their inability to escape their own preconceptions'.[154]

With regard to the Pustet edition, Pothier (as Katherine Bergeron writes) was …

> …sceptical of the Palestrina story… and questioned the book's claim to authority. [In addition] he objected to the chant itself, which reflected the post-Tridentine fashion of truncating the melodies and altering their rhythm.[155]

By a happy coincidence, the extract from the Pustet edition which Bergeron gives as an illustration, is the same chant as I used for my Track A. Bergeron refers to the Didot Font (itself an invention of a French designer, an enthusiast for neo-classicism) as 'impertinent'; and she refers to Pustet's musical notation as 'corpulent squares stuffed uncomfortably into staff lines'. This phenomenon can be seen in Ex. 2.2a below; and in Ex. 2.2b I have shown the same passage of chant as used at Solesmes and published in their *Liber Usualis.* The differences between the two examples are not simply a matter of the printing style; the illustrations show how the Pustet version

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[152] See K. Bergeron, *Decadent Enchantments: The Revival of Gregorian Chant at Solesmes*, Berkeley, CA: California University Press, 1998.

[153] See D.W. Krummel, Review of Bergeron, in *Notes*, Second Series, vol. 56, no 1, 1999, pp 151-153.

[154] See P. Jeffery, 'Solesmes High Mass -- or Low?' in *Early Music*, vol. 27, no 3, 1999, pp 483-485.

[155] See Bergeron, *Decadent Enchantments,* p. 39.

abbreviates the chant (from the version believed at Solesmes to be more original) and turns it into something much more square.

Ex. 2.2 a – Advent Introit 'Ad te levavi' (Pustet edition)[156]

Ex. 2.2 b – Advent Introit 'Ad te levavi' from *Liber Usualis*[157]

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[156] Ex. 2.2a is taken from Bergeron, *Decadent Enchantments*, p. 38.
[157] Ex. 2.2b is from the *Liber Usualis,* online edition, 1961, p. 318.

The story of the plainchant revival in England is told by Bennett Zon, whose book is a classic in this field.[158] A reviewer of this work comments that 'plainchant has served the musical needs of the Church from earliest times'.[159] A central theme of Zon's book is the role played by plainchant in a 'tumultuous time-segment of church music history in England'. He charts the revival of plainchant first in the Roman Catholic Church in the eighteenth century and subsequently in both the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches in the nineteenth century.

Jorma Hannikainen et al study the use of vernacular Gregorian chant and Lutheran hymn-singing in Finland at the time of the Reformation.[160] Marianne Gillion has published an article on the extensive melodic revision of plainchant in editions of the *Graduale Romanum* published in Italy from the late Sixteenth Century onwards.[161] Her findings 'demonstrate the complexity of the editorial process… and deepen our understanding of this multi-faceted repertoire'.[162]

Several of my participants make reference to the *performance* of plainchant. For example, Cheryl says that she is 'familiar with plainchant as a performer'; and Trebor says that he often enjoys 'live performances in monasteries and churches'. On the question of authenticity in the performance of ancient music, Katherine Bergeron refers to the 'powerful writing' of Richard Taruskin, applauding three aspects of his work: firstly his diagnosis – that very little 'historical' performance is, or can be, truly historical; secondly his judgement – that (nevertheless) historical performance practice is legitimate as a 'true' and even 'authentic' representation of modernist thinking; and thirdly his axiom – that the methods we use to base and judge scholarship are not those on which artistic performance is based: each may inform the other, but one cannot be reduced to the other.[163]

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[158] See B. Zon, *The English Plainchant Revival,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

[159] See T. N. Marier, Review of Zon, in *The Catholic Historical Review,* vol.86, no 3, 2000, pp 517-519.

[160] See J. Hannikainen et al., 'Vernacular Gregorian Chant and Lutheran Hymn-singing in Reformation-era Finland', in [same authors] *Re-Forming Texts, Music and Church Art in the Early Modern North,* Amsterdam University Press, 2016, pp 157-178.

[161] See M. Gillion, 'Editorial Endeavours: Plainchant Revision in Early Modern Italian Graduals', in *Plainsong and Medieval Music,* vol 29, no 1, 2020, pp 51-80.

[162] The Latin text of these particular Alleluias is *Ostende nobis Domine misericordiam tuam et salutare tuum da nobis* (Show us your mercy, O Lord, and grant us your salvation), which appears as *Psalm* 85:7 in the BCP version.

[163] See Bergeron, *Decadent Enchantments* (as above)*,* p. 14.

To conclude, this section on General Issues has alluded to studies on the history of plainchant, including the transition from oral to written communication; I have used relevant literature to illustrate the place of plainchant in Christian worship, about which much more will be said in subsequent chapters, and I have provided a glimpse into the literature on the way in which plainchant was at first corrupted, and then revived in a more authentic form, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The paragraphs which follow are more closely tied to the main themes of this thesis, dealing first with the issue of music and emotion, followed by reception, and then leading into the three themes of the evidence-based chapters, the ways in which plainchant (for my 30 participants and others) has evoked memories, helped to create a sense of serenity, and in some cases led to renewed experiences of a transcendent God.

2.2.0 MUSIC AND EMOTION

The whole of this thesis is, in a sense, related to the category of research into Music and Emotion, since I am seeking to establish how my informants *respond* to plainchant, how they perceive the music's *affective* dimension, and what *emotional and spiritual resonances* they find either in performing plainchant or listening to it. For my participant Craig, 'Plainchant is one of the most wonderful musical genres. It stirs the emotions like few others can. I enjoy it frequently in religious services and recreational listening.' Music has often been described as a 'language of emotion', yet many aspects are not fully understood. [164] Over the last twenty years or so, the interest in music as a research focus has been growing, and it is attracting attention from a wide range of disciplines: philosophy, psychology, sociology, musicology, neurobiology, anthropology, and computer science.[165] Questions on the emotional significance of music have been explored in a number of studies.[166] It was claimed in 2010 that emotion in response to music is common to different cultures and that

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[164] See D. Cooke, *The Language of Music*, OUP, 1959. This point is a recurring theme in P.A. Juslin and J.A. Sloboda, (eds), *Handbook of Music and Emotion[:] Theory, Research, Applications*, OUP, 2010.

[165] See V. Imbrasaitė and P. Robinson, 'Absolute or Relative? A New Approach to Building Feature Vectors for Emotion Tracking in Music', in *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Music and Emotion* (ICME3), Jyväskylä, Finland, 11th - 15th June 2013.

[166] See, for example, P. Juslin, G. Barradas, and T. Eerola, 'From Sound to Significance: Exploring the Mechanisms Underlying Emotional Reactions to Music' in *American Journal of Psychology,* vol. 128, 2015, pp 281–304. See also P. Juslin, L. Harmat, and T. Eerola, 'What Makes Music Emotionally Significant? Exploring the Underlying Mechanisms', in *Psychology of Music* vol. 42, 2014, pp 599–623.

therefore it is universal and related to the basic emotions in people.[167] But subsequent research in social psychology has sought to distinguish between types of response according to perceived categories of culture, whether they are 'individualist' or 'collectivist'.[168] Recently, doubts have been expressed about the notion of 'basic' or 'everyday' emotions; and 'constructivist' theories have been re-awakened.[169] Some aspects of this debate are unpacked below.

2.2.1 Music and psychology

On the importance of music for human psychology, Karen Schock has reminded us of Charles Darwin's statement on man's predilection for music, when he wrote that this 'must be ranked among the most mysterious [gifts] with which he is endowed'.[170] Schrock explains that …

> … the brain's auditory cortex, an area dedicated to hearing, is now known to process basic musical elements such as pitch and volume; the neighbouring secondary auditory areas digest more complex musical patterns such as harmony and rhythm.[171]

Schrock also quotes Oliver Sacks, who writes that 'Music seems to be the most direct form of emotional communication', and that 'Music evokes emotion, and emotion can bring with it memory… it brings back the feeling of life when nothing else can'.[172] Other writers on this topic have stated that …

> … music is linked to learning, and humans have a strong pedagogical predilection. Learning not only takes place in the development of direct musical

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[167] See I. Peretz, 'Towards a Neurobiology of Musical Emotions', in Juslin and Sloboda (eds), *Handbook* (as above)*,* pp 99-126.

[168] See P. Juslin et al., 'Prevalence of Emotions, Mechanisms and Motives in Music Listening: A Comparison of Individualist and Collectivist Cultures', in *Psychomusicology*, vol. 26, no 4, 2016, pp 293-326. This study found that spirituality, elation and episodic memory were more frequent in collectivist cultures, whilst melancholy and musical expectancy were more prevalent in individualist cultures.

[169] See J. Cespedes-Guevara, and T. Eerola, 'Music Communicates Affects, Not Basic Emotions – A Constructionist Account of Attribution of Emotional Meanings to Music' in *Frontiers in Psychology*, February 2018. See also T. Eerola, and J. Vuoskoski, 'A comparison of the discrete and dimensional models of emotion in music', in *Music Perception*, vol. 30, no 3, 2013, pp 307-340.

[170] See C. Darwin, *The Descent of Man: and Selection in Relation to Sex,* London: John Murray, 1871.

[171] See K. Schrock, 'Why Music Moves Us' in *Scientific American Mind,* vol. 20, no 4, 2009, p. 33.

[172] See O. Sacks, *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain*, New York, Picador, 2007.

skills, but in the connections between music and emotional experiences. Darwin understood both music and the consideration of emotion to be human core capabilities.[173]

In 2010 Derek Matravers reflected on some 'recent philosophical work' on the connection between music and the emotions.[174] He considered three main theories which he described as: -

- 'resemblance accounts' in which it is claimed that music 'presents emotion characteristics in appearances … [and that] … certain types of appearances are linked to the emotions even though they are not necessarily caused by a felt emotion;[175]

- 'imagination accounts' in which it is claimed that 'to hear music as expressive is to imagine, of the music, that it is something else… that is, we experience the music as the intentional communication of an emotion by virtue of its manifesting signs associated with the betrayal of that emotion'.[176]

- 'arousal or dispositional accounts' where it is thought that 'our experience is a conjunction of two components: the music and some non-cognitive state'; or that 'music puts the listener's body into states that would fit with or be appropriate to interacting with and simulating scenarios and terrains with certain features and with varying emotional valence'. [177]

Matravers finds all three categories problematic as they stand, but he suggests that 'room might be found for all these accounts, following Malcolm Budd'.[178]

Also attempting to elucidate the issue, Susan Hallam has written that …

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[173] See J. Schulkin and G.B. Raglan, 'The Evolution of Music and Human Social Capability', in *Frontiers of Neuroscience,* vol. 8, 2014, p. 292. See also E.O. Altenmüller, 'Music in Your Head', in *Scientific American Mind,* vol. 14, no 1, 2004, pp 24-31.

[174] See D. Matravers, 'Recent Philosophical Work on the Connection between Music and the Emotions', in *Music Analysis* vol. 29, 2010, pp 8-18.

[175] See S. Davies, *Musical Meaning and Expression,* New York: Cornell University Press, p. 261.

[176] See J. Levinson, 'The Aesthetic Appreciation of Music', in *The British Journal of Aesthetics,* vol. 49, no 4, 2009, pp 415-425.

[177] See C. O. Nussbaum, *The Musical Representation: Meaning, Ontology, and Emotion,* Mass Publications, 2007, p. 82.

[178] Here Matravers is referring to M. Budd, *Music and the Emotions: The Philosophical Theories*, Routledge, 1993, pp 137-142.

…most people engage with music throughout their lives. This may be through listening or active participation in music-making activities. Typically, this engagement has affective outcomes. Individuals use recorded music to manipulate personal moods, arouse emotions, and create environments that may influence the ways that other people feel and behave.[179]

And Tia DeNora has written that ….

… from the 1970s until recently the emphasis was on how music is *produced* [her italics]. But now there is 'a much sharper focus on what music can 'do'…. [resulting in a considerable enrichment of] our understanding of the interplay between cultural activity, emotional experience, the subjective experience of health and illness, and… clinically assessed changes in heath states'. [So] …music needs to be understood in terms of its (non-verbal) capacities for enabling and constraining its user(s). Within current sociology, this focus has been directed at how individuals come to appropriate [verb!] musical forms, and how musical forms feature within social settings as organizing materials of action. … Music may [also] be used – with varying degrees of conscious awareness… to construct self-identity and to create and maintain a variety of feeling states. [180]

DeNora also relates that nearly all the women in one of her studies, referred explicitly to music's role as an ordering device at the personal level, and to the need for a process of tuning in to listen. She tells us that the concept of 'emotion work' within recent sociology – a phrase coined by Arlie Hochschild – conceives of emotion as a 'bodily co-operation with an image, a thought, a memory – a co-operation of which the individual is aware'.[181] Some of DeNora's respondents described how they used music 'to regulate moods and energy levels….[making choices] on the basis of what they

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[179] See S. Hallam, 'Music Education: The Role of Affect', in Juslin and Sloboda, *Handbook* (as above)*, chapter 28, specifically p. 791.

[180] See T. DeNora, 'Emotion as Social Emergence: Perspectives from Music Sociology', in Juslin and Sloboda, *Handbook* (as above)*, chapter 7, para 7.3.

[181] See A. Hochschild, 'Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure', in *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 85, 1979, pp 551–75, esp. p. 551, fn 2.

perceived [certain items of] music to *afford*.[182] This perception (says De Nora) 'is shaped by a range of matters…[including] previous associations …. (biographical, situational), their understanding of the emotional implications of conventional music devices, genres and styles, and the perceived parallels… between musical …processes and social or physical … processes'.[183] These references to biographical and situational aspects relate directly to much of what my participants have stated, as recorded particularly in Chapters 4 and 5 below.

One of my interviewees for this project is a music therapist who opined (with reference to plainchant) that 'it is quite possible that a client hearing this type of music for the first time might be put in a calmer frame of mind'.[184] Suzanne Hanser, also a music therapist, examines 'the effect of music on stress, pain, immune and neurological function' with reference to 'four diverse conditions…: childbirth, depression, coronary disease and cancer.' She concludes that …

> … health and wellbeing are redefined, as research uncovers former mysteries of mind and body. Psycho-neuro-immunology has built a foundation for explaining the impact of music and emotion on health; and positive approaches to psychology have helped describe how music facilitates wellbeing…. Many psychologists, researchers and therapists …are devoting their careers to investigating new ways of exploring this extraordinary relationship.[185]

Studies with dementia patients have also revealed music's power to relieve anxiety.[186] But as recently as 2021, Huang et al stated that the 'brain mechanisms' by which

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[182] The notion of 'affordance' is complex, but in relation to music and emotion it might mean that certain items of music, in certain circumstances 'allow' the listener, or the performer, to feel certain emotions.

[183] See T. DeNora, 'Emotion as Social Emergence' (as above).

[184] This interviewee was Dr Angela Fenwick, the leader of the team at The Birmingham Centre for Arts Therapies.

[185] See S.B. Hanser, 'Music, Health and Wellbeing', in Juslin and Sloboda, *Handbook* (as above), chapter 30, para 30.9.

[186] See L. Vaduva and C. Warner, '"Don't Let Me Go", a Case-study on Music Therapy in Early-stage Dementia', in *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai – Musica,* vol. 66, 2021, pp 29-38.

musical interventions can help to moderate anxiety states 'remain unknown'.[187] Some individuals report feeling little or no pleasure when listening to music.[188] But …

> … listeners reported more intense emotions (1) to self-chosen music than to randomly selected music and (2) when listening with a close friend or partner than when listening alone. Moreover, [3] listeners scoring high on the trait openness-to-experience experienced more intense emotions than listeners scoring low. All three factors correlated positively with the experience of positive emotions such as happiness and pleasure.[189]

The degree to which listeners become 'absorbed' in music is also associated positively with their emotional responding.[190] Sometimes professional musicians show larger brain responses than amateurs do. Christian Mikutta et al found that …

> … professionals exhibited different and/or more intense patterns of emotional activation when they listened to the [given] music. The results of the … study underscore the impact of music experience on emotional reactions.[191]

The listener's age and the context are also relevant: older adults report more intense emotions than younger adults when listening to 'happy-sounding' music, and they exhibit higher levels of zygomatic activity when listening to 'scary-sounding' music.[192] Listening to music with a close friend rather than listening alone is associated with more intense and positive emotional responses. There is much debate as to whether

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[187] See B.X. Huang, X.T Hao, (...) and D.Z. Yao, 'The Benefits of Music Listening for Induced State Anxiety: Behavioral and Physiological Evidence', in *Brain Sciences,* vol. 11, no 10, 2021, Abstract, line 3, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8533701/

[188] See E. Mas-Herrero et al., 'Dissociation between Musical and Monetary Reward Responses in Specific Musical Anhedonia', in *Current Biology*, vol. 24, no 6, 2014, pp 699-704.

[189] See S. Liljeström, P.N. Juslin, and D. Västfjäll, 'Experimental Evidence of the Roles of Music Choice, Social Context, and Listener Personality in Emotional Reactions to Music', in *Psychology of Music*, vol. 41, 2013, pp 579–599, esp. p.579 (Abstract).

[190] See G. Kreutz, et al., 'Using Music to Induce Emotions: Influences of Musical Preference and Absorption', in *Psychology of Music,* vol. 36, 2008, pp 101–126. See also G.M. Sandstrom and F.A. Russo, 'Absorption in Music: Development of a Scale to Identify Individuals with Strong Emotional Responses to Music', in *Psychology of Music*, vol. 41, 2013, pp 216–228.

[191] See C.A. Mikutta et al., 'Professional Musicians Listen Differently to Music', in *Neuroscience*, vol. 268, 2014, pp 102–111, esp. p. 102 (Abstract).

[192] See S. Vieillard and A.L. Gilet, 'Age-related Differences in Affective Responses to and Memory for Emotions Conveyed by Music: A Cross-sectional Study', in *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 4, 2013, Article 00711.

music evokes the same emotions as other stimuli such as faces or stories. Does music induce utilitarian or everyday emotions (happiness, sadness, fear, anger, surprise) or does it induce strictly aesthetic emotions (such as wonder, awe, nostalgia)? Utilitarian emotions involve goal-relevant cognitive appraisals that motivate adaptive action tendencies, whereas aesthetic emotions are not goal-relevant and involve feelings of subjective pleasure in response to the structural characteristics of the stimulus itself.[193] Classical music is 'a genre that may be more strongly associated with aesthetic emotions than other genres such as heavy metal'.[194]

2.2.2 Cognitivism and Emotivism

There are big questions about the type of emotions generated by music. Back in 1990, Peter Kivy opined that music does not generally evoke emotions in listeners, it merely expresses the emotions that are perceived by listeners – this is the 'cognitivist' position; the opposing position has been called the 'emotivist position'. [195]

The emotivist position (or Basic Emotions Theory) traditionally claims that music directly induces emotion in listeners, whereas the cognitivist position (also known as Appraisal Theory) asserts that listeners can recognize the emotions, but do not actually feel them.[196] But it is arguable that these two positions need not be considered irreconcilable. Saam Trivedi defends a cognitive-affective view, stating that …

> … emotions are complexes that are composed of cognitive and affective elements. On the cognitive side, emotions are intentionally directed upon (or about) things in the world based on (often evaluative) beliefs, judgments, and

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[193] See K.R. Scherer, 'Which Emotions can be Induced by Music? What are the Underlying Mechanisms? And How can we Measure Them?', in *Journal of New Music Research*, vol. 33, 2004, pp 239–251.

[194] See M. Zentner, D. Grandjean and K.R. Scherer, 'Emotions Evoked by the Sound of Music: Characterization, Classification, and Measurement', in *Emotion*, vol. 8, 2008, pp 494-521.

[195] See P. Kivy, *Music Alone: Reflections on a Purely Musical Experience*, New York: Cornell University Press, 1990. Comparable distinctions are made between the 'absolutist/formalist' and 'referentialist/expressionist' positions, and also between notions of 'autonomous' and 'heteronomous' music.

[196] See T. Roder, J. Caporusso and R. Gsenger, 'Emotion and Experience While Listening to Music', Brain Cognition Emotion Music (BCEM) Conference, University of Kent, 2020.

the like. On the affective side, emotions feel particular ways from the inside — i.e., they have characteristic physical and psychological phenomenologies. [197]

This view is similar to the theories advanced earlier by Robert Solomon,[198] Patricia Greenspan[199] and Ronald de Sousa.[200] But Rory Allen (a contributor to ICME-3 in 2013) challenges the dominant psychological model of emotion which posits that a cognitive process (the appraisal) precedes, and results in, the corresponding emotion, including any induced state of physiological arousal. As a result of his work amongst people with autism, Allen suggests that musical emotions are in fact chimerical, consisting of components of separate naturalistic emotions combined in non-natural ways. For Allen: -

> The practical experience of music therapists appears to show that music evokes powerful and beneficial responses in people with emotional or social difficulties [and] it is reasonable to assume that it is music's raw emotional power that is responsible for these effects: music is after all the 'language of the emotions'. But this leads to a paradox: if a person is emotionally unreactive, how can it be that they respond so well to music, when by definition they have difficulties with understanding the language of emotions, which music is supposed to embody? [201]

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[197] See S. Trivedi, *Imagination, Music and the Emotions: A Philosophical Study,* New York: State University Press, 2017, pp 9-10, as reviewed by B. Polite, in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 78, no 1, 2020, p.117-120.

[198] See R. Solomon, *The Passions,* Notre Dame University Press, 1983. See also R. Solomon (ed), *What is an Emotion?* OUP, NY, 2003.

[199] See P. Greenspan, *Emotions and Reasons,* Routledge, NY, 1988.

[200] See R. de Sousa, *The Rationality of Emotion,* MIT Press, 1987. See also R. de Sousa, *Emotional Truth,* OUP, NY, 2011.

[201] See R. Allen, 'Are Musical Emotions Chimerical? Lessons from the Paradoxical Potency of Music Therapy', in G. Luck and O. Brabant (eds), *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Music and Emotion* (ICME3), Jyväskylä, Finland, 11th - 15th June 2013, para 1, (Introduction). See also M. Boso, et al., 'Effect of Long-term Inter-active Music Therapy on Behaviour Profile and Musical Skills in Young Adults with Severe Autism', in *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine,* vol. 13, no 7, 2007, pp 709-712. See also P. Kern et al., 'Use of Songs to Promote Independence in Morning Greeting Routines for Young Children with Autism', in *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, vol. 37, no 7, 2007, pp 1264-1271. See also T. Wigram and C. Gold, 'Music Therapy in the Assessment and Treatment of Autistic Spectrum Disorder: Clinical Application and Research Evidence', in *Child Care Health and Development,* vol. 32, no 5, 2006, pp 535-542.

The solution to this 'paradox' may possibly lie in the 'constructivist' position (see section 2.2.4 below).

2.2.3 The brain, evolution, rewards and preferences

One of the questions I asked my participants was how easily they could express a preference for one of the three tracks, and some indicated that they preferred the one with which they were most familiar: it was usually Track C, as for example when Paul referred to his 'familiarity with this form from years of Easter Day vigils'. In 2004, K.R. Scherer asked, 'Which emotions can be induced by music? what are the underlying mechanisms? and how can we measure them?'[202] For Schellenberg, (in 2008) 'familiarity is one mechanism that explains how music elicits emotional responding'.[203] This is clear from the responses of several of my participants as indicated, for example, in Chapter 4, section 4.4.5 below. The importance of familiarity was re-affirmed by Swathi Swaminathan and Glenn Schellenberg in 2015, but they stated that 'the role of other mechanisms remains unclear and contentious'.[204]

How important is the *cognitive* element? Some theorists suggest that music induces emotions without the need for cognitive appraisals. For example, one view holds that musically induced emotions are the result of automatic mirroring by listeners of the motor movements musicians use to communicate emotion.[205] Automatic mirroring is perhaps served by the mirror-neuron system, which spans cortical parieto-frontal motor regions.[206] In line with this view, it has been observed that activations in cortical motor regions are evident during music listening. But …

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[202] See K.R. Scherer, 'Which Emotions…?' (as above).

[203] See E. G. Schellenberg, 'Music, Language and Cognition: Unresolved Issues', in *Trends in Cognitive Sciences,* vol, 12, no 2, 2008, pp 45-6.

[204] See S. Swaminathan and E. G. Schellenberg, 'Current Emotion Research in Music Psychology', in *Emotion Review*, vol. 7, no 2, 2015, pp 189-197, esp. p. 191.

[205] See I. Molnar-Szakacs, and K. Overy, 'Music and Mirror Neurons: From Motion to 'E'motion', in *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, vol.1, 2006, pp 235-241.

[206] See G. Rizzolatti and C. Sinigaglia, 'The Functional Role of the Parieto-frontal Mirror Circuit: Interpretations and Misinterpretations', in *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, vol. 11, 2010, pp 264-274.

> … the emotion [which] listeners perceive in response to a musical piece is not always identical to the emotion experienced. Thus, mirroring cannot be the only mechanism of emotion induction.[207]

Some scholars favour the 'evolutionary' theory of musical emotion. For Robert McCrae it is significant that …

> … infants respond to musical cues, and some form of music is found in every culture; the tendency to create, perceive, and appreciate music must be part of evolved human nature. But since Darwin the reasons for this have remained a mystery.[208]

It is interesting, however, that participant Stephen remarked (after listening to Track C): 'More than anything it reminds me of having a story read to me as a child'.

McCrae explains that music may be a mere by-product of other evolved adaptations or a 'transformative technology' that, once invented, became an essential feature of human society.[209] Music may have evolved through sexual selection (as the custom of serenading suggests); it may confer adaptive advantages by promoting bonding with infants (through lullabies) or social cohesion among groups, as through national anthems.[210] But (for McCrae) none of those evolutionary hypotheses explains the unique connection of music to emotion. He then puts forward two other perspectives that do. Firstly, the idea (going back to Darwin) that music evolved from vocalizations that were used to communicate emotions, perhaps as part of a pre-linguistic precursor of both music and language.[211] Just as names presumably evolved from vocative addresses to individuals into nouns that could refer to the individuals in their absence,

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[207] See J.L. Chen et al., 'Moving on Time: Brain Network for Auditory-motor Synchronization is Modulated by Rhythm Complexity and Musical Training', in *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, vol. 20, 2008, pp 226–239

[208] See R.R. McCrae, 'Music Lessons for the Study of Affect', in *Frontiers in Psychology,* vol. 12*,* 2021, Article 760167. See also J. McDermott, 'The Evolution of Music', in *Nature*, vol. 453, 2008, pp 287–288, esp. p. 287 (Introduction).

[209] See S. Pinker, *How the Mind Works*. Norton NY, 1997. See also A.D. Patel, *Music, Language, and the Brain*, OUP, 2010, p. 401.

[210] See P. Savage et al., 'Music as a Co-evolved System for Social Bonding', in *Behind Brain Science*, 2020, pp 1-36.

[211] See C.T. Snowden, et al., 'Music Evolution and Neuroscience', in *Progress in Brain Research*, vol. 217, 2015, pp 17–34. See also N. Masataka, 'The Origins of Language and the Evolution of Music: A Comparative Perspective', in *Physics of Life Review*, vol. 6, 2009, pp 11-22.

so sounds that communicated a current emotional state (fear, distress, love) came to express or symbolize, these affects themselves. Secondly, that music co-evolved with language to compensate for the 'hypertrophy [enlargement] of cognition that language facilitated'. Leonid Perlovsky has argued that language promotes a focus on conceptual thinking, leaving behind the instinctual, emotional, and behavioural aspects of the person. Without a synthesis of all these aspects, people lack a sense of meaning in life. Music and musical emotion evolved because it restores the unity of the self and thus the will to live.[212] These arguments (says McCrae) …

> … provide an evolutionary rationale for the widespread belief that music is the language of emotion. The emotionality of music is not a cultural convention, invented in the Romantic era of Western music; it is the *raison d'être* of human music. If so, then music ought to be as central a concern to research on emotion as language is to research on cognition.[213]

Another evolutionary theory proposes that music arose from humming or singing intended to maintain infant-mother attachment: -

> The singing of lullabies to infants is universal, conveying meaning that is emotional rather than linguistic. … From the beginning, babies everywhere are predisposed to respond to certain maternal vocalizations that function as unconditioned stimuli that alert, please, soothe, or alarm the infant.[214]

A more recent example of the evolutionary approach shows how psychological mechanisms from our ancient past engage with meanings in music at multiple levels of the brain to evoke a broad variety of affective states — from startle responses to profound aesthetic emotions.[215]

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[212] See L. Perlovsky, 'Musical Emotions: Functions, Origins, Evolution', in *Physics of Life Review*, vol. 7, 2010, pp 2-27.

[213] See McCrae, 'Music Lessons for the Study of Affect' (as above – Introduction, para 4).

[214] See D. Falk, 'Prelinguistic Evolution in Early Hominins: Whence Motherese?', in *Behavioural and Brain Sciences*, vol. 27, 2004, pp 491-541, esp. p. 495, para 2.2.

[215] See P. Juslin, *Musical Emotions Explained: Unlocking the Secrets of Musical Affect*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2019.

On the notion of rewards, some recent studies have revealed increased activity in certain brain regions when people listen to music that is generally considered to be pleasurable. Unexpected changes in musical features (intensity and tempo) leading to enhanced tension and anticipation, are proposed to be one of the primary mechanisms by which music induces a strong emotional response in listeners.[216] For Reybrouck et al, a finding of special importance is 'that neural activity in the reward circuit of the brain is a key component of a conscious listening experience'.[217] In several studies, participants preferred music that balanced high uncertainty with low surprise and vice versa, suggesting that testing and improving predictions about music may be intrinsically rewarding.[218] Zhou et al made a distinction between 'smaller-but-sooner' rewards and 'larger-but-later' rewards, finding that people tended to prefer the former.[219] Eerola et al recently investigated the relationship between music reward sensitivity and the perception of emotions in music, taking into account the emotional category of stimuli (pleasant, neutral, or unpleasant clips). Music-reward and emotion-perception were explored as a function of gender, musicianship, and skills in musical discrimination.[220] Rewards are further demonstrated by the preferences which listeners express for particular types of music, and by the benefits which they derive from them. This issue is again relevant for me, since I asked participants to express a preference for one of the three tracks which I sent them. Preferences can be defined as a set of emotional-rational attitudes, which in turn affect the perception of a piece of music.[221] Rafał Lawendowski analysed the temporal stability of musical preferences as measured with the Short Test of Music Preferences (STOMP) which was tested within five months in a group of 88 people aged 20 to 58 years.[222] This test allows for

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[216] See H.-A. Arjmand et al., 'Emotional Responses to Music: Shifts in Frontal Brain Asymmetry Mark Periods of Musical Change', in *Frontiers in Psychology,* vol. 8, 2017.

[217] See M. Reybrouck, P. Vuust and E. Brattico, 'Neural Correlates of Music Learning: Does the Music Matter?', in *Brain Sciences,* vol.11, no 12, 2021, p. 1553 (Abstract)

[218] See B. Gold, 'Functional Connections Underlying the Reward and Pleasure of Musical Expectancies', in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA*, vol. 116, no 8, 2019, pp 3310-3315.

[219] See L.S. Zhou, Y.F. Yang and S. Li, 'Music-induced Emotions Influence Intertemporal Decision Making', in *Cognition and Emotion,* vol. 36, no 2, 2021, pp 211-229, esp. p. 211 (Abstract).

[220] See N. Fuentes-Sanchez, M. Carmen Pastor and T. Eerola, 'Individual Differences in Music Reward Sensitivity Influence the Perception of Emotions Represented by Music', in *Musicae Scientiae*, vol. 27, no 2, 2021, pp 313-331.

[221] See L. Finnas, 'A Comparison Between Young People's Privately and Publicly Expressed Musical Preferences', in *Psychology of Music*, vol. 17, no 2, 1989, pp 132–145.

[222] See P.J. Rentfrow and S.D. Gosling, 'The Do Re Mi's of Everyday Life: The Structure and Personality Correlates of Music Preferences' in *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* vol. 84, no 6*,* 2003, pp 1236-1256.

a relatively stable measurement of music preferences within that time-period.[223] Lawendowski's analysis revealed that the stability of the results of music preferences is high and constant; but he was concerned mainly with preferences between different genres, whereas I asked participants to express a preference within the same genre. Some other work on preferences suggested that unknown music producing higher arousal was found to receive higher preference ratings.[224] But (contradicting this) it was also found that 'familiarity is an important predictor of enjoyment', and that it 'generally increases "liking" or "preference" of the given musical stimuli'.[225]

2.2.4 Constructivism

In recent years, theories referring to basic emotions have been critiqued on the grounds that the evidence to support them is inconsistent.[226] Two radically new constructionist accounts of emotion in music have been proposed: the Psychological and the Social Construction Theories. The first of these argues that emotion cannot be equated with any one process or component, because emotional episodes are not all of one kind, and they do not all stem from one mechanism dedicated just to emotion.[227] Psychological Construction entails three sets of processes, those that produce: (a) the components [or materials – see below], (b) the associations among these components, and (c) the categorization of the pattern of components as a specific emotion'.[228]

In other words, 'people experience an emotion when they conceptualize an instance of affective feeling': in this view, the experience of emotion is 'an act of categorization,

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[223] See R. Lawendowski, 'Temporal Stability of Music Preference as an Indicator of their Underlying Conditionings', in G. Luck and O. Brabant (eds), *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Music and Emotion* (ICME3), Jyväskylä, Finland, 11th - 15th June 2013.

[224] See T. Schäfer et al., 'The Psychological Functions of Music Listening', in *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 4, 2013.

[225] See E. Schubert, 'The Influence of Emotion, Locus of Emotion and Familiarity upon Preference in Music', in *Psychology of Music*, vol. 35, no 3, 2007, p. 510. See also S.O. Ali, and Z.F. Peynirciolu, 'Intensity of Emotions Conveyed and Elicited by Familiar and Unfamiliar Music', in *Music Perception*, vol. 27, no 3, 2010, pp 177-182.

[226] See J. Cespedes-Guevara, and T. Eerola, 'Music Communicates…' (as above). See also D. van der Schyff and A. Schiavio, 'The Future of Musical Emotions' in *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 8, 2017, Article 00988.

[227] Some antecedents to current psychological construction theories include those of James (1884), Lange (1885), Wundt (1907), Bard (1928), Cannon (1929), Schacter and Singer (1962).

[228] See J.A. Russell, 'From a Psychological Constructionist Perspective', in P. Zachar and R. D. Ellis (eds), *Categorical Versus Dimensional Models of Affect: A Seminar on the Theories of Panksepp and Russell*, John Benjamins, 2012, pp 79-118. See also A. Moors, 'Integration of Two Sceptical Emotion Theories: Dimensional Appraisal Theory and Russell's Psychological Construction Theory', in *Psychological Inquiry,* vol. 28, 2017, pp 1-19.

guided by embodied knowledge about emotion'.[229] Applying this to music, the constructionist approach states that emotional or musical meanings are not inherent in expressive behaviours and musical sounds, but emerge from the interaction of three elements: firstly, the *materials* (i.e., the configuration of the facial expressions, the acoustic qualities of the voice, or the structure of the musical work), secondly, the knowledge and goals of the observer, and thirdly the characteristics of the situation where the expressive behaviour or musical work occurs. The Social Construction Theory emphasises the third aspect more strongly, claiming that emotions are elicited through 'social norms' (shared beliefs and rules) which provide the prototypes according to which emotions are constructed.[230] Such interactions produce the feeling of perceiving that a piece of music expresses emotions *as if* they were somehow 'within' the musical sounds.[231] The use of the term *as if* ties this approach very closely to the way in which theological statements are understood in non-realist interpretations; it also relates to the concept of *seeing-as* developed by Wittgenstein in relation to the famous duck-rabbit illustration (see Chapter 3, section 3.C.3 below). According to a recent formulation, the 'constructionist model constitutes a fruitful approach, as it provides a non-reductionist heuristic framework that produces new hypotheses for future investigation of affective experiences with music'.[232] This approach relates very closely to my own understanding of music, and of theology, and is helpful in understanding (and building upon) the insights of my participants.

Summarising the whole recent story of musical emotions, the data scientist Lindsay Warrenburg outlines the four main approaches (Basic Emotions, Appraisal Theory, Psychological Construction and Social Construction) in the following table, indicating their methodologies, brain processes and other significant factors (see Ex. 2.3 below) which serves to conclude this whole section on music and emotion.

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[229] See L.F. Barrett, 'Solving the Emotion Paradox: Categorization and the Experience of Emotion', in *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, vol. 10, 1, 2006, pp 20-46, esp. p. 20 (Abstract).

[230] See J.R. Averill, 'The Future of Social Constructionism', in *Emotion Review*, vol. 4, no 3, 2012, pp 215-220.

[231] See J. Cespedes-Guevara, and T. Eerola, 'Music Communicates….' (as above).

[232] See J. Cespedes-Guevara, 'Towards a Constructionist Theory of Emotion Induction by Music', in *PsyArXiv*. 2021, p. ii (Abstract).

Ex. 2.3 – The recent story of Musical Emotions [233]

	Methods	Evolution	Brain Modules	Development	Language	Cultural Context
Basic Emotions	fMRI, EEG, PET, facial emotions, self-report, lesion studies, cross-species analysis	Emotions are innate, functional responses that evolved from our ancestors	Each emotion has a unique neural substrate (cortical or subcortical)	Emotions are innate and are present at birth or shortly after birth	Language is of peripheral interest; what makes an emotion is a brain central state	Emotions can occur in non-human species and robots; emotional states are universal
Appraisal Theories	Self-report	Appraisals are innate, functional responses that evolved from our ancestors	An emotion may have a unique physiological pattern, but may not	Appraisals are innate and are present at birth or shortly after birth	We can only use language to access information about appraisals	Different situations can give rise to different appraisals; if the same appraisals are made, the same emotion will be experienced
Psychological Construction	Self-report, disproving basic emotions	Each emotion is a unique instance constructed on the spot. Emotional prototypes are learned through culture	The only thing that separates an emotion from the rest of cognition is its goal-relevance	The ability to develop emotional categories is innate; children learn emotional categories as they grow older	We can only use language to access information about emotions; language holds emotion concepts together	Emotions are a social reality that depend on enculturation of a person and the language one uses; emotions depend on interoceptive perception
Social Construction	Ethnographies, emotional lexicons, fMRI, historical documents, cultural myths/legends, observations	Emotions are passed down generations by way of learning from others in the culture	An emotion may have a unique physiological pattern, but may not. These patterns will differ for different cultures	Parents instill values and emotional concepts into their children; enculturation	Language will vary across cultures, leading to different collective intentionality across culture	Emotions are a social reality; different cultures will have different cultural scripts for emotion; new emotions can be acquired by moving to a different culture

2.3.0 Reception Theories

As stated in Chapter 1, my focus is on the reception of plainchant, mainly by listeners who are non-specialists. It is therefore important to give reception theories critical attention here. Most of such theories relate to the literary sphere, but many of the issues are relevant in a musical context. With regard to literature, a principal debate is whether the meaning of a text is primarily governed by authorial intention (the so-called substantialist or intentionalist position) or by the reader's perception of what the text might mean for him/her (the so-called pragmatic position).[234] Hans-Robert Jauss (1921-1997) and Wolfgang Iser (1926-2007) were the two seminal thinkers of German reception theory – (*Rezeptionsästhetik*).[235] Jauss favoured the pragmatic position, and his central concern was…

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[233] See L.A. Warrenburg, 'Comparing Musical and Psychological Emotion Theories', in *Psychomusicology: Music, Mind and Brain,* vol.30, no 1, 2020*,* pp 1-19. Note**:** 'interoceptive perception' (column 7, line 3) refers to a person's ability to identify, access, understand, and respond appropriately to the patterns of internal signals. See Cynthia J. Price and Carole Hooven, 'Interoceptive Awareness Skills for Emotion Regulation: Theory and Approach of Mindful Awareness in Body-Oriented Therapy (MABT)', in *Frontiers in Psychology*, May 2018.

[234] See G. Grimm, *Rezeptionsgeschichte*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1977, pp 10-31.

[235] See H.R. Jauss, 'Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory', Inaugural Lecture at University of Constance, 1967. See also H.R Jauss, 'Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory,' in *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, tr. T. Bahti, University of Minnesota Press, 1982.

… to wrest works of art from the past by means of new interpretations, to translate them into a new present, to make the experiences preserved in past art accessible again, to ask questions that are posed anew by every generation and to which the art of the past is able to speak and again give us answers.[236]

For Iser there must be some constraints on the interpretative freedom of the reader: he says that ….

…. the literary work has two poles, which we might call the artistic and the aesthetic: the artistic refers to the text created by the author, and the aesthetic to the realization accomplished by the reader. From this polarity it follows that the literary work cannot be completely identical with the text, or with the realization of the text, but in fact must lie halfway between the two.[237]

The pioneering work of Roman Ingarden (1893-1970) had been the starting point for the phenomenology of reading developed by Iser, whose work in English made him readily accessible in the English-speaking world. Robert C. Holub begins his introduction to reception-theory with reference to Jauss's essay 'The change in the paradigm in literary scholarship' (1969), showing how reception-theory was significant for the social and institutional changes in West Germany in the late 1960s (the era of *glasnost* and the fall of the Berlin wall).[238]   Holub demonstrates that the development of reception-theory has been neither smooth nor linear. This is borne out by Mark Everist, who comments that even in the 1990s, reception-theory had no confirmed place within the canon of literary theories.[239]

2.3.1 Substantialist and pragmatic theories

These two theories (in literature) are not competitive. Each approach offers different insights. The substantialist theory asserts that texts are created by specific authors at

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[236] See H.R. Jauss, 'Paradigmaweschel in der Literaturwissenschaft' in *Linguistische Berichte, v*ol. 3, 1969, pp 54f. Translated and quoted in R. C. Holub, *Reception Theory,* Methuen, 1984, pp 3f.

[237] See W. Iser, "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," in *New Literary History*, vol. 3, no 2, 1972, pp 279-299. See also R. Cohen (ed), *New Directions in Literary History*, London: Routledge, 1974, p. 125.

[238] See R.C. Holub, *Reception Theory: A Critical Introduction,* North Yorkshire: Methuen, 1984, chapter 1.

[239] See M. Everist, 'Reception Theories, Canonic Discourses, and Musical Value', in N. Cooke and M. Everist (eds), *Rethinking Music*, *Reception Studies*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp 378-402.

specific times and bear a limited range of meanings which the authors could have intended and which were, in principle, open to the texts' first readers or audiences. The pragmatic theory claims that the meanings of texts and their critical assessments vary with time, with place, and with the specific characteristics of readers. No reader reads a text without some experiences and some expectations; what is got out of a text is always in part a function of these experiences.[240]

As Martyn Thompson writes: -

> The meaning of a text is literally created in the act of its being read. Th[is] theory is pragmatic in that it posits that the meaning of any given text varies according to the practical circumstances in which it is read.[241]

The two theories present different perspectives on the character of what is written, and I submit that it is useful to adopt a middle-way between the two groups of theories by stating that any artwork must have been produced in accordance with the ways of thinking in its era of production, but, at the same time, saying that any artwork is open to various interpretations as it is seen or read by people in different eras. This is as true for a musical work as it is for works of literature or visual art. In the context of plainchant (just as of ancient literature) there is rarely any evidence of authorial intention. The *meaning* of plainchant becomes manifest when it is performed and/or heard; whilst the original intentions of its composers are shrouded in mystery, its modern reception can be overlaid with various interpretations according to the musical and psychological pre-dispositions of those who hear and (in some cases) perform it.

2.3.2 Synthesis?

A middle-way approach is also proposed by Michael Eckert. He suggests 'a synthesis of phenomenological and reception theories, both of which focus on the importance of the reader's interaction with the text'.[242] This kind of hermeneutic exercise was originally developed by Schleiermacher, who would accept that the message *means*

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[240] See M. P. Thompson, 'Reception Theory and the Interpretation of Historical Meaning', in *History and Theory*, vol. 32, no 3, 1993, pp 248-272.
[241] See Thompson, 'Reception Theories' (as above), p. 251.
[242] See M. Eckert, 'Hermeneutics in the Classroom: An Application of Reception Theory', in *CEA Critic*, vol. 46, numbers 3 and 4, 1984, pp 5-16, esp. p. 5 (introductory para).

one thing, but that receiving the message involved an element of inter-subjective exchange; as, in the Socratic dialogue, the author might guide the interpreter by a process of question and answer. Schleiermacher's successor, Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), modified the process by stressing the importance of historical consciousness – the *distance* between the author and the interpreter. [243] Heidegger and others argue for the possibility of various textual meanings.[244] For Heidegger the interpreter brings to the work an 'anticipatory resoluteness' without which the interpretation cannot be meaningful.[245] Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) pursues this line, saying that such anticipatory understanding (which he calls prejudice, in a non-pejorative sense – it could be called *pre-understanding*) is part of a tradition which makes application possible: the *work* is an actualization of a particular lived experience.[246] This is particularly true in the context of plainchant, where each *work* (chant) reflects and expresses the experiential response of an ancient community to particular biblical texts. Jauss emphasises how the reception of a work influences society, and vice versa. Jean-Paul Sartre describes the purpose of literary experience (which could equally well apply to music-listening) as a revelation of the reader's *pour soi* or essence, through fusion in the text of authorial and readerly perceptions.[247] Maurice Merleau-Ponty refers to the way in which the reader (or, we could say, the listener) can grasp the world of lived experience as expressed in the text.[248] This grasping consists of several stages of perception: the recognition, and then the suspension of one's *natural attitude* (what Husserl called *epoché* – setting aside); the phenomenological description and then the transcendental analytic.[249] The Geneva critics focussed on the manner in which the voice of the text reveals itself and certain

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[243] See W. Dilthey, *Das Wesen der Philosophie (The Essence of Philosophy),* 1907, tr. S. A. Emery and W. T. Emery, Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press,1954 & 2020.

[244] The others include Jauss and Hans-Georg Gadamer (see below).

[245] See M. Wheeler, 'Martin Heidegger' in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, online, para 2.3.2, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/heidegger/#AntRes

[246] See H-G. Gadamer, G. Barden, J. Cumming and D.E. Linge, 'Truth and Method', in *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion,* vol. 8, no 1, 1977, pp 67-72. On the tension between the monists and the pluralists, see D. C. Hoy, *The Critical Circle,* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978.

[247] See especially J-P Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology* (1943), tr. H.E. Barnes, Routledge (2nd edition), 2003.

[248] See M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945) tr. D.A. Landes, London: Routledge, 2012.

[249] see Chapter 3 below.

themes to the reader.[250] Meanwhile Ingarden and Mikel Dufrenne concentrated on the structure of the work itself as well as on the experience of it.[251]

2.3.3 Applications

The American literary critic Stanley Fish (b. 1938) accepts the inter-subjective nature of interpretation, as justification for a plurality of interpretative possibilities.[252] Eckert applies this to the classroom; and one can equally apply his words to the music-listening experience. The first stage begins with what Heidegger and Gadamer call pre-understanding, and what Merleau-Ponty calls the natural attitude: the expectations that recipients bring to a work of art, expectations which are determined by their belonging to an essentially historical interpretative community. These expectations can sometimes be disappointed by their encounter with the work, so interpreters may attempt to resolve their disappointment by channelling their frustration into an inter-subjective dialogue with the work. One might equally well say that listeners enter into a dialogue with the music (perhaps guided by the questions of a researcher); the listener (perhaps aided by the researcher to appreciate the *meaning* of the music in its original context) searches for its present meaning – ways in which it can illuminate/reflect his/her own experiences.[253]

From the late 1960s the shift in perspective represented by reception-theory was registered by musicology. Examples include Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht's classic study of Beethoven reception, with its emphasis on the social construction of musical meanings and the ideology that informs them;[254] and the study on Chopin reception by Zofia Lissa, who opined that music was heard 'with different ears' in particular

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[250] Specifically, the Geneva critics meant here are Marcel Raymond, Albert Beguin, Georges Poulet, Jean Pierre Richard, Jean Rousset, and Jean Starobinski. For accounts of their influence, see S. N. Lawall, *Critics of Consciousness*, CUP, 1968, and J. H. Miller, 'The Geneva School', in *Critical Quarterly*, Winter 1966.

[251] See R. Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art: An Investigation on the Borderlines of Ontology, Logic, and Theory of Literature* (1931), tr. E.S. Casey et al., Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973; see also M. Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973.

[252] See S. Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class*?, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980.

[253] This account of the Socratic dialogue is idealized, assuming that the direction of the questions and answers is not rigidly 'fed' or determined.

[254] See H. H. Eggebrecht*, Zur Geschichte der Beethoven Rezeption (On the History of Beethoven Reception)*, Mainz,1972; see also H.H. Eggebrecht, *Understanding Music: The Nature and Limits of Musical Cognition,* tr. R. Evans, Ashgate, 1999 and 2010. See also M.E. Bonds, *The Beethoven Syndrome: Hearing Music as Autobiography,* Oxford Academic, 2020, Chapter 5, at
 https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190068479.003.0006

countries, remarking on just how susceptible music can be to appropriation.[255] More recent German scholarship has sought a middle way between the views of these two writers. In Anglo-American scholarship, the *new musicologies* developed in 1970s and 1980s undermined any assumption of an autonomous meaning for the musical work. With regard to plainchant, John Butt refers to 'the most spectacular musical revival of the nineteenth century, the restoration of an entire repertory, performance practice and life-style by the monks of Solesmes'.[256] Jennifer Bain has pointed out that revival and reception, though not the same thing, are closely related.[257]

2.4.0 A THEMATIC APPROACH: Memory, Serenity and Transcendence

As background to the evidence chapters, I now present a thematic approach to relevant literature not yet discussed above. Chapters 4 to 6 of this thesis are organized around three main topics identified by my participants, viz. (1) Memory, (2) Serenity, and (3) Transcendence.[258] My approach to these topics has been guided by a wide range of scholarly work from various disciplines; and in the following paragraphs I demonstrate how and why certain approaches have been important for the interpretation of my data.

2.4.1 Relevant Literature on Memory

It will be clear in Chapter 4 that certain memories were evoked for my participants when they listened to the plainchant tracks which I provided for them, as when Katisha wrote that Track C 'brought back memories of the church I attended as a teenager'. As an aid to analysing their comments on their memories, I have studied the way in which memory has been a subject of investigation by many twentieth-century psychologists, and remains an active area of study for today's cognitive scientists.[259]

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[255] A 1960 article by Lissa is quoted by H. Goldberg, 'Chamber Arrangements of Chopin's Concert Works', in *The Journal of Musicology, v*ol. 19, no 1, 2002, pp 39-84.

[256] See J. Butt, *Playing with History: Musical Performance and Reception,* Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press*,* 2002, p. 165.

[257] See J. Bain, *Hildegard of Bingen and Musical Reception*, Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 5.

[258] My original label for the second of these was 'emotion', but subsequently it became clear that aspects of the 'music-and-emotion' issue are present in all three areas: memories evoke emotions; perceptions of transcendence are closely linked with emotion. So, I have used the label 'serenity' (a word employed by more than one participant) in the heading for Chapter 5 and for this particular sub-section of the present chapter.

[259] See S.A. McLeod, 'Stages of Memory: Encoding, Storage and Retrieval', at https://www.simplypsychology.org/memory.html 2007. See also https://www.psychologistworld.com/memory/influential-memory-psychology-studies-experiments

It is generally agreed that memory consists of three cognitive processes: (a) encoding, (b) storage, and (c) retrieval; and that there are three main ways in which information can be encoded: visual, acoustic and semantic. There are many ramifications of these views on how memory works: the 'multi-store' model was proposed by Richard Atkinson and Richard Shiffrin in 1968.[260] They suggested that information exists in one of three stages of memory, viz. sensory memory (Stage 1), short-term memory (STM - Stage 2) and long-term memory (LTM - Stage 3). Information passes from one stage to the next the more we rehearse it in our minds, but it can fade away if we do not pay enough attention to it. Fergus Craik and Robert Lockhart were critical of the multi-store model, and in 1972 they produced an alternative explanation known as the 'levels-of-processing' effect.[261] They distinguished between two types of processing which take place when we make an observation: *shallow* and *deep* processing. The former means that (for example) we quickly forget the faces of people we meet in the street but do not know; the latter, also known as semantic processing, entails focussing on a particular stimulus and *rehearsing* it repeatedly, as (for example) when we think about the consequences of a particular event. Alan Baddeley and Graham Hitch broadly supported the multi-store model but they viewed the short-term memory concept as too simplistic, proposing instead a *working memory* model. They suggested that there are two components of short-term memory (a) a visuo-spatial sketchpad (the 'inner eye') and an articulatory-phonological loop (the 'inner ear'), both working independently of one another but regulated by a 'central executive' which collects and processes information from the visual and auditory components. [262] They saw this as analogical to the way a computer processor handles data held separately on a hard disk. George A. Miller (in a study that has been described as one of the classics in the history of psychology[263]) put forward his 'magic-number' theory. He questioned the limits of the capacity of the STM, asserting that it could only hold a few chunks of information, before needing to rehearse them for long-term storage. The 'magic

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[260] See R.C. Atkinson and R.M. Shiffrin, 'Human Memory: A Proposed System and its Control Processes', in K.W. Spence and J.T. Spence (eds), *The Psychology of Learning and Motivation*, New York Academic Press, 1968, pp 89-195.

[261] See F.I.M. Craik and R.S. Lockhart, 'Levels of Processing: A Framework for Memory Research', in *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior,* vol. 11, 1972, pp 671-684.

[262] See A.D. Baddeley and G.J. Hitch, 'Working Memory', in G.A. Bower (ed), *Recent Advances in Learning and Motivation*, vol. 8, pp 47-90, New York: Academic Press, 1974.

[263]See
https://psychclassics.yorku.ca/author.htm#:~:text=Freud%2C%20Sigmund.,origin%20and%20development%20of%20psychoanalysis.

number (he said) is seven, plus or minus two.[264] Following on from Miller, Lloyd R. Peterson and Margaret J. Peterson sought to measure the longevity of memories, conducting experiments which suggested that an STM might often remain intact for less than 20 seconds.[265] Roger Brown and James Kulik recognized the phenomenon of 'flash-bulb' memories, referring to moments such as learning of the assassination of J.F. Kennedy, or the collapse of the twin towers in New York.[266] Their work (and that of others on this topic) was recently reviewed by William Hirst and Elizabeth Phelps.[267] Work on memory and olfaction was done by Arnie Cann and Debra Ross; and more recently by Jordan Gaines Lewis, and other researchers.[268] Lewis tells us that incoming smells are first processed by the olfactory bulb which starts inside the nose and runs along the bottom of the brain. The olfactory bulb has direct connections to two brain areas that are strongly implicated in emotion and memory: the amygdala and the hippocampus. Visual, auditory and tactile types of information do not pass through these brain areas. This may be why olfaction, more than any other sense, is so successful at triggering emotions and memories.[269] As long ago as 1932, John A. McGeoch suggested that what had previously been known as 'decay theory' should be replaced by the notion of interference theory.[270] Then, in 1957 Benton J. Underwood revisited the classic Ebbinghaus forgetting-curve (see Ex. 2.4 below) and found that much forgetting was due to interference from previously learned materials. In other words, proactive inhibition is more important or meaningful than retroactive inhibition in accounting for forgetting.[271]

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[264] See https://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Miller/ for an internet version of G.A. Miller, 'The Magical Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two: Some Limits on our Capacity for Processing Information', first printed in *Psychological Review,* vol. 63, 1956, pp 81-97. Miller's paper was first read as an Invited Address before the Eastern Psychological Association in Philadelphia on April 15, 1955.

[265] See L. R. and M. J. Peterson, 'Short-term Retention of Individual Verbal Items', in *Journal of Experimental Psychology,* vol. 58, no 3, 1959, pp 193-198.

[266] See R. Brown and J. Kulik, 'Flashbulb Memories', in *Cognition*, vol. 5, 1977, pp 73-79.

[267] See https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721415622487 This article was published in February 2016.

[268] See J.G. Lewis, 'Smells Ring Bells: How Smells Trigger Memories and Emotions' at https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/brain-babble/201501/smells-ring-bells-how-smell-triggers-memories-and-emotions See also A. Cann and D.A. Ross, 'Olfactory Stimuli as Context Cues in Human Memory', in *The American Journal of Psychology,* vol. 102, no 1, 1989, pp 91-102.

[269] See R.S. Herz et al., 'Neuro-Imaging Evidence for the Emotional Potency of Odor-Evoked Memory', in *Neuropsychologia,* vol. 42, 2004, pp 371-378.

[270] See E.R. Hilgard, *Psychology in America: A Historical Survey*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987.

[271] See B.J. Underwood, 'Interference and Forgetting', in *Psychological Review*, vol. 64, no 1, 1957, p. 49.

<u>Ex. 2.4 – The Ebbinghaus Forgetting Curve</u> [272]
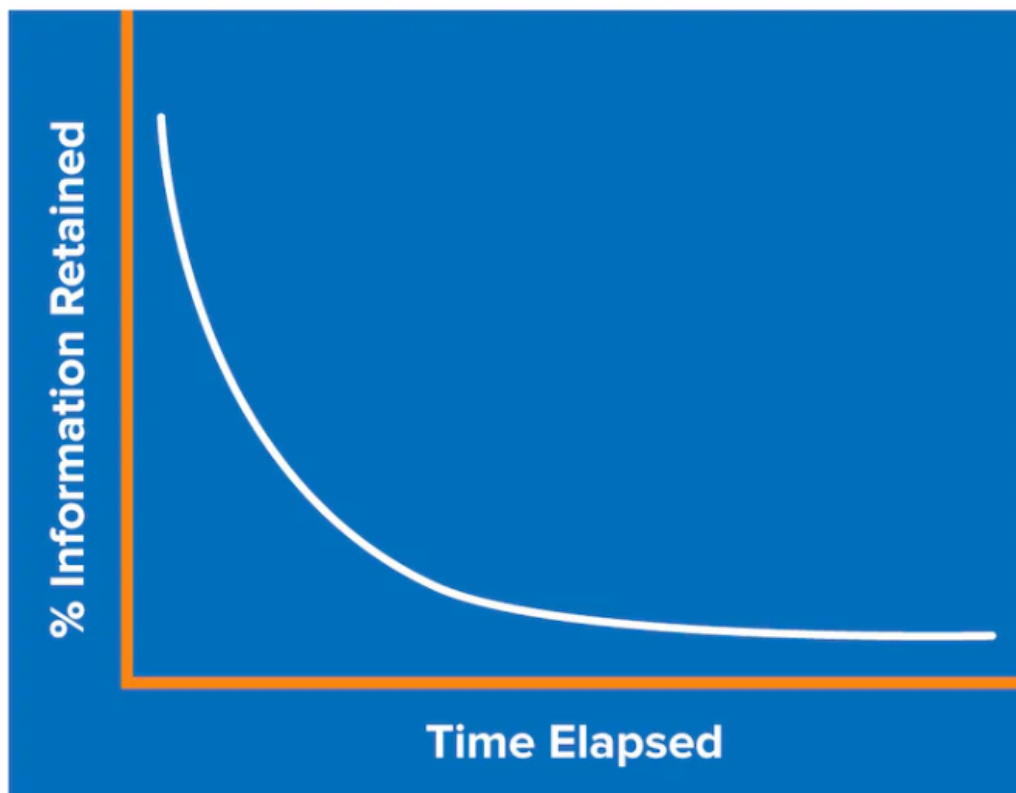
In 1960, Benton J. Underwood and Leo Postman also asserted that we forget certain memories due to interference by other memories.[273]. False memories might arise (for example) in relation to the testimony of eye witnesses in criminal trials [or to the writing of the Gospels!]. The key researchers here were Elizabeth F. Loftus and John C. Palmer (1974) followed by John C. Yuille and Judith Cutshall (1986).[274] This issue has been further investigated by several twenty-first-century researchers, whose approach greatly assists my analysis of the data from my participants.[275]

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[272] See https://www.mindtools.com/a9wjrjw/ebbinghauss-forgetting-curve

[273] See B.J. Underwood and L. Postman, 'Extra-experimental Sources of Interference in Forgetting', in *Psychological Review*, vol. 67, no 2, 1960, pp 73-95.

[274] See E.F. Loftus and J.C. Palmer, 'Reconstruction of Auto-mobile Destruction: An Example of the Interaction between Language and Memory', in *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, vol. 13, 1974, pp 585-589. See also See J.C. Youille and J.L. Cutshall, 'A Case Study of Eyewitness Memory of a Crime', in *Journal of Applied Psychology,* vol*.* 71, 1986, p. 291.

[275] See T. Buchanan, 'Retrieval of Emotional Memories', in *Psychological Bulletin* vol. 133, no 5, 2007, pp 761-779. See also C.J. Brainerd et al., 'How Does Negative Emotion Cause False Memories?', in *Psychological Science,* vol. 19, no 9, 2008, pp 919-925.

A recent study of memory (in general), by Philippe Tortell et al, explores the fragility and fluidity of memory, and its capacity to convey different meanings across time and space.[276] The insights of neurological science into how memories are formed, archived and retrieved can aid our understanding of the tendency for human memories to change over time. Memory is malleable, and this has implications for the administration of legal justice and for our understanding of 'shifting ecological baselines in the face of an expanding human footprint on natural systems'.[277] Humans devise commemorations and ceremonies which either reinforce or challenge dominant cultural narratives. Those who regularly attend celebrations of the Mass or Eucharist (for example) are almost inevitably made aware of the extent to which an ethic of sharing challenges many of the norms of today's world. Tortell's collection of essays makes the reader aware of how memories have been transmitted over thousands of years through indigenous oral histories, story-telling, and embodied cultural practices. This is precisely what has happened in Christian history, and what is acted out each time the Mass is celebrated, with or without the use of plainchant or other music.

Memory and history are explored in some depth by Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005) who considers the question of how the past 'bears upon' the present. He asks why it sometimes seems that history 'over-remembers' some events at the expense of others; and he shows how the relationship between remembering and forgetting affects our perceptions of the past and the production of historical narrative.[278] Ricoeur wanted to transform history into a discipline which could provide answers to the great existential questions raised by what he called 'our modernity'. He saw it as a good thing that the 'consolations of religion' and the 'certainties of metaphysics' had been demystified, thus forcing Western humanity to face its responsibility 'to and for history'.[279] But he is reported to have admitted towards the end of his life that he had not taken sufficient account of the relationship between history and memory. For Hayden White (reflecting on Ricoeur's work of fifty years) it is memory that…

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[276] See P. Tortell, M. Turin and M. Young (eds), *Memory*, Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies, 2018.

[277] See C. J. Forbes et al., 'Shifting Baselines in a Changing World', in *Anthropocene,* vol. 2, 2018, pp 81-93.

[278] See P. Ricoeur, *La Mémoire, L'Histoire, L'Oubli* (2000) tr. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

[279] See H. White, 'Guilty of History? The *Longue Durée* of Paul Ricoeur', in *History and Theory,* vol. 46, no 2, 2007, pp 233-251.

> … forces us to confront the enigma of how what is past can perdure into the present, and, no matter how we might wish it, that refuses to go away on command but remains present to consciousness, even getting in the way of perception, and pressing for attention however distracted we may be by current affairs.[280]

In contrast with the notion that ideologies can 'distort' history, Ricoeur argues that the only distortion of historical reality is that which purports to be completely and unequivocally 'true'.[281] Thus, we are warned against the dangers of claims to *objectivity* in any literary venture! As applied to this current research it behoves the writer to take seriously all of the insights and opinions of the participants, when weaving them into a theological study of the impact of plainchant, particularly in the context of worship. The results of such weaving will, I hope, become clear in my final chapter.

For comments specifically on plainchant and memory, we turn to Franz Karl Prassl who wrote (in 2013) as follows: -

> In medieval life, church music, especially Gregorian chant, serves to create many acoustic memories: daily events and various times and occasions. Examples of this [perception of time through the medium of music] include church bells, the melodies of the *Kyrie eleison*, chanted readings, the use of hymn tunes, and melodic formulae as theological messages.[282]

Prassl refers to 'acoustic perception and related conditioning' in the context of monastic life, (a context which, he admits, is 'foreign', even to practising Christians today) where 'the passing of each day, week, and year is closely ordered through liturgy, manual labour, academic study, and recreational periods'. Using various extant documents (*libri ordinarii*, etc) it is possible to explore the daily routines of spiritual communities from the Middle Ages, where, in the daily performance of up to six hours' worth of liturgy, music (as an 'integral component') played a central role, well beyond

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[280] See White, 'Guilty of History? (as above), p. 234.
[281] See White, 'Guilty of History? (as above), p. 235.
[282] See F.K. Prassl, 'Pavlov's Dog and the Liturgy: Listening and Recognition in Gregorian Chant', in *De Musica Disserenda*, vol. 9, numbers 1-2, 2013, pp 253-269, specifically p. 253 (Abstract).

mere aesthetics.[283] None of my participants is a current member of a monastic order; but Holly is a former Nun, who 'used to be Cantrix regularly'. Monastic discipline is generally less strict today than it was in medieval times, but it still involves formal worship on a daily basis; and in such worship chanting still forms an 'integral component' as Holly's testimony makes clear.[284]

Prassl goes well beyond the topic of memory, to explore concepts of time, faith, eternity and the value of music in worship; these are all subjects with which this thesis is concerned, at various points. Prassl demonstrates that memory, serenity and transcendence cannot be put into water-tight compartments: and many of my participants reveal in various ways that they reach the 'up' *through* the 'back' and the 'in'. Prassl writes: -

> Time in the context of the spiritual place is to be consciously experienced and reflected, as this time is also a directional time aimed at the eventual goal of life: eternity. In this sense, the liturgical year is rarely understood as a circle, but rather as a spiral: with each turn (that is to say, with each passing of another year) there is a deeper engagement not only with musical associations, but with the very essence of faith. St Augustine was deeply sceptical when it came to music in the liturgy. He was frequently pained by the question of whether music would keep humans at the surface, or assist them in approaching the unexplainable. In the end, his own musical experience led the great teacher to favour sacred music as a crucial element of each liturgy—not, however, without attaching a crucial caveat: music would only be useful if performed professionally and to a high standard.[285]

It will be seen that standards of performance (and recording) were critical issues for a number of my participants, as when Cantor observes (referring to Track C) that 'the solo performance helps towards clarity' or when Joanna says that, when listening to

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[283] See Prassl, 'Pavlov's Dog…' (as above), p. 254.
[284] See the quotes from Holly in section 4.4.2. Tim also, as a cathedral precentor for 14 years, was (and is) thoroughly accustomed to the discipline of daily worship.
[285] See Prassl, 'Pavlov's Dog…' (as above) p. 266.

Track A, she was 'continually distracted because of the poor quality of recording which meant that some phrases seemed to begin sharp'.

2.4.2 Relevant Literature on Serenity

As a means of inducing a sense of wellbeing, music is believed by many 'to usher in bliss and serenity'. As Madhusudan Singh Solanki et al maintain, music ….

> … has an emotionally charging charisma of its own, that we all as listeners might have experienced at times. Music has been there with mankind since the beginning of history… and certainly promises more than just entertainment. Evidence so far suggests music therapy can be beneficial in the treatment of psychiatric disorders, as a cost-effective non-invasive adjunct to standard therapy in a variety of settings and patient groups…[286]

References to music and serenity are found mainly in the programme notes of recorded music, including one disk containing an item attributed to Pope Innocent III (c.1160-1216).[287] Another disk features choral and orchestral music under the heading 'Serenity – the beauty of Arvo Pärt'.[288]

Referring specifically to plainchant, Michael Spitzer notes the views of Augustine in a chapter on 'the emotion of chant' in a book that claims to be 'the first history of musical emotion in any language'.[289] Spitzer quotes a dictum of Augustine: 'Sing in jubilation - Do not seek for words as though you could explain what God delights in'.[290] Augustine (as Spitzer interprets him) associated song in general with a joyful response to the love of God; and he believed that the intensity of this emotion exceeds the expressive capacity of language. In medieval times, when a *jubilus* was sung as a melismatic continuation of the *Alleluia* chant, this was believed to represent the music

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[286] See M.S. Solanki et al., 'Music as a Therapy: Role in Psychiatry', in *Asian Journal of Psychiatry*, vol. 6, no 3, 2013, pp 193-199, specifically p. 193 (Abstract).

[287] See P. Mealor, 'The Same Stream' (Choral Music), Naxos, Hong Kong, 2020.

[288] The orchestral element was provided by the English Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Neeme Järvi Hong Kong, Naxos, 2012.

[289] See M. Spitzer, *A History of Emotion in Western Music: A Thousand Years from Chant to Pop*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. See Abstract at https://academic.oup.com/book/31970?login=true.

[290] See Spitzer, *A History* (as above), ch. 5 section 2 at https://academic.oup.com/book/31970/chapter/267711941
See also G. Cattin, *Music of the Middle Ages,* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 162.

of the angelic hosts. A particularly famous Offertory chant is *Iubilate Deo universa*, whose concluding musical phrase is as follows: -

Ex 2.5 – Excerpt from 'Jubliate Deo universa'[291]

For Spitzer: -

> It is easy to imagine these waves of jubilation embodying the rise and fall of the will in Augustine's theory, striving toward the Divine, attaining it momentarily with the [top] F crest of the melisma, only to sink back to earth at the end.[292]

A similar interpretation of a particular chant was given by one of my informants.[293]

It seems likely that music evokes mainly positive emotions in listeners, as suggested by studies using the 'experience-sampling methodology' (ESM) introduced to the literature by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi et al.[294] In 2008 Marcel Zentner et al produced a list of 66 emotions 'that had been judged to be more than just occasionally experienced across a variety of musical genres'. For these writers, music was particularly effective in evoking 'peaceful' emotions.[295] In the same year Juslin et al reported 'calm-contentment, happiness-elation and interest-expectancy' as the most common reactions.[296] This is certainly borne out by my research on the reception of plainchant. But we should note that music does not *always* evoke emotions. Much depends on factors in the music, in the listener, and in the situation.[297] In 2001, Alf Gabrielsson

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[291] See Spitzer, *A History* (as above), p. 186.

[292] See Spitzer, *A History* (as above), p. 187.

[293] See Chapter 5 (below) Ex.5.2 (S*ervasti bonum)* and the comments on the chant by Peter Allan, of the Community of the Resurrection.

[294] See J.M. Hektner, J.A. Schmidt and M. Csikszentmihalyi, *Experience Sampling Method: Measuring the Quality of Everyday Life,* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2007.

[295] See M.R. Zentner, D. Grandjean, and K.R. Scherer, 'Emotions Evoked by the Sound of Music: Characterization, Classification, and Measurement', in *Emotion*, vol. 8, 2008, pp 494-521.

[296] See P.N. Juslin et al., 'An Experience Sampling Study of Emotional Reactions to Music: Listener, Music, and Situation', in *Emotion*, vol. 8, 2008, pp 668-83.

[297] It was notable in this context that one of my participants said he found it 'difficult to listen to plainchant at home'. See Chapter 6, section 6.1 below.

reported his conviction that music could evoke 'just about any emotion felt in other realms of human life'.[298] At about the same time, the Geneva Emotional Music Scale (GEMS) listed nine factors: Wonder, Transcendence, Tenderness, Nostalgia, Peacefulness, Power, Joyful activation, Tension, and Sadness.[299] In a more recent study, Juslin et al found that substantial majorities of participants referred to positive emotions; and also to 'pure' or single emotions. [300] Not many people mentioned 'being moved' (too vague) or experiencing 'wonder' or 'chills'. Juslin has indicated that he is not satisfied with the GEMS scale because …

> … it lacks some musically relevant categories such as *interest* and *surprise*; and it places arguably different emotions (e.g*., anxiety, irritation*) in the same category; it under-estimates the extent to which music evokes negative emotions such as *boredom* (when we are unable to choose the music!); and it lacks some aesthetically relevant terms such as *awe*.[301]

2.4.3   Relevant Literature on Transcendence

I have already mentioned in Chapter 1, and I will press this point in Chapter 6, that plainchant, because of its ancientness, its simplicity, and its continuing appeal to modern listeners, facilitates in a poignant way a bridge (at least in Western cultures) between humanity and the divine. I will refer later in this section to Christopher Page who gives a specific example from the plainchant repertoire, but this is not to deny that other music genres can also contribute to such bridge-building: John Tavener (1944-2013) and Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992) are supreme examples of twentieth-century composers who demonstrate this kind of link to a transcendent Reality.

Tavener's musical creativity sprang from his religious faith, and he was convinced that his music was operating on a spiritual level. One of his large-scale choral works was based on texts by the sixteenth-century Spanish mystic known as St John of the Cross.

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[298] See A. Gabrielsson, 'Emotions in Strong Experiences with Music', in Juslin and Sloboda, (eds), *Music and Emotion* (as above), pp 431-9.

[299] The 'prominence of nostalgia' was described as 'a surprising feature' but this is hardly surprising in the context of plainchant.

[300] See P.N. Juslin et al., *A Nationally Representative Survey Study of Emotional Reactions to Music: Prevalence and Causal Influences,* MS submitted 2009. See also Juslin and Sloboda, *Handbook* (as above) p. 609.

[301] See 'Emotional Reactions to Music', in *The Oxford Handbook to Music Psychology,* 2009, chapter 13, specifically p. 206.

This writer's metaphysical concept of *dying to oneself* registered strongly with the composer. One of Tavener's final works was a *Requiem* (composed in 2008). The texts were drawn not only from the traditional Latin verses, but also from Sufi poetry, the Qurʾān and the Upanishads. Tavener explained that 'the essence of the Requiem is contained in the words "Our glory lies where we cease to exist"'.[302] Like nearly all of Tavener's music, this work portrays a *journey* and *becoming one with God*. As will be seen in Chapter 6, these themes are particularly significant for some of my participants and informants.

Messiaen was clear that his own models included plainchant. In an article for *Le Monde musical* he refers to his 'completely unconventional use of note values and duration', saying, 'I am not alone in this. My models were first Debussy then plainchant then [Hindu rhythms]'.[303] At the conservatoire, in his final week of teaching (in 1978) he gave a lecture on plainchant.[304] A good example of his use of a plainchant-like melodic line occurs as the second theme of 'Dieu parmi nous', the final movement of his *La Nativité du Seigneur* (a suite of nine pieces for organ). The melodic line is as follows: -

Ex. 2.6 a – Excerpt 1 from 'Dieu Parmi Nous' [305]

The first and last bars are virtually the same (a pattern also found in the plainchant hymn, *Veni, Redemptor gentium*); in the middle he develops the melody by widening the intervals whilst maintaining exactly the same rhythms. When it first appears, this theme is given a very smooth chordal accompaniment, suggesting perhaps the humility and obedience of the Virgin. But later in the piece this same melody is harmonized with running semiquavers, thus: -

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[302] This is a quotation from Sri Ramana Maharishi; see https://www.sriramanamaharshi.org/teachings/%D7%97%D7%A1%D7%93/#:~:text=You%20will%20know%20in%20due,guidance%2C%20and%20He%20guides%20you.

[303] See P. Hill and N. Simeone, *Messiaen,* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005, p. 82.

[304] See Hill and Simeone, *Messiaen* (as above) p. 319.

[305] See O. Messiaen, 'Dieu Parmi Nos', no IX of *La Nativité du Seigneur: Neuf Méditations pour Orgue,* 4me Fascicule, Alphonse Leduc, 1936, p. 1.

Ex. 2.6 b – Excerpt 2 from 'Dieu Parmi Nous' [306]

at first a semitone lower than previously, but then continuing to rise in pitch over four repetitions, suggesting, perhaps, that because God came *down* to earth, so also humanity can be raised to the level of *divinity.*

Christopher Page, writing on music in the Middle Ages, quotes Joseph Dyer, saying that: -

> Years of daily encounters with the prayers of the psalmist fostered a rich contextuality of associations, a private and interior exegesis of the scriptural text in an ever-widening field of significance.'[307]

For Page, …

> … although a work of theology in medieval Latin may now seem a very silent thing there was a glimmer of latent melody around many words and phrases for those who experienced the liturgy year by year. What is more, experience showed that music sometimes carried the divine word to a greater depth in the listener than the speaking voice could alone, and more deeply than a passionate homily or an erudite gloss.[308]

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[306] See O. Messiaen, 'Dieu Parmi Nous' (as above), p.2.

[307] See J. Dyer, 'The Singing of Psalms in the Early-Medieval Office', in *Speculum*, vol. 64, 1989, pp 535–78, esp. pp 535-6.

[308] See C. Page, 'To Chant in a Vale of Tears', in D.J. DiCenso and R. Maloy (eds), *Chant, Liturgy, and the Inheritance of Rome: Essays in Honour of Joseph Dyer,* Martlesham UK and Rochester NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2017, pp 431-440, esp. p. 432.

Page goes on to refer to Bishop Isidore of Seville (d. 636), who believed that whilst readers could 'announce' the teachings of scripture, singers could 'excite the minds of their hearers to compunction'.[309] Page also comments that Augustine of Hippo ….

> …. had few greater confessions to make than his response to the music he heard in church at Milan, and which kindled a 'flame of piety' within him.[310] Jerome, Isidore, Alcuin, and many other Church Fathers would have deemed that reaction a fine reward for much more strenuous labours in the vineyard of theology than singing an Ambrosian chant.[311]

Beyond such florid language, Page gives a fascinating analysis of one particular chant, which sets the words of King David in his lament over the death of his son Absalom. The biblical text tells us that (on hearing the news of Absalom's death): -

> The king was shaken. He went up to the room over the gateway and wept. As he went, he said: "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!"[312]

The text of the medieval chant varies only slightly from this: -

Rex autem David, cooperto capite incedens, lugebat filium, dicens: Absalon, fili mi, fili mi, Absalon! Quis michi det ut ego moriar pro te, fili mi, Absalon?
King David, walking with covered head, mourned for his son, saying: O Absalom, my son, O my son Absalom. Who may grant me that I die for thee, O my son Absalom.

This text is full of emotion, as it stands, without the use of music, but, for Page, …

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[309] See W. M. Lindsay (ed), *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum*, (2 vols), Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911, vii, p. 12. Page explains (as above, p. 435) that the literal meaning of 'compunction' is of a pricking or stinging sensation, adding that in Lucretius, for example, ice and fire have the power to *conpungere sensus corporis*, 'sting the senses of the body'.
[310] See Augustine, *Confessions*, X. 33.
[311] See Page, 'To Chant in a Vale of Tears' (as above), p. 432.
[312] See *2 Samuel*, 18:33 (NIV)

> …. the music exploits the trained ear's ability to discern points of homecoming and departure in a series of tones; and uses that discernment to point the grammar and rhetoric of the words.[313]

The chant, beginning and ending on G (but with a range of notes from D to d) is in Mode VIII (plagal mixolydian). An old manuscript of the chant, together with a transcription in modern notation, is shown below: -

Ex. 2.7 a – Rex Autem David[314]

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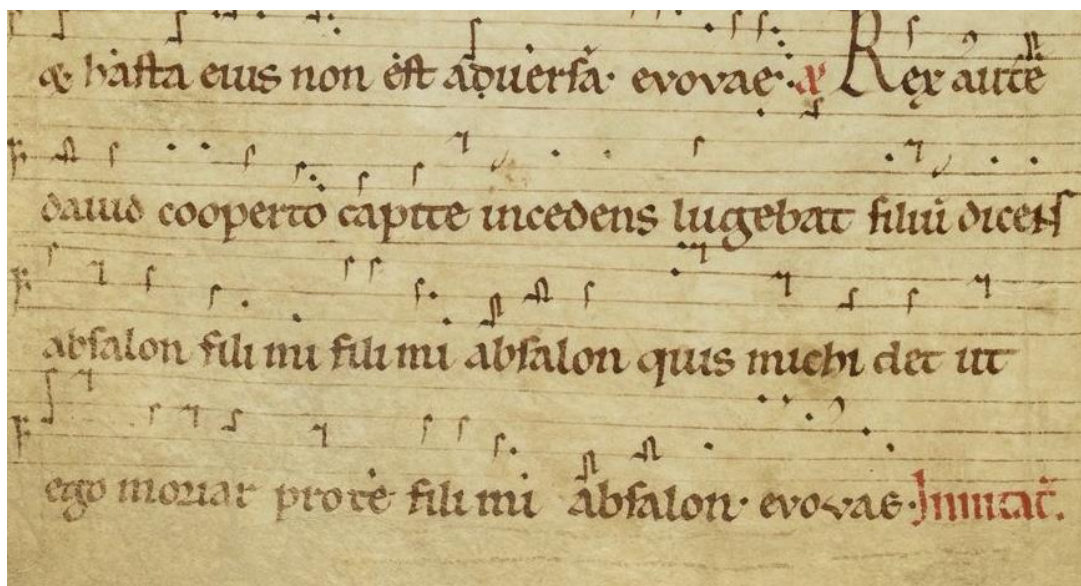
[313] See Page, 'To Chant in a Vale of Tears' (as above), p. 434.
[314] The MS is found at https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8422985f/f12.image.

Ex.2.7 b – Rex Autem David [315]

Rex au - tem Da - vid co-op-er-to__ ca-pi-te__ in - ce-dens

lu - ge - bat fi - li - um__ di-cens Ab - so - lon__ fi - li mi

fi - li mi - - Ab - - sa - - lon

quis__ mi - hi__ det ut__ e - go__ mo-ri - ar__ pro__ te

fi - li mi - Ab - sa - lon. A - men.__

At this point Page comes nearer than any other writer I have encountered to discussing the emotional response to such a chant of those who originally performed it, and of those who may have performed it or listened to it over the centuries up to the present day.

For John Stevens, in music 'there is a higher level of experience than the merely personal, and … chant helps us to reach it': chant 'can diminish our sense of pain and lead us from mundane emotion toward transcendent emotion'. [316] Michael Schwarz has shown that a similar upward trajectory is portrayed in Giotto's *Lamentation over the Dead Christ* (see below).

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[315] C. Page, 'To Chant in a Vale of Tears' (as above), p. 435. The transcription in Page's chapter is incomplete, so this one is my own.

[316] See J. Stevens, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages: Song, Narrative, Dance and Drama, 1050–1350,* Cambridge UK, London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Ex. 2.8 'The Mourning Christ' (Giotto di Bondone) [317]

Schwarz describes this as 'a devastating portrait of collective grief'.[318] Mary holds the dead Christ while others mourn him, women on the left, men on the right. Their expressions are echoed by angels flying up above. Schwarz shows how the painting draws the viewer into a double path of imitating the picture's grief: first inward, toward the emotion modelled by the mourners' stock expressions and poses, so that we can participate with their grief; and then upward, to the higher order of emotion represented by the angels and mirrored below by the humans. Giotto's emotion flows 'up a spiritual ladder' from the situated reality of the individual viewer, through a three-dimensional representation of collective humanity (the mourners); reaching a higher order of being (the angels) in the abstract space of the heavens.

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[317] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lamentation_(The_Mourning_of_Christ)
[318] See M. Schwartz, 'Bodies of Self-Transcendence: The Spirit of Affect in Giotto and Piero', in H. Hills and P. Gouk (eds), *Representing Emotions: New Connections in the Histories of Art, Music and Medicine*, London: Routledge, 2005, pp 69-88.

2.5   Conclusion

This chapter has sought to survey a large quantity of literature which is relevant in various ways to the main themes of this thesis, whilst at the same time indicating the lacuna which exists in relation to my title. As well as giving a background to general issues concerning the use of plainchant in worship, a number of the quotations above help to demonstrate that memory, serenity and a sense of the transcendent are all aspects of the *spirituality* of many people, including the majority of my participants and other informants, as will be revealed in later chapters. An area of literature not yet discussed is that concerning qualitative research and the specific methodology of this thesis. This issue will be covered in the next chapter.

3
METHODOLOGY

3.A.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the methodology both for my work with participants and for the writing of the thesis. I adopt a cross-disciplinary approach, based on my lifetime's interests in both music and theology (see section 3.D below). My research questions (set out at the start of Chapter 1 above) include the words *affective*, *emotional* and *spiritual*, and my immediate task in this chapter is to discuss the meaning of these three terms. Following Juslin and Sloboda, I treat *affect* as an 'umbrella term' covering music-induced evaluative states such as mood, emotion, or preference for a particular composition. Similarly, I treat *emotion* as referring to a brief but intense affective reaction (e.g. happiness or sadness) which usually involves a number of sub-components – subjective feeling, physiological arousal, expression, action tendency, and regulation – that are more or less synchronized when the music is encountered in performance or listening. The meaning of *spirituality* has already been discussed in some detail above, and will come to the fore again in Chapter 6 below.[319]

My research questions raise both musical and theological issues; and indeed, there are other relevant categories which might be designated as 'psychological', 'practical', or even 'political'. The issue of the relationship between music and theology will continue to arise throughout the thesis. All of my participants seem to have been struck by the emotional content of the chants to which they listened, and in many cases their emotional responses have been linked with memories or with some sense of an encounter with *the divine*. A number of the participants have been clear about the links between plainchant and the Mass, and some have reflected on the implications of the Mass as an expression of the *covenant* between God and humanity. At the heart of the Mass (and its counterparts in the various protestant traditions) is the gesture of thankful self-offering, followed by the actions of breaking and sharing. Then, at the end, people are *sent out* to *live out* these ritual gestures in their daily lives: this is where

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[319] On 'affect' and 'emotion', see Juslin and Sloboda, *Handbook* (as above), Chapter 1, Table 1.2. On 'spirituality' see sections 1.4.3, 1.4.6 and 2.4.3 above.

the practical and political aspects enter into the picture, with questions such as 'What can we actually do, having shared bread and wine ceremonially, to work for a just and equal sharing of the resources of the world?' As Janet Walton puts it,

> How does covenantal awareness affect our responsibility to care for the earth, to feed the millions of people dying from hunger, to eliminate illiteracy, to narrow the gap between rich and poor?[320]

Such questions are not answered in comprehensive detail in this thesis, but at various points throughout the narrative there are mentions of specific ways in which the participants and others are (and have been) engaged in seeking to work out, and carry out, the implications of the ceremonial actions. I refer to Marian's comment on this point at the end of section 3.C.4 below.

With these issues in mind, I divide the chapter (after this Introduction) into three main sections: firstly, a description of my chosen method of research; secondly some information about my participants and the process of seeking their views in accordance with research ethics; and thirdly a section on epistemology: in this third section I introduce the concept of 'invitational rhetoric', I discuss the different types of knowledge which underpin the thesis, and I make the point that, in the theology of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the most important thing is not what you know but what you do with the knowledge you have.

3.A.1 MY CHOSEN METHOD – IPA

My research-method is broadly phenomenological – concerned with 'structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view',[321] or, more simply with things as we experience them and our processes of perception. Modern ethnographers have moved away from the 'fly-on-the-wall' position[322] often adopted by the early anthropologists, recognizing that *objectivity* is impossible, because anyone studying a particular society or set of customs inevitably works from their own

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[320] See J. R. Walton, 'Introduction: North American Culture and its Challenges to Sacred Sound', in L. A. Hoffman and J.R. Walton (eds), *Sacred Sound and Social Change: Liturgical Music in Jewish and Christian Experience,* Indiana: Notre Dame University Press, 1992, p. 3.

[321] See *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* at https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology/

[322] See https://think.design/user-design-research/fly-on-the-wall/

viewpoint. In the words of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961), as quoted by Fiona Bowie: -

> We do not have passive bodies that see and understand an objective world 'out there'. All our experience of the world is mediated through our perception of it – via biological, psychological and spiritual mechanisms, or senses. As the world acts on our bodies, so our experience of being in the world affects and shapes the phenomena we perceive.[323]

This thesis is fundamentally qualitative in nature, as described by Creswell.[324] In particular I have used 'Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis' (IPA). The reason for my choice (in short) is that virtually everything I have read about IPA seemed to serve precisely the kind of research that I initially had in mind. I considered other possible options, such as 'Grounded Theory' and 'Case Studies', but decided that I was not seeking to 'prove a theory' of any kind, nor did I want to approach my participants in an over-obtrusive way.[325] IPA enables me to take a more open-minded approach to the views and feelings of my participants; it seems to embody the right balance of listening carefully to what my participants had to say, and developing their responses (which were, as it turned out, very varied) into a coherent analysis with appropriate emphasis on both the musical and theological aspects of their views. This chapter, therefore, continues with a brief description of the main traits of phenomenology, and then discusses why IPA has seemed particularly appropriate for this particular research topic on the reception of plainchant.

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[323] See M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945), tr. D. A. Landes, London: Routledge, 2012. See also F. Bowie, *The Anthropology of Religion: An Introduction*, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2000, p.39.

[324] See J.W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design* (3rd edition), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2013.

[325] See J.W. Cresswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, (2nd edition), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003, where he defines grounded theory research as the researcher's attempt to 'derive a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants in a study' (p. 14). See also J.W. Creswell et al., 'Qualitative Research Designs: Selection and Implementation', in *The Counseling Psychologist*, vol. 35, no 2, 2007, pp 236–264, where it is stated that 'Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (p. 245).

3.A.2 Husserl et al.

Phenomenology as a specific discipline began with Edmund Husserl,[326] who described it as the study of the structures of experience or consciousness; but as a phenomenon it is much older. As David Woodruff Smith writes: -

> When Hindu and Buddhist philosophers reflected on states of consciousness achieved in a variety of meditative states, they were practising phenomenology. When Descartes, Hume, and Kant characterized states of perception, thought, and imagination, they were practising phenomenology. When Brentano classified varieties of mental phenomena (defined by the directedness of consciousness), he was practising phenomenology. When William James appraised kinds of mental activity in the stream of consciousness (including their embodiment and their dependence on habit), he too was practising phenomenology. And when recent analytic philosophers of mind have addressed issues of consciousness and intentionality, they have often been practising phenomenology.[327]

D.W. Smith distinguishes three distinct approaches used in classical phenomenology: firstly, a preference for 'pure description' favoured by Husserl and Merleau-Ponty; secondly an emphasis on the interpretation of phenomena, as in the hermeneutics of Heidegger; and thirdly a desire to provide analysis of various types of experience. This thesis will want to do justice to the descriptions given by informants of their encounters with plainchant; but it will also seek to analyse and interpret those experiences. Some recent practitioners of IPA have spoken of a 'double hermeneutic' where the researcher is trying to make sense of the way in which his informants make sense of their experiences.[328]

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[326] It was however F. Brentano (1838-1917) who first used the term phenomenology for what was then known as 'descriptive psychology', as opposed to 'genetic psychology'. The latter attempted to seek the cause of various types of phenomena, but the former (our concern here) concentrated on how people described what they experienced.

[327] See D.W. Smith, 'Phenomenology', in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy online,* 2013, section 4.

[328] See I. Tuffour, 'A Critical Overview of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: A Contemporary Qualitative Research Approach', in *Journal of Healthcare Communications,* vol. 2, no 4, 2017, pp 52ff esp. p. 55, 'IPA and Hermeneutics', para 5. See also, for example, (a) J. Smith and M. Osborn, 'Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis', in J.A. Smith (ed) *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Research Methods*, London: Sage, 2003, pp 51-80; and (b) R. Miller et al., 'Experiences Learning Interpersonal Neurobiology: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis', in *Journal of Mental Health Counselling,* vol. 38, no 1, 2016, pp 47-61.

Husserl used the term 'intentionality' to refer to the central structure of an experience, the way it is directed towards a certain object in the world. In our context here that *object* is the ancient music of Gregorian chant, which has been experienced by some informants in an obviously active way, in singing or sometimes in providing instrumental accompaniments; by other informants, more *passively* (as some would regard it) in listening to live performances or recorded tracks. Whilst the latter type of experience might seem to some to be relatively passive (compared with, say, kicking a ball) it is arguable that all worthwhile listening to music is an *active* experience, requiring at least as much activity as sucking a lozenge, an analogy found by some to be appropriate not only in a musical context but with reference to the reflective reading of a religious text.[329] So listening to recorded music provides a good illustration of intentionality: it is possible to have music in the background, to hear it without really listening; it is also possible (and with good music desirable) to listen to it *intently*. This is clear from the comments of some informants to be found in the chapters below. The same can apply to the experience of listening to a reading from the Bible, not just hearing the words, but reflecting on their meaning for one's own life.

This kind of listening (with 'intentionality') is an example of what Husserl called *noesis* or *nous*, meaning the intentional process of consciousness which one can bring to an(y) experience, which could be an act of perceiving, judging or remembering. He used a corresponding term *noema* for the 'object' of that experience.[330] This might be described as the very 'essence' of the experience. Whether that 'object' has any existence ontologically (outside of the mind of the perceiver) is a controversial point amongst philosophers, and that discussion cannot be covered here. But it may suffice to say that those who experience the beauty of plainchant (or indeed any kind of music or any kind of beauty) have no doubt (at the time of the experience, and perhaps long afterwards) that the experience is of something 'real', significant, and in many cases powerful. There seemed to be no doubt about the reality of such 'objects' in the mind of Martin Heidegger.

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[329] The analogy is attributed to Baron F. von Hugel (1852-1925) and is mentioned in R. F. Morneau, *Not by Bread Alone: Daily Reflections for Lent*, Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2011, p.3.

[330] See E. Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, tr. W. B. Gibson, New York: Crowell-Collier, 1962, p. 238.

Heidegger (1889-1976), one of Husserl's pupils, defines phenomenology as 'the art or practice of letting things show themselves'.[331] Referring to the roots of the word 'phenomenology', and perhaps relating the *logos* element to a theological use of that term, Heidegger speaks of letting 'that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself'. This implies a respect for 'things in themselves' including other people, who have a right to be perceived on their own terms, as they perceive themselves. When we come to apply this notion to inanimate objects (especially to such things as a piece of music, or any work of art) it is arguable that such a thing *deserves* to be seen for what it is, and not purely in terms of our own bias towards (or against) it. If one accepts this argument, it is a travesty to judge a work of art on one's first encounter with it, simply on the basis of likes and dislikes; the work deserves, rather, to be understood, and this may take time.

A particular form of phenomenology was developed in France in the first few decades of the twentieth century, and can be seen in the works of Proust and Sartre. According to D. W. Smith, 'the experience of one's own body...has been an important motif in many French philosophers [of this period]'.[332] Their thoughts were developed particularly by Merleau-Ponty who referred to his body not as something dualistically separate from his mind, but as 'me in my engaged action with things I perceive' – 'things' in this case to be taken as including other people. Referring to Descartes' famous *cogito ergo sum* Merleau-Ponty writes: -

> Insofar as, when I reflect on the essence of subjectivity, I find it bound up with that of the body and that of the world, this is because my existence as subjectivity [= consciousness] is merely one with my existence as a body and with the existence of the world, and because the subject that I am, when taken concretely, is inseparable from this body and this world.[333]

For this philosopher, our consciousness is *embodied* (in the world) and conversely our bodies are 'infused with consciousness' (or with cognition of the world). Such a rejection of Cartesian dualism was taken up in English philosophy most significantly

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[331]See D.W. Smith, 'Phenomenology', in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy online,* 2013, section 4, para 8.
[332] See D.W. Smith, 'Phenomenology' (as above), section 4, para 10.
[333] See M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (as above), p. 408.

by Gilbert Ryle (1900-1976) who castigated what he saw as a commonly accepted notion of the mind as 'the ghost in the machine'.[334] In the later twentieth century and the early twenty-first, a number of writers have focussed on the fundamental nature of consciousness.[335]

At this point I feel the need to highlight one particular aspect of phenomenological discourse, and that is its preference for referring to experiences in the first person. This was of course a characteristic of Descartes' writing, and is also strongly evident in the short quotation from Merleau-Ponty above. For Husserl, the defining trait of phenomenology was to study different forms of experience just *as* we experience them, from the perspective of the subject living through or performing them. This approach is particularly appropriate, and indeed essential, for the type of research being reported here, the aim of which is to understand the appeal of a certain type of music to particular listeners and practitioners. My task as a researcher is to enter (as far as possible) into their own thought-worlds, and then to seek to analyse (to interpret and explain) their own thought-processes in relation to plainchant, showing also as far as possible how their experiences in this particular musical world relate to and impinge on other aspects of their lives. It is also for this reason that, when writing up the comments of my participants, I have retained, as far as possible, their own first-person approaches.

3.A.3 Characteristics of IPA

IPA emerged as a discrete research method in the early 1990s, mainly as a result of the work of Jonathan A. Smith, a psychologist who applied the insights of Husserl, Heidegger and others to work with his patients. He described IPA as….

> … a research method designed to investigate people's lived experience and how they make sense of it in the context of their personal and social worlds. It is especially well suited to exploring experiences perceived as highly significant,

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[334] See G. Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (1949), London: Penguin Classics, 2000; see esp. chapter 1 section 1, 'The Descartes Myth'.

[335] See, for example, S. Dehaene, *Consciousness and the Brain: Deciphering How the Brain Codes our Thoughts*, New York: Viking, 2014. See also A. Seth, *Being You: A New Science of Consciousness,* London: Faber, 2021.

such as major life and relationship changes, health challenges, or emotion-laden events.[336]

The method has been applied in various clinical and sociological contexts, and Smith's publications have continued to the present day.[337] IPA has not only been used in 'scientific' contexts but also in relation to the appreciation of works of art, thus making it particularly appropriate in the context of this thesis.[338]

For another contemporary writer, Linda Finlay, the four main elements of IPA are 1) 'seeing afresh', 2) 'dwelling', 3) 'explicating' and 4) 'languaging'.[339] In the sections below, I consider these four elements in detail, and, later in the chapter, I relate them to my own understanding and adoption of IPA as a method for this particular research.

3.A.3.1 '**Seeing afresh**'

Finlay quotes Merleau-Ponty's remark that 'in order to see the world, we must break with our familiar acceptance of it',[340] and also Husserl's dictum that there needs to be a 'radical self-meditative process whereby the philosopher [puts aside] the natural, taken-for-granted everyday world and any interpretations in order to let the phenomenon show itself in its essence'.[341] This process, which Husserl called reduction or *epoché*, is also known as 'bracketing'. It is described by Max van Manen as the need to reflect on one's own pre-understandings, frameworks, and biases regarding the (psychological, political, and ideological) motivation and the nature of the question, in a search for genuine openness in one's conversational relation with the phenomenon. This means that …

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[336] See J. A. Smith and I. E. Nizza, *Essentials of IPA,* American Psychological Association, 2021, p. 3.

[337] See J. A. Smith, 'Beyond the Divide Between Cognition and Discourse: Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis in Health Psychology', in *Psychology and Health* vol.11, no 2, 1996, pp 261-271. See also J. A. Smith, P. Flowers and M. Larkin, *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis,* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2009, 2nd edition, 2021.

[338] See R. Starr and J. A. Smith, 'Making Sense of an Artwork: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of Participants' Accounts of Viewing a Well-known Painting', in *Qualitative Psychology,* vol. 10, no 1, 2023, pp 107-120.

[339] See L. Finlay, 'Engaging Phenomenological Analysis' in *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, vol. 11, 2014, pp 121ff. The article is mainly theoretical, but quotes a couple of specific examples of IPA in practice.

[340] See M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (as above) p. xv.

[341] See E. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1936), Evanston, IL: North Western University Press, 1970, p. 161.

> … one needs to overcome one's subjective or private feelings, preferences, inclinations, or expectations that may seduce or tempt one to come to premature, wishful, or one-sided understandings of an experience and that would prevent one from coming to terms with a phenomenon as it is lived through.[342]

For Finlay, seeing afresh entails staying 'open' to what is given; being empath[et]ic, and genuinely curious, while also being reflexively mindful of one's own bias; acting with 'a certain humility' towards the phenomenon, adopting a holistic approach 'straddling' the divide between subjectivity/objectivity, intimacy/distance, inside/outside, part of / apart from…'. Marie Clancy comments that 'the researcher is not a data-collecting machine',[343] suggesting that he/she might use the services of a colleague who 'has the courage to question any assumptions made'. I have been fortunate in being able to call on more than one such person to fulfil this role.

3.A.3.2 'Dwelling'[344]

This is described by Finlay as a process of 'slowing down or stopping and lingering, immersing oneself in the data, [becoming] absorbed in what is being revealed by the participants so that data are transformed into meaning'. Set out by steps, this entails a) empathic immersion in the situations described; b) slowing down and dwelling in each moment of the experience; c) magnification and amplification of the situations as experienced; d) suspension of disbelief, and employment of intense interest in experiential detail; e) turning from objects to their personal and relational significance.

3.A.3.3 'Explicating'[345]

Here again there are several aspects outlined by Finlay: explicating means, firstly, not allowing the 'trees' (the participants' stories) to obscure the wood (the meaning of the phenomenon); secondly, accepting the challenge of trying to describe something about pre-reflective lived experience which 'threatens to conceal itself the moment that

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[342] See M. van Manen *The Hermeneutic Reduction: Openness*, 2011, at
http://www.phenomenologyonline.com/inquiry/methodology/reductio/hermeneutic-reduction/>.
[343] See M. Clancy, 'Is Reflexivity the Key to Minimising Problems of Interpretation in Phenomenological Research? *Nurse Researcher, v*ol. 20, no 6, 2013, pp 12-16.
[344] See Finlay, 'Engaging Phenomenological Analysis' (as above), p. 126.
[345] See Finlay, 'Engaging Phenomenological Analysis' (as above), p. 129.

we slip into the kind of reflective mode that allows us to describe it;[346] thirdly, not expecting a 'tidy' end product; being prepared to show the 'full ambiguity, irreducibility, contingency, mystery, and ultimate indeterminacy';[347] and fourthly, trusting the descriptive process, in three interlinked ways:

- using the principle of eidetic analysis [eidos = the universal essence] together with 'imaginative variation' to 'distill the meaning';

- 'capturing' (focusing on) the 'lifeworld' (the existential structures) of the participant, in terms of time, space, body relations, life/death, being/becoming, embodiment, identity, etc., and

- being aware of the 'horizons' [boundaries?] between the researcher, the participants and the phenomenon; this brings us back to personal reflexivity, and a 'holistic' (non-dualistic) approach.

3.A.3.4 'Languaging'[348]

This is the final stage in which the researcher attempts to create a persuasive narrative, so that readers feel that they are being directly addressed; it entails an attempt to 'restore a poetic heart to academic writing' by using rigorous, rich descriptions, as a 'focused act of discovering, out of silence, sediments of meaning, nuance and texture'. Van Manen speaks of the joy of phenomenology, and of the need for modesty, when he writes that his reflections ….

> … are somewhat sobering and should instil a sense of modesty and caution in our confidence of writing insightful lifeworld studies. But they also grant hope and optimism: one may not be a professional philosopher and yet have studied phenomenological philosophy sufficiently to possess the tactful ability of pursuing fascinating projects and writing insightful texts. From my experience, the joy of phenomenology includes becoming familiar with some of the great philosophical phenomenological texts.[349]

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[346] See M.A. Wrathall, 'Existential Phenomenology', in H.L. Dreyfus and M.A. Wrathall (eds), *A Companion to Phenomenology and Existentialism*, Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009, p.45.

[347] See van Manen, *The Hermeneutic Reduction,* as above.

[348] See Finlay, 'Engaging Phenomenological Analysis' (as above), p. 133.

[349] See M. van Manen, *Phenomenology of Practice: Meaning-giving Methods in Phenomenological Research and Writing*, Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2014, p. 24.

3.A.4 FURTHER POINTS

In addition to these four points there are further aspects of my methodology which now need to be presented. For ease of reference, these are again numbered.

3.A.4.1   Sample size and preliminary soundings: The IPA studies that I have seen or read about use sample sizes ranging from 1 to 325 people.[350] Creswell seems to suggest that a relatively small number is best. Smith and Osborn commend the process of 'purposive' sampling, where the researcher works with a relatively small but 'homogeneous' group of people (as I have done); they warn that one should not sacrifice quality for quantity.[351] My own group of participants numbered thirty. My recruitment process, and its rationale, are explained in section 3.B.1 below. Smith and Osborn comment that in some circumstances the topic may be rare, and it is certainly arguable that plainchant-appreciation has some rarity value. Since I knew my participants would have varying degrees of familiarity with plainchant, I sent them a selection of three recorded tracks, together with a list of questions designed to invoke an initial response. In some cases, I had further follow-up conversations, which some would describe as interviews, with participants, as well as with certain other informants (see 3.B.4 below).

3.A.4.2   Data Analysis: This proved to be the most difficult aspect of the whole process. I made use of the Microsoft 'Publisher' software in order to reproduce all my participants' comments on the digital equivalent of one very large sheet of paper. I then went through these comments and divided them into topics, using columns in addition to the main sheet. At this stage I needed about a dozen columns, but (treating the headings of these as sub-headings) the number of main headings was reduced to five. I was subsequently asked by one of my supervisors if I could do some merging and further reduce the number of main headings to three: this exercise then gave me the chapter headings for the distinctive part of this thesis (viz. Chapters 4, 5 and 6).

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[350] See V. Eatough and J. Smith, 'I Feel Like a Scrambled Egg in my Head: An Idiographic Case Study of Meaning-making and Anger Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis', in *Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory Research and Practice,* vol. 79, 2006, pp 115-135. This study (exemplary in clarity of presentation) is based on the evidence of just one female participant. But see also D.E. Polkinghorne, 'Phenomenological Research Methods' in R.S. Valle and S. Halling (eds), *Existential-phenomenological Perspectives in Psychology*, New York, Plenum Press, 1989, quoted by Creswell, *Qualitative Enquiry* (as above) p. 157.

[351] See J. Smith and M. Osborn, 'Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis' (as above), pp 51-80.

Since I was also planning to conduct 'interviews' I followed various pieces of advice on that topic. For example, some researchers recommend a system which uses the following stages: a) reading transcripts of interviews several times and making notes on anything that appears significant and of interest: this can enable the researcher to feel progressively more 'wrapped up' in the data, and more responsive to what is being said; b) transforming initial notes and ideas into more specific themes or phrases, calling upon psychological concepts and abstractions: care must be taken at this stage to ensure the researcher's interpretative comments are clearly based on the participant's own words; c) reducing the data by establishing connections between the preliminary themes and clustering them appropriately: such clusters can be given descriptive labels to convey the conceptual nature of the themes.[352] Smith and Osborn suggest that researchers 'imagine a magnet with some of the themes pulling others in and helping to make sense of them'.[353] My own approach to interviews is described in section 3.B.4 below.

3.A.4.3   Reliability and validity: Qualitative researchers tend to make modest claims with regard to 'solving something' or adding significantly to a universal body of knowledge. Mark Forshaw has rejected the notion of such research as 'moving forward' in favour of the analogy of 'standing still and admiring the countryside'.[354] A musicologist has commented in relation to a particular musical performance that 'much of what I consider important in the event could not be adequately expressed in words'.[355] A similar comment is made by David John Wilde and Craig D. Murray when they deal with reported 'near-death experiences': they remark on the 'ineffability' of the experience, quoting one of the participants saying '...sometimes there aren't words available'. [356] When my informants were asked to comment on the 'effect' (or 'affect') on them of particular plainchant experiences, they might well have experienced a similar difficulty. Nevertheless, it is my task to ensure that my recording of the words

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[352] This is known as the Colaizzi method: see P.F. Colaizzi, 'Psychological Research as the Phenomenologist Views It', in R. Vaile and M. King (eds), *Existential Phenomenological Alternatives for Psychology*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1978, pp 48-71, referred to in Creswell, *Qualitative Enquiry*, p. 332.

[353] See J. Smith and M. Osborn, 'Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis' (as above), p.71.

[354] See M. J. Forshaw, 'Free Qualitative Research from the Shackles of Method', in *The Psychologist,* vol. 20, 2007, p. 478f.

[355] See M. Clayton, 'Comparing Music, Comparing Musicology', in M. Clayton, T. Herbert and R. Middleton (eds), *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction,* New York, Routledge, 2003, p. 58.

[356] See D.J. Wilde and C.D. Murray, 'The Evolving Self: Finding Meaning in Near-death Experiences Using IPA', in *Mental Health, Religion and Culture,* vol. 12, no 3, 2009, pp 223-239, esp. p. 224 and 234.

of my informants is as accurate as possible, and that my interpretative comments make sense when reported back to the body of my informants as a group, and to those who may subsequently read my thesis. Finlay warns researchers that they will never get the picture 'right' or perfect: there will always be more to be said, and the finished presentation should indicate the 'complexities and ambiguities inherent in the total picture'.[357] These complexities and ambiguities are brought out particularly in Chapter 7 below.

3.A.4.4   Presentation in the chapters which follow – an example

In an article on the use of IPA, Pietkiewicz and Smith stress the importance of using participants' own words when writing up the research, provided these words are properly introduced by the researcher, and subsequently analysed in relation to the overall theme of the study. The example they give is quoted here: it refers to a patient (named Lobsang) who initially understood the cause of his illness to be related to evil spirits. The researcher writes as follows: -

> Trying to rationalize the onset of his illness, Lobsang initially referred to the traditional indigenous beliefs of the culture he represented:
>
>> I thought that it was the curse of *nagas*. These serpent deities are very powerful beings, you know, so you have to… you know, be careful not to offend them. Sometimes, they… you can see them in the form of a frog or snake. They live in forests, in streams or in a tree. So, you know… when you pee into the stream or on that tree… or cut this tree, you can make them angry and they curse you.
>
> [The researcher comments as follows:] Stories about serpent deities have been part of everyday life and social discourse in the Tibetan diaspora. They were embedded in their cosmological system and reflected the belief in the invisible sphere of existence, inhabited by gods, demi-gods, spirits or hungry ghosts.

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[357] See Finlay, 'Engaging Phenomenological Analysis' (as above), p. 137.

> This defined Lobsang's spirituality and his sense of identity …. [the commentary continues for several more lines].[358]

Although my subject-matter is very different, this is the kind of technique which I have tried to adopt in quoting and analysing my participants' comments on their responses to plainchant.

<p style="text-align:center">oOoOoOo</p>

3.B.1 THE 'LISTENING EXERCISE' – PARTICIPANTS AND TRACKS

This section consists of three sub-sections: firstly, a general overview of all the participants, explaining the rationale for their recruitment; secondly, my reasons for selecting the three tracks; thirdly an outline of the participants responses, including a table showing their religious affiliations and track preferences. This is followed in sections 3.B.2 and 3.B.3 by more detailed examination of the participants' profiles.

3.B.1.a   Participants: their recruitment and involvement

Since I wanted to establish how people *respond* to plainchant, I recruited a group of interested participants and devised for them a 'listening exercise' which entailed making responses to three specific tracks of recorded plainchant. The rationale for my selection of participants was as follows: -

The nature of the research that I envisaged made it desirable (if not essential) to have a 'purposive' sample of participants. The concept of purposive (or purposeful) sampling has been explored in a number of scholarly books and articles on qualitative research by writers including Michael Patton, John Cresswell, Robert Yin, Nick Emmel, Steve Campbell and others. Many of the quoted examples of this practice occur in a medical context, but qualitative research is certainly not confined to that sphere of work. Cresswell explains that purposeful sampling means that the researcher selects individuals because they can 'purposefully inform an understanding of the research

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[358] See I. Pietkiewicz and J.A. Smith, 'A Practical Guide to Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis in Qualitative Research Psychology', in *Czasopismo Psychologiczne – Psychological Journal,* vol. 20, no 1, 2014, pp 7-14, esp. p. 11.

problem and central phenomenon of the study'.[359] For this it is 'essential that all participants have experience of the phenomenon being studied'.[360] Cresswell expresses a preference for cases that show 'different perspectives' on the issue being studied.[361] Patton advises that decisions on sampling are constrained by various factors, observing that 'the sampling strategy must be selected to fit the purpose of the study, the resources available, the questions being asked, and the constraints being faced'.[362] Yin writes that the goal of purposive sampling is that participants should 'yield the most relevant and plentiful data – in essence, *information rich*'.[363] Campbell and others raise the issue of 'simplicity or complexity', declaring that: -

> Purposive sampling has a long developmental history and there are as many views that it is simple and straightforward as there are about its complexity. The reason for purposive sampling is the better matching of the sample to the aims and objectives of the research, thus improving the rigour of the study and trustworthiness of the data and results. [364]

In this current study, it was clear from the start that a purposive sample of participants would be necessary: I needed to be able obtain the views and feelings of people who already had some knowledge of, or interest in, plainchant; and the 'different perspectives' (as mentioned by Cresswell), were obtained by having a mixture of 'professionals' and 'congregants', and a mixture of 'cathedral-based' and 'parish-based' participants, as well as a small number who professed no religious allegiance. Twenty of the thirty participants were already 'known' to me; this does not mean that they were close friends, but, in most cases, they had expressed interest in a previous

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[359] See J.W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches,* (Third Edition), Los Angeles: Sage, 2013, p. 156.

[360] See Cresswell, *Qualitative Inquiry* (as above), p. 155.

[361] See Cresswell, *Qualitative Inquiry* (as above), p. 100.

[362] See M.Q. Patton, *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1990, p. 181f.

[363] See R.K. Yin, *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish,* Second Edition. New York: The Guilford Press, 2016, p. 94 (his italics).

[364] See S. Campbell, et al., 'Purposive Sampling: Complex or Simple? Research Case Examples', in *Journal of Research in Nursing,* vol. 25, no 8, 2020, pp 652-661, Abstract.

'project' which I ran[365]. The remaining ten participants were people who responded to adverts which I placed with several churches – 'to be included in the printed Notices'.

The data collected certainly merits Yin's description of 'rich'; one of the great opportunities of my method was that participants were ready and willing to give me such a plentiful amount of data. A limitation inherent in my method is that it only involves a very small sample of people familiar with plainchant. Further research would be needed to assess whether or not my findings might be replicated in a larger percentage of the church-going population, or indeed of the population as a whole. However, small samples are often used in qualitative research, and multiple small-sample studies can usefully contribute to a meta-analysis.[366] It has been revealed that the mean number of participants across a wide range of PhD studies in psychotherapy is 31, which matches my own sample fairly closely.[367] In qualitative research it is considered realistic to be somewhat tentative about one's claims: as Emmel remarks, such work 'persuades rather than convinces, argues rather than demonstrates, is credible rather than certain'.[368]

3.B.1.b   Selection of tracks

In an article on ethics in qualitative research, Dilmi Aluwihare-Samaranayake reflects on 'how participants and researchers can work together to ensure that the participants' voices and experiences are represented with due considerations to respect for persons', adding that such 'respect' involves 'honouring and caring for a person, and treating that person with dignity'.[369] With this kind of approach in mind, I wanted to be careful (in the 'listening exercise') not to over-burden the participants, whilst at the same time enabling them to respond with their opinions and feelings in a structured

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[365] This was my 'Bach Cantata Club', which entailed sending to interested listeners a recording of a Bach Cantata with texts, translations and explanatory comments. This took place from Autumn 2011 to Autumn 2015, and involved writing comments on 25 Cantatas.

[366] For an example of a small-sample study with only four participants but with useful results, see L. Charalambous and A. Townsend, 'The Learning Experiences of Student Nurses during the Covid 19 Pandemic', in *Nursing Times [online]* vol. 119, no 9, 2023.

[367] See L. Timulak, 'Meta-analysis of qualitative studies: a tool for reviewing qualitative research findings in psychotherapy', in *Psychotherapy Research*, vol 19, no 4-5, 2009, pp 591-600.

[368] See N. Emmel, *Sampling and Choosing Cases in Qualitative Research: A Realistic Approach,* London: Sage, 2013, p. 34.

[369] See D. Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 'Ethics in Qualitative Research: A View of the Participants' and Researchers' World from a Critical Standpoint', in *International Journal of Qualitative Methods,* vol. 11, no 2, 2012, pp 64-81, esp. p. 68f.

way. The choice of just three tracks for them to listen to seemed a manageable number, and indeed this proved to be the case. I sought out tracks which were (i) in the public domain, (ii) not too long, and (iii) representative of the main seasons of the Church Year (i.e. Advent, Christmas and Easter). I felt that the choice of just three tracks was justifiable in the sense that, though there are many musical differences between different chants in the Gregorian repertoire, and indeed some participants identified such differences by referring to specific musical intervals, there are also many similarities between the different chants particularly in their 'affective' qualities, and the 'mood' that they tend to convey. The theological reflections of my participants, as well as my own 'building upon' those reflections, in the end validated the selection of a small musical sample of tracks, as I hope Chapter 7 will make clear.

Here are some brief details of the three tracks to which my participants were asked to listen: -

'Track A': An Introit for Advent Sunday, *Ad te levavi,* sung by a small group of cantors at the theological seminary of Tiltenberg, Holland.[370]

'Track B': An Introit for Christmas Day, *Puer natus est,* sung by the monks of the abbey of St Domingo de Silos, Spain.[371]

'Track C': The Easter Proclamation, *Exultet,* sung by an anonymous cantor and choir.[372]

3.B.1.c   Responses of participants

I sent the three tracks to all the participants, together with a list of questions to guide their responses. The results were elicited by email; one of the questions was whether they would be willing, subsequently, to have a one-to-one conversation with me about their responses; about half the participants were positive about this, and a number of conversations took place (see section 3.B.4 below). So, in short, the field work for this dissertation involved the following two phases: -

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[370] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvfjgSvq6KA
[371] The track was taken from their 1994 CD entitled *Chant,* a remarkable phenomenon which sold over 6 million copies.
[372] Track available by email from bernardsalter123@gmail.com

Phase 1 – the 'listening exercise' as just described: the three tracks are referred to throughout this thesis as Track A, Track B and Track C, or sometimes just as 'the tracks'. Further details are given below.

Phase 2 – the 'interview' stage: some participants were invited to a one-to-one conversation with me about either their responses to the tracks supplied in Phase 1, or their general experience of plainchant more widely; this stage yielded some valuable insights over and above the written responses to the tracks.

I felt from the outset that both phases would be necessary. Phase 1 would give the participants complete freedom to listen to the tracks as many times as they wished, and to answer the very open-ended questions which I posed. Some participants responded with the utmost brevity, but others were more expansive. In Phase 2, I was able (as I had originally hoped) to probe a little more deeply into the views of both these participant-categories.

Before commencing the research, I complied with the requirements for seeking ethical approval. The relevant documents are shown in Appendix 1 – the five documents are as follows: -

1. Description of Project
2. Invitation to participate
3. Information Sheet
4. Consent Forms
5. Phase 1 'Questionnaire'

For my participants' information and interest, I created a 14-page 'Commentary' giving the music, texts and some background to the tracks and to plainchant in general. The Commentary appears as Appendix 2. It has been suggested that by writing such a Commentary I might have been 'steering' my participants towards a particular type of response to the tracks. But my rationale for the Commentary was rather like that for writing programme notes, which can be helpful to listeners particularly if they are about to hear music of an unfamiliar style or genre. Because I was aware of the possibility of 'steering', I specifically asked the participants not to read the Commentary until after they had heard the tracks for the first time, and answered the first few questions.

I was aware that I would need to have a 'representative sample' of actual (or potential) listeners to plainchant, and possibly to include a few performers.[373] I wanted to get a mix of 'cathedral-based' and 'parish-based' participants, and also a mix of 'professionals' and 'congregants' (the latter meaning worshippers who were not professionally involved in leading worship or leading the singing). It would also be possible (I hoped) to get a small number of participants who claimed 'no religious allegiance', and this proved to be the case with three people. So, the respondents to my 'listening exercise' fall into five clear categories, listed here, together with the number of participants in each category.

A) Cathedral-based professionals	2
B) Parish-based professionals	8
C) Cathedral congregants	7
D) Parish congregants	10
E) People of no religious allegiance	3

Some further details with reference to the participants are indicated by the Table on the next page (See Ex. 3.1a below) and by the explanatory notes on the following page (see Ex. 3.1b).

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[373] The term 'representative sample' in this sentence is not used in the normal sociological sense: it refers here to people who might already have had some interest in, or at least awareness of, plainchant, and they are 'representative' of different members of this sub-group, either as 'professionals' or 'congregants', in the setting of cathedrals or parish churches, either as listeners or performers. For example, Tim describes his performing experience as a cathedral precentor as follows: '14 years, every Wednesday, Choral Evensong, men's voices, psalms, sang alternate verses'. Peter, and CP are also performers, having sung the *Exultet* on several occasions. Holly 'used to be Cantrix regularly'.

Ex. 3.1a – Table of Participants, showing Track Preferences and other details

For explanation of abbreviations etc, please see Ex. 3.1b (next page)

PARTICIPANTS			AGE GROUP				PROFESSION	TRACK(S)		
	M	R	18	25	45	65		A	B	C
	or F	A	to 24	to 44	to 64	plus				
ANN (PP)	F	C				1	Music Festival Organiser			6
CANTOR (PP)	M	A				1	Parish Organist			6
CHERYL (PC)	F	A			1		Teacher/Wife/Mother		4	2
CP (PP)	F	A			1		Consultant Gynaecologist			6
CRAIG (PP)	M	C			1		Veterinary Dermatologist		6	
DANIELLE (N)	F	N	1				Student	1	1	4
DAVID (PP)	M	C				1	Social Worker			6
DAWN (CC)	F	A			1		Counsellor/Psychotherapist		6	
EDINGALE (CC)	M	C			1		Management Consultant			6
EH (PC)	F	A				1	Teacher/Offsted Inspector			6
ELSA (N)	F	N				1	Piano Teacher			6
FRANK (PC)	M	C				1	Electrical Engineer		6	
GRAZIA (CC)	F	C		1			Residential Support Worker			6
HOLLY (PP)	F	A			1		Church Youth Work Leader	6		
JOANNA (CC)	F	A				1	Local Government Officer	1	1	4
KATISHA (PC)	F	C				1	Animal Care Lecturer			6
LANZADA (PP)	F	A				1	Teacher			6
MARIAN (PP)	F	A				1	Teacher	1	2	3
MARK (CC)	M	A				1	Parish Priest	6		
MARY (CC)	F	C			1		Administrator			6
MELANIE(PC)	F	C		1			Teacher			6
MR BUCKET (PC)	M	A				1	Teacher		5	1
PAUL (PP)	M	A		1			Parish Organis/Recitalist			6
PETER (CP)	M	A				1	Hospice CEO			6
SACRISTAN (PP)	F	A			1		Parish Administrator	1	4	1
SALLY (N)	F	N			1		University Lecturer	1	4	1
STEPHEN (CC)	M	A				1	Local Government Officer	1	1	4
TIM (CP)	M	A				1	Cathedral Precentor			6
TREBOR (PC)	M	C				1	Retired Civil Engineer			6
ZOE (CC)	F	A				1	General Literary Factotum			6
Totals (for age groups)			1	3	9	17				

Ex. 3.1b – Explanatory Notes for Table of Participants

Column 1: The abbreviations beside the names mean:

CP—Cathedral-based 'professional'
CC—Cathedral-based 'congregant'
PP—Parish-based 'professional'
PC—Parish-based 'congregant'
N—'No religious allegiance'

Column 2: Gender—self-evident

Column 3: RA = Religious Allegiance indicated by

C = (Roman) Catholic
A = Anglican
N = 'no religious allegiance'

Columns 4-7: Age Groups (self-evident)

Columns 8-10: Tracks preferred

For track preferences I devised a simple system based on allocating to each participant a notional 'handful' of 6 'tokens'. Ann (for example) expressed a preference for Track C, and made no particular reference to any of the other tracks, so her 6 'points' all go in the column for Track C. Cheryl (for example) found it difficult to choose between B and C, but ultimately chose B as her favourite. A score of 1 point for a particular track indicates a passing reference made to that track, but a preference for one or both of the others. These 'scores' do *not* represent the amount of time the participant spent on any of the tracks, or the number of words they wrote in their responses to them. Nor is there any suggestion that the contribution of a 'professional' is in any sense more valuable than that of a 'congregant'. In accordance with the principles of IPA (and my own inclination) it seemed important to treat each participant's contribution to the study as of equal value, hence the allocation of 6 'tokens' to each person.

Participants were asked about their tastes and experience of music generally (other than plainchant). Over 80% of respondents referred to themselves as amateur instrumentalists and/or singers, and as present or former members of a choir or choral society. Two are professional musicians. Favourite genres of music include (predictably) sacred music, psalms, Taizé chants in worship, organ music and 'Bach' plus 'Requiems by the Masters'[374] such as Mozart, Brahms, Berlioz and Fauré. Ranging more widely, tastes included opera ('especially Mozart operas provided they are "live"'),[375] folk music ('which in its traditional style has some similarity with plainsong'),[376] dance music, including 'music with a strong dance tradition – e. g.

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[374] Trebor
[375] Sally
[376] Trebor

French baroque – and modern English folk interpretations'.[377] Favourite composers included (in addition to the above) Tallis, Byrd, Monteverdi, Handel, Haydn, Beethoven, Schumann, Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Shostakovich, Britten, Arvo Pärt and John Tavener. Favourite artists included Trio Medieval, the Tallis Scholars, the Beatles and Kate Rusby. Other preferred genres of music included 'a massive variety from cheesy to choral via heavy metal, pop and classical',[378] piano music of the classical and romantic periods, spirituals and 'anything from Renaissance to the present day' (with the expressed reservation that 'not all new music is good music').[379] There are also references to 'WOMAD world-type music and Coldplay',[380] 'some modern minimalist'[381] music, 'the music of the Anglican, Catholic and Orthodox traditions, 'r'n'b, hip-hop and indie rock'[382] and 'military music through Gilbert and Sullivan to rock'.[383]

The 'other interests' of participants (outside music and singing) covered a wide range, including reading, television, history, ancestry research, stamp collecting, scrabble, bridge, arts and crafts, photography, knitting, ceramics, needlework, cooking, making 'celebration cakes',[384] drawing and painting; travel, outdoor pursuits and sporting activities such as walking, swimming, cycling, badminton, golf, geo-caching (see Google), gardening, studying wild plants and herbs, maintaining an allotment; political activism, serving on the board of a housing company, studying developments in end-of-life care, caring for dogs, cats, children and grandchildren; church activities, Reader ministry and pastoral visiting; studying languages, bell-ringing (though that is, in a sense, music); 'writing proper letters',[385] helping to maintain the Ordnance Survey database of triangulation stations; membership of organizations such as the National Trust, the Womens' Insititute and the Letterbox Study Group. One participant is qualified to drive a steam engine.

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[377] Edingale
[378] Cheryl
[379] David
[380] Sally
[381] Joanna
[382] Grazia
[383] Katisha
[384] Sacristan
[385] Mr Bucket

3.B.2 FURTHER DETAILS OF PARTICIPANTS

The profiles of the participants can now be examined more specifically according to their categories.

3.B.2.1   Cathedral-based 'professionals'

Peter and Tim are both former Precentors, now retired. The main difference between them is that Tim retired *from* cathedral work as a Precentor, whereas Peter retired from other work (as chief executive of a hospice) and now 'volunteers' as a cathedral Residentiary Canon, in a role which involves a considerable amount of singing, as well as financial management. Peter wrote that he has a 'limited experience of singing plainchant' and that he enjoys 'listening to plainchant, whether recorded or live'. He described himself and his interests as follows: -

> I am an amateur instrumentalist / singer. I have been a member of a choir or choral society. I listen to recorded music regularly. My favourite types of music are classical of all genres (including many twentieth century British composers) and contemporary choral works. I attend an act of worship regularly, i.e., several times a week. I am retired but volunteer up to 4 days a week as a Cathedral Residentiary Canon and one day a week in the governance of hospices. In addition to music, my other interests include gardening, socialising and developments in end-of-life care.

Tim wrote: -

> I used to work as an Incumbent then a Precentor …but am now in retirement. I attend an act of worship regularly, i.e., weekly. Ordained priest! I am an amateur singer. I am a member of a choral society. I listen to recorded music sometimes. My favourite types of music are Mozart, Haydn, Bach and early [music] especially [when performed by the] Tallis Scholars ! [386]

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[386] One of Tim's sons is a member of this choir – hence the exclamation mark!

3.B.2.2   Parish-based 'professionals'

Of the ten participants in this category three are Anglican organists (one of whom is an international recitalist, and one of whom is also qualified to drive a steam engine!). In addition, Craig is a Catholic musician, guitarist, singer, composer and arranger; Sacristan (a parish administrator) was an Anglican ordinand at the time of the original research but is now a priest; Marian is an Anglican Reader; and CP (a hospital doctor and the wife of an Anglican priest) has also worked as a choir director. Another 'parish-based professional' (Holly) gave rather more personal details which are reproduced here: -

> I work as a church youth work co-ordinator. I am in the 45-64 age group. I used to be a Nun and we sang plainchant. I used to be Cantrix regularly. I could read it on the original 4-line stave though I am rusty now. I am an amateur instrumentalist. I listen to recorded music sometimes. My favourite types of music are anything melodic plus 70s pop. Music was extremely important to me as I grew up. It helped me get through much. Something traumatic happened in my 20s which has since made it harder to do anything with music. In addition to music, my other interests include researching family history, books, gardening and wildlife. Oh, and cats!

3.B.2.3   Cathedral congregants

Eight participants belong to a cathedral congregation (five Anglicans and three Roman Catholics). One of these is in the age-group 25-44; two are 45-64 and five are over 65. Their 'other interests' vary considerably: Dawn works as a Christian counsellor and psychotherapist; Mary works as an administrator and is currently studying Italian; Mark is a retired priest and also a painter; Edingale is a management consultant 'with some farming interests on the side'; David is a retired social worker and a swimmer; Zoe is an expert in translating from Latin and Greek; and Grazia (the youngest member of this group) is a residential support worker for teenagers with learning disabilities. Mary gave this autobiographical information: -

> I attended a Catholic primary school from the age of 5 – probably from 1959 so before Vatican II and when Mass was still in Latin. As well as Sunday Mass, we attended Mass from school on Monday morning and Benediction on Friday

afternoon. This meant I was exposed to Latin from an early age. I love Latin and all the Romance languages. To hear Latin sung in plainchant brings me a twofold pleasure – the beauty of the melody and the meaning of the words.

3.B.2.4   Parish congregants

Of the seven parish-based congregants three are Anglicans, four are Roman Catholics, one of whom (Katisha, who described herself as 'lapsed') has since died. This latter participant, however, made a few telling contributions which are included in the discussions below. At the time of the original research, five of these participants were in the age group 65 and over; one was in the group 45-64, and one (active in the teaching profession) is in the group 25-44. Two are retired teachers (one of whom was a primary head teacher who subsequently worked for Ofsted); two are retired engineers (electrical and civil); and Katisha (now deceased) was a veterinary receptionist and a judge at dog shows.

3.B.2.5   Participants with 'no religious allegiance'

I turn now to the three participants who said they had 'no religious allegiance'. All three are female, spanning the age groups. Danielle is a student in the 18-25 group; Sally is a senior lecturer (45-64) and Elsa is in retirement. Although they have 'no religious allegiance' it is clear that all three have some background experience of religion. Elsa (a member of a chamber choir which performs both religious and secular music) wrote as follows: -

> I used to work as a primary school teacher, then we owned a boarding kennels and cattery and then I was a piano teacher but am now in retirement. In addition to music, my other interests include playing bridge, swimming and looking after our dogs. I was once a regular church-goer… I listen to recorded music regularly. My favourite types of music are: classical, choral, rock-and-roll and the Beatles.

Sally described herself in the following terms: -

> I am an amateur instrumentalist. I listen to recorded music sometimes. My favourite types of music are: WOMAD world type music and Coldplay, but I also

love Mozart operas, got to be live though. I was once a regular church-goer but my commitments have changed and my attendance has now lapsed. I enjoy singing and have through my life sung in choirs but not at present. I also ring bells, which is (I think) a form of music. I love radio 4 – and listen almost exclusively to this. I'd listen to music more; however, since moving house last October I've not managed to find somewhere to put the stereo, and so I sometimes listen to music on an iPad. I work as a University Lecturer in health sciences. I am in the age group 45-64; I used to work as a physiotherapist. In addition to music, my other interests include ringing, playing scrabble, my work – it spreads into my personal life.

Danielle wrote that she had 'never had religious allegiance although brought up in a church-going family'. She put herself in the category of those who 'enjoy listening to plainchant (live or recorded)', and she is familiar with plainchant as a performer. She listens to recorded music 'regularly' and her favourite types of music are 'baroque and folk'. She defined plainchant as 'monastic chant, sung in Latin and in unison'.

3.B.3 TWO DETAILED PROFILES

Out of the above 'parish-based' participants, two (Stephen and Joanna) gave particularly detailed answers about themselves: they are a retired couple (in the age-group 65 and over) who have shifted their religious allegiance over the years and were until recently members of an Orthodox congregation.[387] Before retirement, Stephen used to work as a librarian and as a teacher. In addition to music, his other interests include 'travel/sightseeing/history, languages, gardening'. He describes his experience of music and worship as follows:

I am an amateur instrumentalist and amateur singer. I am a member of a choir. I listen to recorded music regularly, especially Radio 3 which I enjoy very much. I enjoy a wide range of music, mostly classical music in the widest sense. I attend an act of worship regularly, i.e., weekly and on special days. My parents were Methodists, my father sang in a Methodist church choir, and I was brought

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[387] In 2022 they disassociated themselves from the Orthodox Church in protest again Patriarch Kyril's support of President Putin and the invasion of Ukraine. They are now 'cathedral congregants', so I have re-classified them as such.

up in that tradition. Later in life I became Anglican. As I developed an interest in both early church history and the Russian choral tradition, I became interested in Orthodoxy and was received into the Orthodox Church in 1992. After a few years, following job changes and house moves I found a home in High Anglicanism again for a while – I could feel culturally at home and make a contribution to the singing there whereas the local Orthodox churches were very Greek. Since moving to the West Midlands, I have become settled in the Orthodox Church again and was made a Reader by Archbishop Gregorios in 2014. Participation in liturgical Christian worship is important to me, as is being part of a community following a living tradition in direct continuity with the early church.

Stephen has had 'some experience of plainchant as a performer, but …quite a long time ago'. He thinks of plainchant as 'the traditional way of singing the services of the (Western) Church, or substantial parts of them'. He adds that ….

> … the defining characteristics seem to be: a single melodic line (solo or unison); the melody moves by relatively small steps within one of the various scales or modes; the text is in Latin; [there is an] absence of a regular rhythm.

Expanding on his experiences of plainchant and of music in general, he wrote: -

> As a boy I learnt the clarinet. I was encouraged by an uncle who was a professional violinist but being strongly left-handed I found I couldn't get on with string instruments. (Cricket was a problem too.) I played in orchestras as a student but then in the 1970s with increasing interest in early music I took up the recorder and played with The Elizabethans, based in Hertfordshire. I have taken up the recorder again recently after a gap of 30 years or so and enjoy consort playing once more. For a while I played Eb bass (=tuba) in brass bands. This started when my daughter was learning the tenor horn in a local band and I wanted to encourage her. I never really used to think of myself as a singer but became more involved in it since my wife is a singer and this was an activity we could share. I have sung in choirs and choral societies in various

places but find I get most enjoyment from singing in smaller groups. A few years ago, I had singing lessons for a while which I found very helpful.

Joanna (Stephen's wife) described herself and her interests in the following terms: -

In addition to music, my other interests include gardening, History, travel. I am an amateur singer. I am a member of several choirs and a choral society and have belonged to many choirs over 50 years. I listen to recorded music regularly, mostly radio 3. My favourite types of music are church music, most types of classical especially early music, choral, some modern minimalist [items]. I have participated in a lot of church music of the traditional Anglican, catholic and orthodox traditions. I attend an act of worship regularly, i.e., weekly. Apart from a period of about 5 years in my fifties and the years of my twenties, I have attended church every Sunday all my life. I used to work as a local government officer, but am now in retirement.

We shall meet Stephen and Joanna again, together with all my participants, in Chapters 4 – 6 below.

3.B.4 INTERVIEWS

The author whose approach to this topic I found most helpful was Steinar Kvale, with his notion of 'Inter-Views'. Kvale, when describing the role of the researcher, presents two contrasting metaphors: (a) the miner and (b) the traveller. The former represents the traditional view, which Kvale rejects – the notion that the researcher must 'extract objective facts or nuggets of meaning' which are then 'purified' by transcribing their meaning into a written text. The metaphor of the traveller, however, implies that the interviewer is setting out on 'a journey that leads to a tale to be told on returning home'. The interviewer/traveller (according to Kvale) 'wanders through the landscape and enters into conversations with the people encountered'. If the interviewer has a 'method' this would be 'in the original Greek meaning of "a route that leads to a goal"'. When the traveller invites 'the local inhabitants …to tell their own stories of their lived world' then he is conversing with them 'in the original Latin meaning of conversation

as "wandering together with'". This 'journey' might not only lead to new knowledge but also to a process of change in the traveller.[388]

A good deal of interviewing was done by Thérèse Smith for her book, *Let the Church Sing*.[389] This is an exciting ethnography by an Irish Catholic writer who immersed herself in the life of an African American Baptist church in Mississippi, in order to examine its worldview, by exploring with church members its notions of religious identity, time, tradition, 'moving in the Spirit', prayer and preaching. Whilst her primary focus is music, she states that, since the music cannot exist apart from these other forces, analysis must take all of them into account.[390] Smith espouses the phenomenology of Paul Ricoeur, which was in turn based on his study of Edmund Husserl, the acknowledged founder of the phenomenological movement. Smith quotes Ricoeur as saying that 'we can never escape the subjectivity of our own minds and senses': -

> All knowledge…is preceded by a relation of belonging [or] pre-understanding [and] supported by an *interest. …*To forget this primordial tie is to enter into the illusion of a critical theory elevated to the rank of absolute knowledge. We are not unattached intellectuals but remain supported by what Hegel called *Sittlichkeit*, the 'ethical substance'.[391]

Among those whom I 'interviewed' in the course of my research were (in alphabetical order): -

Peter Allan – Precentor of the Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield;

Jonathan Arnold – Dean of Magdalen College, Oxford;

Guy Nicholls – retired priest, Birmingham Oratory;

Ben Saunders – Director of Music for the Diocese of Leeds;

Gordon Thornett – Choral Director and Music Therapy leader, Birmingham;

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[388] See S. Kvale, *Doing Interviews,* Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 2007, pp 36f. See also
https://scresearchjournal.weebly.com/blog/the-miner-and-the-traveler-and-thinking-like-an-academic
[389] T. Smith, *Let the Church Sing,* New York: Rochester Press, 2004.
[390] See T. Smith, *Let the Church sing* (as above), p.3.
[391] See P. Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016, p. 207/8.

And (from among my 30 participants): Dawn, Holly, Joanna, Marian, Peter, Sally, Stephen and Tim.

In some cases, these were fairly 'formal' interviews, recorded and edited in written form. In other cases, they were more informal conversations, some face-to-face, others by phone or email. The results of all my dealings with participants, and other informants, will become clear in the course of the remaining chapters. My interview schedule is shown as Appendix 3, and reports of a all my interviews appear in Appendix 4.

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3.C   EPISTEMOLOGY

Epistemology is defined as the study, or a theory, of the nature and grounds of knowledge, especially with reference to its limits and validity.[392] I have already made reference to this in section 3.A.4.3 above. In this section I raise the important questions of 'what we can know' and 'how we can know it', (a) in relation to the world in general – facts, values etc. and (b) in relation to the 'truths' with which aesthetics or theology seek to deal. I also introduce the concept of 'invitational rhetoric'; tackle the issue of subjectivity; and make the point that (in the Judaeo-Christian tradition) right action is more important than any notions of correct knowledge.

3.C.1 Different kinds of knowledge

In this thesis I aim to integrate different kinds of knowledge, factual, revelatory, academic, psychological, hermeneutical, anthropological, and theological. The factual knowledge is limited: I know that Holly was once a Nun, because she writes 'I used to be a Nun and we sang plainchant'; I know that Tim and Peter were both cathedral precentors, and that Peter was also the chief executive of a hospice, because I knew them before embarking on this project. Tim writes of his plainchant experience as '14 years, every Wednesday, Choral Evensong, men's voices, psalms, sang alternate verses'. But most of my knowledge of my participants is revelatory in the sense that they have revealed to me many things about their own memories, feelings and beliefs,

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[392] See https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/epistemology.

which I would not otherwise have known. This will all become clear in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. The hermeneutical element comes to the fore when (in those chapters) I interpret these revelations against the background of my own academic knowledge, some of which existed before I embarked on my research, but much of which has been gleaned during the course of this project. Much of my academic knowledge is in music and theology, but some of it is in psychology and the various theories I have studied on how memory works, and on how emotions are sometimes related to music; this links in with an awareness of my own 'musical emotions'. As already mentioned (see 3.A.2 above) some recent practitioners of IPA have spoken of a 'double hermeneutic' where the researcher is trying to make sense of the way in which his/her informants make sense of their experiences.[393] My work is anthropological in the sense that it deals with one particular aspect of human culture, namely the musical genre of plainchant (and at times with music more generally), and its apparent ability to point its performers and hearers to perceptions of 'the divine'.

The theology which underpins this project is biblical, exegetical, philosophical and practical.[394] It is biblical and exegetical in the sense that the biblical narratives are seen as of primary importance, but are not taken as literal reportage; rather, they are used in such a way that one 'draws out' meanings and themes. The fundamental themes of the Bible include <u>creation and creativity</u> (the narrative is that God created a 'good' world and 'made man in his own image', to be creative also: Dawn's favourite track made her think of 'the beauty of creation, and the quieter, lovelier things in life'); <u>sin and redemption</u> (Adam and Eve, and their descendants everywhere, have 'marred' the created world but that is not the end of the story – healing is possible, and Sally mentions her work as 'a university lecturer in health sciences'); <u>community and equality</u> (Jesus taught his followers to say 'Our Father' and St Paul speaks of humans as 'God's children', implying that all people, as children of one Father, are brothers and sisters: as when Stephen sees a 'picture' of …a community gathered together); and <u>concern for the poor</u> (the meaning here is obvious). These prominent themes can all be subsumed under an over-arching theme of Covenant. Josef Ratzinger (formerly Pope Benedict XVI) writes of 'one covenant' saying that the biblical narratives of

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[393] See I. Tuffour, 'A Critical Overview…' (as above), p. 55.

[394] There is also an element of apophatic theology; see section 6.11 where Dawn writes 'It is the mystery of God; it is the place of intimacy but also the unknown'.

various covenants, with Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, etc., are all expressions of one covenant/agreement/bond between God and humanity, and that this reaches its fulfilment in the 'new covenant' of which Jesus speaks at his Last Supper, and which he inaugurates by his death.[395] In relation to all these themes, it is significant (especially in Christianity) that God is 'seen' in physical things, just as the themes and 'truths' of music have to be 'embodied' physically, in wood, strings, columns of air, human breath, or one thing being struck against another.

The 'philosophical' aspects of the underlying theology are two-fold: firstly, it recognizes that the old philosophical 'arguments for the existence of God' are no longer valid; indeed, if God is 'pure Being' then it is misleading to speak of God as 'existing' in the same sense that anything in the world 'exists'.[396] Secondly the theology in this thesis is based on linguistic philosophy, expounded by Wittgenstein and others, which tends to favour the concept of 'truth' as subjective, as indicated by the use of the duck-rabbit illustration (see section 3.C.3 below): everything depends on 'how we see things', and it is important to recognize not only our own 'truths' but the ways in which others 'see things'. One of Wittgenstein's famous *dicta* is as follows: -

> For a *large* class of cases of the employment of the word 'meaning'—though not for all—this word can be explained in this way: the meaning of a word is its use in the language.[397]

This statement is typical of Wittgenstein's later thought: he revises his earlier concept of meaning as *representation* in favour of a view which looks to the *use* (of a word or phrase) as the crux of the matter.[398]

I have also said that my theology is 'practical': this again is brought out by Ratzinger when he writes of 'trans-substantive action'. The adjective echoes the old Aristotelian

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[395] See J. Ratzinger, *Many Religions — One Covenant: Israel, the Church, and the World,* tr. G. Harrison, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999, pp 102, 106.

[396] See P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology,* vol. 1, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951, pp 234-279.

[397] See G.E.M. Anscombe and R. Rhees (eds), Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations,* tr. G.E.M. Anscombe, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 1953, section 43.

[398] My italics. See A. Biletzki et al., 'Ludwig Wittgenstein', in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* Winter 2021 Edition, ed. Edward N. Zalta, at https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2021/entries/wittgenstein/.

notion of substance and accidents, and the idea that in the Mass the bread and wine remain outwardly the same, in terms of their physical properties, but that, somehow, mysteriously, their inner substance becomes the Body and Blood of Christ. Ratzinger's emphasis on action implies that (a) we should no longer concern ourselves too much with what happens to the physical substances used in communion; rather (b) we should concentrate on the actions of breaking and sharing, and on ensuring that these symbolic actions are 'lived out' in the lives of believers in such a way as to work towards a situation where God's desires for humanity ('life in all its fullness', equal sharing, recognition of the 'deeper purposes' of human life) are fulfilled. This is all implied, says Ratzinger, by the words *Ite, missa est'* which end the Mass, and which give the Mass (*Missa)* its name (see also section 4.4 below).

3.C.2 Invitational Rhetoric

A common use of language is to persuade other people to see things in a certain way – one's own way. This use of language is sometimes described as 'rhetoric', but it can take the form of the written as well as the spoken word. Aristotle defined rhetoric as 'the faculty of discerning the possible means of persuasion'.[399] Sometimes, however, 'persuasion' can be seen as a form of violence. For Sally Gearhart: -

> Since the Middle Ages scholars have been fond of classifying rhetoric into three brands: that which flows from the pulpit, that which is found at the bar of justice, and that which rings out on the senate floor. All three efforts demonstrate precisely a violence not just of conquest but also of conversion, whether it be conversion of the sinner, the jury, or the worthy opposition.[400]

Examples of such discourse are, sadly, numerous, from Gregor Gysi (on Germany's socialist left) to Donald Trump (on America's extreme right).[401] In an attempt to bring healing to a broken world, Sonja Foss and Cindy Griffin suggested in the 1990s that,

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[399] See Aristotle, *Rhetoric,* (350BCE), tr. W. Rhys Roberts, California: CreateSpace, 2015.

[400] See S.M. Gearhart, 'The Womanization of Rhetoric', Ch 1 in, S.K. Foss and C.L. Griffin (eds), *Inviting Understanding,* Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2020, p. 197.

[401] See, for example, (1) N. Petlyjutschenko and A. Artiukhova, 'Aggressive Rhetoric: Prosodic and Kinetic Means', ResearchGate article, 2015; (2) S. Collinson , CNN, 'Trump's Violent Rhetoric Conjures Chilling Echoes as Midterms Loom', at https://edition.cnn.com/2022/10/04/politics/trump-violent-rhetoric-analysis/index.html

rather than being seen as persuasion, rhetoric might be regarded as 'an invitation to understanding' – to seeing things from a new or different viewpoint.[402] Building on this concept, in 2008, three feminist writers introduced the notion of 'a move toward civility' in rhetoric. They say that ….

> …… our goal is to expand our knowledge of invitational rhetorical practices, as they exist in an increasingly diverse, complex, and interconnected world and to illustrate the ways that invitational rhetoric works to promote and establish civility in a variety of venues.[403]

This notion seems to set an appropriate tone for what my thesis aims to do. I have applied its insights (and the principles of IPA – 'seeing afresh' etc. as outlined above in section 3.A.3) in the following ways: -

- **'Seeing afresh':** Although I have had a lifetime's experience in the world of church music, plainchant has not played a large part in that experience, and so it is relatively easy for me to see that branch of music 'afresh'. Whilst it is an aspect of music that I have recently found fascinating, I do not have many pre-judged attitudes towards it, and this makes the 'bracketing' process relatively straightforward. For example, I have been open to the comments of Sally including her temptation (when her 'dormant' feminism is awakened) to see plainchant as 'just men doing their thing' in Chapter 5 (see section 5.5 below)
- **'Dwelling':** I have recently had considerable experience as a 'participant observer' in work that I have done with members of the worshipping congregation of Lichfield Cathedral, as part of a 'Sacred Music Studies' course at Bangor University. My research topic there was to explore people's attitudes to worship in general. This involved a good deal of 'dwelling' – spending time with different members of the congregation both individually and in small groups, hearing their stories, and ascertaining their thoughts and feelings. One

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[402] See S. K. Foss and C. L. Griffin, 'Beyond Persuasion: A Proposal for an Invitational Rhetoric', in *Communication Monographs,* vol. 62, no 1, 1995, pp 2-18.

[403] See J.E. Bone, C.L. Griffin and T.M.L. Scholz, 'Beyond Traditional Conceptualizations of Rhetoric: Invitational Rhetoric and a Move Toward Civility', in *Western Journal of Communication,* vol. 72, no 4, 2008, pp 434-462, esp. p. 435.

of my current participants, Zoe, still a regular worshipper at Lichfield Cathedral (and who was involved in my earlier project), refers to Track C (the *Exultet*) as evoking 'that Easter Vigil feeling of expectation'.

- **'Explicating':** My Lichfield/Bangor research was not presented as an academic dissertation, but it was written up as a report for the Dean and Chapter. It was a very full and detailed report, but, arguably, it contained too much description and not enough analysis. This has been highlighted as a typical weakness in some qualitative research projects, but now that I am aware of this problem, I feel equipped to strike, in this new project, the right balance between description and interpretative analysis, as for example when I 'explicate' the notions of Mr Bucket on 'thankfulness, happiness, joy and comfort' (see section 5.4b).

- **'Languaging':** It is left to my readers to judge whether, on reading my narrative, they feel that they are being directly addressed. I am encouraged by Finlay's reference (see 3.A.3.4 above) to restoring 'a poetic heart' to academic writing: I take this to mean that the style should not be too formal and 'cold'; but that it should flow, and be easily readable. In this respect my dissertation for Bangor University received favourable comments. In the present context, I have made a number of references to the poetry of the Hebrew scriptures, and no research on the reception of plainchant would be complete without reference to Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-89) – see sections 6.6 and 7.10a below.

Still under this sub-heading of 'languaging', it may be noted that I make a number of references to the 'ancestral home' of plainchant within the liturgies of the Christian Church. On the one hand, this is simply a factual statement. As David Hiley states 'plainchant is liturgical chant….'[404] But I have used the term 'ancestral home' to make a cardinal point which possibly some readers might not otherwise have recognized. At one of my reviews, I was asked the question 'Will this be a musical or a theological thesis?' and I sensed the possibility that in a Music Department a 'digression' into theology would not (at least by some readers) be considered acceptable. I wanted to affirm as strongly as possible my belief that plainchant cannot simply be considered as 'music', because, to understand and appreciate it fully, one must realise that the

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[404] See D. Hiley, *Gregorian Chant* (as above), p. 1.

musical content is entirely inseparable from the religious texts. My participants expressed varying views on this point: for a few it was 'just the music' to which they responded, but for a majority it was clear that the texts had equal – or greater – importance (as shown in section 6.5 below).

3.C.3 Subjectivity

One of the 'fathers' of epistemology was Gottlob Frege (1848-1925) whose work, mainly in the areas of mathematics and logic, is still discussed today.[405] Another mathematician-philosopher was Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) who, with his pupil Ludwig Wittgenstein laid the foundations for modern linguistic philosophy.[406] For Wittgenstein (in his earlier work) propositions could help people to 'picture' the world, and so represent it in a way that was either true or false.[407] But in his later work, Wittgenstein rejected this 'simple' view of the way language works, explaining that it all depends on the way different people see things: he used the phrase 'seeing-as', with the illustration of the duck-rabbit (see below) which has a prominent role in helping to elucidate what this thesis seeks to do.[408]

Ex. 3.2 – Joseph Jastrow's Duck-Rabbit[409]

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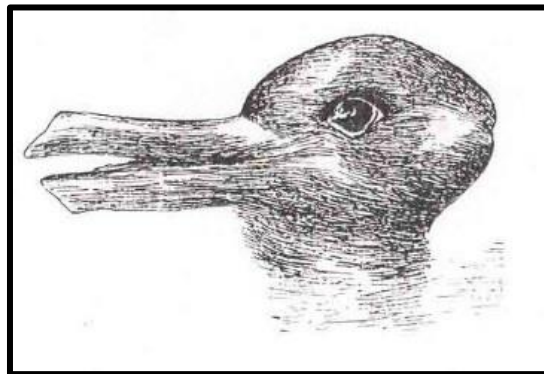
[405] See D.J. Chalmers, 'Propositions and Attitude Ascriptions: A Fregean Account', in *Noûs* (Bloomington, Indiana), vol. 45, no 4, 2011, pp 595-639.

[406] L. Wittgenstein (1889-1951) was an Austrian philosopher who was made a Fellow of Trinity College Cambridge in 1929. His influence on twentieth-century analytical philosophy has been felt in most fields of the humanities and social sciences, although many people admit to difficulties in understanding his thoughts, partly because they are often expressed in a rather enigmatic and short-hand way.

[407] See M. Morris, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Wittgenstein and the Tractatus,* London: Routledge, 2008.

[408] See L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (1953, posthumously), 4th edition, Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

[409] See J. Jastrow, 'The Mind's Eye', in *Popular Science Monthly,* vol. 54, 1899, p. 312.

It has been reported that when children were confronted with this image, if the time of year was near to Easter, they were more likely to perceive a rabbit; in October they tended rather to see a duck or some other bird.[410] Let us suppose that one person (be it child or adult) says first of all, 'I see a duck', and another person says, 'I see a rabbit'; but then the first person says 'Oh yes, I can see the rabbit too. Can you see the duck?'. This is a good example of 'invitational rhetoric'. But it might be that the second person is adamant (especially if it's Easter Day) and says, 'No, it's just a rabbit'. This is when the rhetoric could become over-persuasive, or even abusive. On the other hand, the second person might experience a 'light-bulb' moment, and see the duck as well. Or they might refer to a third person, and see if there is any 'weight' attaching to one perception or the other. Throughout this exchange, the drawing (in the external world) has remained the same, but the picture (in the mind of the observers) may well have changed from a rabbit to a duck, and back again.

With perceptions of 'emotions in music' the process is more complex. In the case of 'martial music' (for example) one listener may feel that a sense of patriotism is aroused, as a result of a mental picture of soldiers marching; another may feel a sense of despair at the wastage of lives (particularly young lives) which occurs when battles are fought – an entirely different picture. It might be possible for the two listeners to explain to each other why they feel the way they do, and this kind of invitational rhetoric might lead to mutual understanding. But it is equally possible that they will have to 'agree to differ', respecting each other's subjectivity and autonomy.

The concept of subjectivity is of the utmost importance for epistemology, and has been mentioned already in connection with Merleau-Ponty and Ricoeur. In more recent literature, Susan Crane, a historian, points out that subjectivity is not the opposite of objectivity. She writes that: -

> Historians pride themselves on their efforts to render the past legible in a responsible manner, and they realize that although they can never be completely 'objective' in their accounts, they nonetheless value the sustained

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[410] See J. F. Kihlstrom, 'Joseph Jastrow and his Duck – or is it a Rabbit?', unpublished Letter to the Editor of *Trends in the Cognitive Sciences*, November, 2004, available at www. ocf.berkeley.edu.

effort. Subjectivity, however, always inflects the historian's choice of topic and evidence as well as the selection of an appropriate authorial voice. …. Subjectivity and objectivity are related, not opposed; I would further suggest that we could never attempt one without the other and that we should all be fairly comfortable acknowledging this.[411]

Crane contends that it is possible for a historian to be as 'objective' as possible, whilst recognizing the inevitability of his/her own subjective judgements. It should be noted, however, that history and theology (whilst they are inevitably related) cover rather different aspects of 'reality'. Historians are concerned with helping their readers to understand the past; theologians (in our post-modern world) are more concerned with trying to explicate what certain statements (such as 'God made the world' or 'God loves the world') might mean, and what (if anything), is their 'cash-value'.[412] On the notion of 'historical subjectivity, and the extent to which an author can allow 'emotion' to affect his/her writings, Crane quotes Ruth Behar as saying that …

> … emotion has only recently gotten a foot inside the academy and we still don't know whether we want to give it a seminar room, a lecture hall, or just a closet we can air out now and then.[413]

In the field of psychology, a recent paper gives 'a new definition of subjectivity' as …

> … a phenomenon that emerges as a result of the symbolical forms which are socially and historically situated, from which concepts like discourse, deconstruction and dialogical-communicative systems also appeared. [The paper asserts that subjectivity] … is oriented toward specifying human

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[411] See S.A. Crane, 'Historical Subjectivity: A Review Essay', in *The Journal of Modern History,* vol. 78, 2006, pp 434–456, esp. p. 434.

[412] The phrase 'cash-value' was used prominently by William James, to refer to the practical consequences that come from discerning the truth behind arguments. See W. James, *Pragmatism: a new name for some old ways of thinking*, (1907), Myers Education Press, 2019. See also J. Capps, 'A Common-Sense Pragmatic Theory of Truth', in *Philosophia,* vol. 48, no 2, 2020, pp 463-481.

[413] See R. Behar and D. Gordon (eds), *Women Writing Culture,* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995, pp 4-5.

processes that are not exhausted in these concepts, being complementary to them in a broader and complex approach to the study of human realities.[414]

This comes closer to the sense in which subjectivity is relevant for the theologian, since 'human realities' include religious beliefs and the kind of convictions that are expressed by many of my participants. As understood in this sense, …

> … subjectivity is a specific quality of human phenomena within culture, and its functioning involves individual and social instances as agents who have active, generative and creative character. Nonetheless, subjectivity does not reduce to discourse nor to language; it always involves emotions, which are based on the imaginary character of subjective processes. Subjectivity functions on the basis of subjective senses and subjective configuration, which are not [controlled or dominated] by intellectual meanings and constructions.[415]

Another scientific paper refers to subjectivity as 'the elephant in the room' and quotes an 'ancient fable' in which …

> …. six blind men went out to use their sense of touch to investigate the nature of an elephant, something they had never heard of. Each man touched a different part of the creature. One perceived the elephant to be a wall (side), another one was sure to be touching a snake (trunk) and the third one was convinced that he had just put his hands on a tree (leg). The other three were touching the elephant's tusk, ear and tail and again came to a different conclusion regarding the nature of the elephant.[416]

This illustrates the danger of relying too much on one's own perceptions as a guide to what might be 'absolute truth'. The researchers in this instance used 'Q methodology' – a research method not radically different from that used for the study behind this

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[414] See F. L. G. Rey, 'Subjectivity and Discourse: Complementary Topics for a Critical Psychology', in *Culture and Psychology,* vol. 25, no 2, 2019, pp 178-194, esp. p. 178 (Abstract).

[415] See Rey, 'Subjectivity and Discourse' (as above) p. 179.

[416] See A. Lundberg, N. Fraschini and R. Aliani, 'What is Subjectivity? Scholarly Perspectives on the Elephant in the Room', in *Quality and Quantity,* vol. 57, 2022, p. 4510.

thesis.[417] Their conclusion is that there can be no 'single, objectively true, definition of subjectivity'; but that it is important to understand '*how* [different people] feel and think the way they do, but more importantly *why* there might exist multiple divergent views' on any specific topic, whether it be (for example) the nature of an elephant or the emotional and theological value of plainchant.

From the above comments it is clear that, since the time of Wittgenstein, ideas of subjectivity and the role of the subject in interpreting data have become entrenched in academic thinking for most of the disciplines in humanities and social sciences. And, as we saw in Chapter 2 (in the discussion of reception theories) many reception-based approaches are grounded in an understanding of the role of the subject in interpretation.[418]

3.C.4 Theology – 'drastic' not 'gnostic'

In the Bible the notion of 'knowing God' (perhaps the most subjective of all forms of knowledge) is often described in 'drastic' rather than 'gnostic' terms – related more to human actions than to thoughts. It will be seen in the following chapters that my participants are very much alive to this view, which is frequently commended in biblical literature. In the ancient Hebrew scriptures, the story is told of a 'book of the law' being 'found' in the temple during the reign of King Josiah (c. 640-609 BCE); and a number of scholars have equated this with what now forms the core of the book *Deuteronomy* (*deutero-nomy* meaning 'second Law'). A significant emphasis in this book is the concern it shows for 'strangers' (or refugees).[419] For one modern commentator it is the work of ….

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[417] Q methodology is a research method developed by W. Stevenson (1902-1989) to study people's 'subjectivity' i.e., their viewpoints (See Wikipedia).

[418] See also (1) P. E. Dolittle and D. Hicks, 'Constructivism as a Theoretical Foundation for the Use of Technology in Social Studies', in *Theory and Research in Social Education,* 2012, (2) V. Richardson, 'Constructivist Pedagogy', in *University of Michigan, Teachers College Record*, vol. 105, no 9, 2003, pp 1623–1640. See also https://www.itcilo.org/process-constructing-knowledge

[419] See (for example) *Deuteronomy* 15:7-11; 24:10-12.

> …. leaders trying to apply religious principles to social problems, in order to solve them compassionately and in a way that reflects God's graciousness to his people. …[420]

….. and it is King Josiah who is regarded in the biblical history as a 'good king', because he set in motion a reformation that bears his name and that left an indelible mark on Israel's religious traditions.

> Before him [writes the 'deuteronomic' editor] there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart … according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him.[421]

Throughout the 'deuteronomic' history (mainly the books of *1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings)* the rulers are judged good or bad according to their deeds and the extent to which they were in accordance with 'deuteronomic' principles of concern for the disadvantaged.[422] There is a parallel emphasis in the Christian scriptures, particularly in the brief *Letter of James,* described famously by Luther as 'an epistle of straw', but judged more positively by modern commentators.[423] The writer shows particular concern for 'those who are poor in the world', and seems to challenge some of his contemporary writers by saying that 'faith apart from works is barren'.[424] But this 'drastic' emphasis is also found in many other parts of the Bible. The Hebrew scriptures refer to a God whose 'word' is also his 'deed', when the same Hebrew word is used for both concepts.[425] So, in Genesis we read, 'And God said "Let there be light", and there was light'. The 'word' is followed immediately by the 'deed' – the word is the deed.[426] In the *Gospel of John,* the Word becomes flesh, and turns water into wine:

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[420] See J.W. Rogerson, 'Deuteronomy', in J.G. Dunn and J.W. Rogerson (eds), *Eerdmans Commentary* (as above), p. 153.

[421] See *2 Kings* 23:25.

[422] See *1 Kings* 15:25f – 'Nadab the son of Jeroboam … did what was evil in the sight of the Lord….'; see also the positive judgement on King Josiah (above).

[423] See Luther, *Word and Sacrament* (c.1525), 1, 362, in *Luther's Works*, vol. 35, tr. Theodore Bachmann, Muhlenberg Press, 1960. See also R. Baukham, 'James' in J.G. Dunn and J.W. Rogerson, *Eerdmans Commentary* (as above), pp 1483-1491.

[424] See James 2:2-5 and 2:20.

[425] The verbal form is דבר (dabar). See https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Dabar.html

[426] See *Genesis* 1:3.

the divinity of Jesus is made known in a whole series of 'signs'.[427] There is a story (good for sermons!) of a man who pushes a wheelbarrow, on a tightrope, across the Niagara Falls; when he reaches the other side there is a group of people cheering him, and he says to them, 'Do you believe I can do it again?' 'Oh yes', they reply, we believe you can'. 'OK', he says, 'now which one of you will come and sit in the wheelbarrow for the return trip?' [end of story]. It would not be surprising in a situation like that if action failed to follow a declared belief. This bears out the injunction of James, and the view expressed by my participant Marian, echoing Ratzinger's doctrine of Covenant.[428] For Ratzinger, 'believing no longer means a kind of reaching out in thought……; now belief has become incarnate…… [and] means living by the God whose Body is the Church'. Marian, an Anglican Reader, referring to the Eucharist, writes that 'there is a sense of dedication, as people of the Covenant seek to respond to a divine imperative that the good things we have must be shared with all humanity'.[429]

3.D. CONCLUSION

Am I claiming to 'build a theology'? No, it would be a considerable over-statement to claim that for this thesis. To speak metaphorically, I am not planning to build a city, or even a tower-block or a semi-detached house; perhaps the 'constructive' element will seem more like a garden shed, or a rough structure of branches and leaves to provide shelter on a desert island. For whilst the truths of which theology claims to speak may well be 'eternal' (and they are matters of 'ultimate reality') yet the language with which it speaks is inevitably ephemeral, changing as intellectual concepts change. I have mentioned (in Chapter 1, section 1.4.1) that a great problem for theology is that it is encumbered with too much anthropomorphism and literalism.[430] And the first task in any construction is to level the foundations and clear away debris.[431] The theological

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[427] See *John,* 2:11.

[428] See Ratzinger, *Many Religions* (as above), e-book, loc 817.

[429] The Greek word for 'give thanks' is ευχαριστειν (eucharistein) from which we get one of the principal names for the Mass. The notion of 'covenant' is discussed further below.

[430] This has been recognized as an 'issue' for more than a century – an issue opened up by the famous *Essays and Reviews,* ed. J.W. Parker, London, 1860.

[431] It should be added that 'clearing away debris' should be done with great caution, and with respect for the insights of past generations. When Bach's successor at Leipzig (as I imagine the scene) cleared out the cupboards and got rid of some of Bach's 'old stuff', many of the great master's sacred cantatas were lost. In preaching, I often tended to use 'traditional' language (without perjuring myself) because that is how most hearers view religious truth; but when (for example, one Easter Day) I reflected on the words of a former Bishop of Durham that the resurrection was 'not a conjuring trick with bones', the response of many in my congregation was 'Thank goodness we are not expected to take it literally'. Now, in an academic context, I feel

equivalent of this is to make clear that we can no longer rely on old ideas about 'God' or on literalistic interpretations of 'scripture'. I have referred (also in Chapter 1, see section 1.4.7) to the 'post-modern' approach to the Bible, including the Gospels. The latter are based on oral traditions and reminiscences about Jesus and his immediate followers, which were in circulation for a generation before anything was committed to writing; the accounts of the evangelists are not *reportage,* but expressions of the theological views of the respective writers, in the context of belief in a flat earth, a three-decker universe, spirit-possession causing illnesses, etc. The question we must ask is, 'What can the truth be for *us* if people who thought as they did put it like that?'.[432] It may well be that in relation to the 'truths' of theology, there is very little that we can actually know, and even that only 'dimly'.[433] But this does not mean we should stop asking questions or looking for 'intimations' of answers.[434] This is why my 'conclusions' in Chapter 7 are largely framed in terms of 'antitheses', questions, and 'wanderings'. Moreover, what is most important for the believer (in the Judaeo-Christian tradition) is not what one knows, but what one does.

In this chapter I hope I have set out clearly my methodology for the research project which I undertook, and for the writing of this thesis. I have identified my method as Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and I have described my actions and the rationale for them. I have given extensive details about my participants in the hope that the Reader will feel that he/she 'knows' these individuals as real people, and will look forward to getting to know them even better on reading chapters 4 to 7. I have been amazed at the wealth of information – on memories, pictures, feelings etc. –

I can be bolder, but still 'invitational', in asking the Reader to take seriously the many and varied insights of my participants, into their own perceptions of 'spiritual truths', and to continue asking questions about 'the truth of God' for our present time. One fundamental challenge (which I feel deeply and personally) is presented by issues related to human actions contributing to climate change, and the all-too-possible termination of human life on our planet: it is hard to retain any belief in 'divine purposes' in the face of what seems to be humanity's collective 'spitting in the face' of the Creator. If death is imminent, what hope can there be of resurrection?

[432] A saying recalled by pupils of Leonard Hodgson (1889-1969), quoted by Norman Pittenger, *Becoming and Belonging,* Morehouse Publishing, 1989, chapter 1. See https://www.religion-online.org/book-chapter/chapter-1-christian-faith/

[433] As St Paul says '…now we see in a mirror, dimly…'; see *1 Corinthians* 13:12.

[434] For further references to the use of this word by Wordsworth, see sections 1.5.8 and 7.4.

which has been elicited in their answers to my questions. I hope that my detailed descriptions and analysis of the research findings (below) will have done justice to all my participants and other informants. They have led me down a myriad of different 'avenues' as I hope will be clear in Chapter 7.

It is possible that there are issues regarding my own 'situatedness' and the extent to which this might have influenced my findings. The two disciplines of Music and Theology have absorbed my whole life, even going back into my childhood as a cathedral chorister. At Cambridge I did the first part of my degree in Music, and Part 2 in Theology; and in parish ministry as an ordained priest, I was always aware of the importance of music in worship – it could 'make' or 'mar' a service! Having resigned from this ministry in 1990, I have continued to be involved in worship, mainly as an organist. And I have given lectures on 'exploring spirituality in music', which have involved raising fundamental questions about the nature of 'God' and our human perceptions of 'divine realities'. My own theological position could be described as 'radical' and/or 'non-realist'. With this background I could have been more sympathetic to those most committed to church attendance; this was something I was aware of from the outset. However, I don't think that in the end this was the case: I have paid particular attention to those three participants (Danielle, Sally and Elsa) who declared 'no religious allegiance': in particular I have amplified in detail Danielle's juxtaposition of the two words 'candles' and 'crucifixion' (see section 6.9); and Sally was the interviewee from whom I learned a lot about the experience of bell-ringing and its similarities (as she perceived them) with plainchant (see section 5.5).

All in all, I hope the Reader will now enjoy the remaining chapters of this thesis, and feel (to quote Kvale's metaphor again) that my journeying with my participants has been illuminating, and leads to a worthwhile 'tale to be told on returning home'.

4

PLAINCHANT

AND

MEMORY

4.1   INTRODUCTION

The aims of this thesis are twofold: firstly, to define, explain and interrogate the role of plainchant within the broader category of sacred music, particularly as an encounter with Christian spiritual, cultural and historical meaning; secondly to explain how and why people respond to plainchant individually and congregationally as part of a larger community of believers.

As explained in Chapter 1, it makes sense to see the whole process through the 'lens' of Christian worship, since that is the 'ancestral home' of plainchant – a fact which has been recognized by all the participants in this study. The purpose of this chapter is to reveal and explore the memories evoked in the minds of the participants when they listened to the three plainchant tracks which form the basis of my investigation. Their comments, when quoted and developed, take us on a kind of journey, in the course of which we shall see many examples of how worship has been 'lived out' in the lives of the worshippers.[435] These comments will be explored in detail in the analysis of data below. The analysis draws on recent approaches to memory by cognitive scientists, whilst seeking to locate participants' comments within a broader literary and factual context.

In accordance with the principles of IPA (see Chapter 3 above – Methodology), it is important to 'flesh out' participants' comments with reference to various factual details and literary insights. The Bible is a key source of literary insight for this study, provided

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[435] I use the term 'developed' here in a way that is analogous to its use in musical 'development', where the composer 'explores' a theme from a variety of angles. 'Us' here refers first to the writer who certainly found the whole process revealing in so many ways; but secondly it is hoped that the reader will also share in this sense of being taken on a journey of discovery! The concept of 'living out' recurs at a number of points throughout the thesis.

that it is interpreted in the light of modern biblical scholarship. All good liturgy is based on biblical insights. It is also important to recognize that plainchant flourished and developed within the context of Christian worship; and that plainchant itself and its reception have changed and varied across time and in different worship situations.

Through their responses to the plainchant tracks, and in what they have chosen to reveal about themselves, the participants have expressed their individual identities in many and varied ways. They have searched their memories and recounted stories of their experiences in early and later life – experiences of people and places, as well as of plainchant itself. They have shown their knowledge of and familiarity with plainchant, in some cases quite limited, but in other cases much more extensive; some participants have remarked on the power of the sense of smell to trigger memories of various kinds. In addition, and importantly, many of the participants have expressed a sense of corporate identity as worshipping members of the Christian Church; all have recognized that the Church with its buildings and liturgies is the ancestral home of plainchant; some are aware (more than others) of the way in which their personal identities are offered to God in worship, particularly in the Mass or Eucharist. In this rite the self-offering of individuals is symbolised by the presentation of bread and wine, traditionally seen as representing the most basic ingredients of life; the liturgy speaks of these elements as things 'which human hands have made', but also as things which symbolise God's bountiful provision for his people: the grain and the grapes ripen as fruits of the earth blessed by sun and rain, but it is people who are responsible for the cultivation of the ground, for the harvesting of the crops and for turning them into acceptable food and drink. So, as one participant (Marian) puts it: -

> When these 'gifts' are offered they represent ourselves, our God-given skills and expertise, our memories and knowledge, our identity characterised by the totality of our life experiences. All this is offered in a spirit of gratitude as we give thanks and at the same time (as the bread is broken and the wine is shared) there is a sense of dedication, as people of the Covenant seek to respond to a divine imperative that the good things we have must be shared with all humanity.[436]

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[436] This is a fuller version of Marian's comment, also mentioned above at the end of section 3.C.4.

In order to place the analysis of memory within a critical field, this chapter explores and utilizes recent cognitive science on the nature of memory and how it affects peoples' lives in the present. I explore participants' comments in relation to their memories of Christian worship – its liturgies, buildings, traditions, and so on – and I examine how these elements affect the lives of believers and their practical service to society.

4.2.0 MEMORY AND COGNITIVE SCIENCE[437]

Cheryl's comment that 'music is very powerful and can bring back a memory in an instant' suggests that we should look more closely at how memory works. This section contains some important theoretical background which is relevant to my analysis of the ways that plainchant has interacted with participants' memories. Memory has been the subject of investigation among many twentieth-century psychologists, and it remains an active area of study in cognitive science.[438] We need to consider both individual and collective memory: whilst my research for this chapter has mainly involved the individual memories of participants, the notion of collective memory is also important, especially when we come to consider 'salvation-history'.[439]

4.2.1 Individual Memory

Having already stressed the importance of memory (see section 2.4.1), here I give a brief resumé of the salient facts and perceptions. It is generally agreed that memory consists of three cognitive processes: (a) encoding, (b) storage and (c) retrieval; and that there are three main ways in which information can be encoded: visual, acoustic and semantic. But there are many ramifications and variations of these views on how memory works. There is an established link between memory and olfaction.[440] It is thought that memories evoked by odours are linked to more brain activity in areas associated with visual vividness. Anything we find particularly interesting captures our

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[437] I have already explored this issue in some detail in Chapter 2 (see sections 2.4 and 2.4.1). Here I set out the main points which underpin this Chapter.

[438] As already mentioned in Chapter 2, see S.A. McLeod, 'Stages of Memory: Encoding, Storage and Retrieval', at https://www.simplypsychology.org/memory.html 2007. See also https://www.psychologistworld.com/memory/influential-memory-psychology-studies-experiments

[439] See section 4.2.2.

[440] See, for example, A.I. Yang et al., 'The What and When of Olfactory Working Memory in Humans', in *Current Biology,* vol. 31, 2021, pp 4499-4511.

attention and so we 'rehearse' it in our minds. Memory is an integral part of a larger system that supports not only thinking of what was the case but also what could have been the case.[441] Memories are fragile, fluid and malleable, having a tendency to change over time; they have been transmitted, in various ways, over thousands of years, as the next section shows.

4.2.2 Collective Memory

The way individuals collectively remember, forget, and recall events, people, places, etc., has been a prominent topic of research for many years.[442] However, the notion of collective memory as a socially generated common perception of an event itself has been introduced and studied only recently.[443] As Henry L. Roediger and K. Andrew DeSoto explain: -

> Collective memory is historical memory, or individuals' memories that reflect the groups to which they belong. Understanding a nation's collective memories helps to understand their perspective. … Collective memory suffuses many debates within and between groups.[444]

The collective memories of a people can change over generations. A recent study by Franklin Zaromb et al showed that both younger and older Americans listed the U.S. bombings of Japan as a critical event in World War II. [445] However, older adults (those alive during the war) rated the bombings quite positively (the bombs ended the war; they spared American lives) whereas younger adults rated the bombings as negative (the bombs killed and injured thousands of civilians; the war would surely have ended soon anyway).

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[441] See F. de Brigard, 'Is Memory for Remembering? Recollection as a Form of Episodic Hypothetical Thinking', in *Synthese*, vol. 191, no 2, 2014, pp 155-185.

[442] See R. Garcia-Gavilanes et al., 'The Memory Remains: Understanding Collective Memory in the Digital Age', in *Science Advances,* vol. 3, no 4, 2017.

[443] See M. Halbwachs and L. A. Coser, *On Collective Memory*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

[444] See H.L. Roediger and K. A. De Soto, 'Three Facets of Collective Memory', in *American Psychologist,* vol. 76, no 9, 2021, pp 1388-1400, esp. p. 1388, 'Public Significance Statement'.

[445] See F. Zaromb et al., 'Collective Memories of Three Wars in United States History in Younger and Older Adults', in *Memory and Cognition,* vol. 42, 2014, pp 383-399.

Memories of the past are a significant element of the biblical record. Memories in the biblical sense, in most cases, fall into this category of collective memory. These memories form an important aspect of a genre known as *Heilsgeschichte* or 'salvation-history': this is not history in the modern sense – history purporting to be 'objective'.[446] History here is understood as a recounting of past events overlaid with their theological significance for the present. This may be likened to the above example of perceptions of World War II discussed by Zaromb.

The theological element in this context mainly centres around the notion of a 'covenant' between God and the Israelite nation. Numerous passages in the Hebrew scriptures look back to the time of the exodus from Egypt. This is particularly apparent in the *Book of Psalms* – the ancient 'hymns' of the Bible, where we find passages such as the following: -

> In the sight of their ancestors God worked marvels
> > in the land of Egypt, in the fields of Zoan.
> He divided the sea and let them pass through it,
> > and made the waters stand like a heap.
> In the daytime he led them with a cloud,
> > and all night long with a fiery light.
> He split rocks open in the wilderness,
> > and gave them drink abundantly as from the deep.
> He made streams come out of the rock,
> > and caused water to flow down like rivers.[447]

A similarly poetic expression of the exodus myth is found in the 'Song of Miriam' already quoted (see section 1.5.1). This text is used (in the plainchant repertoire) for one of the Canticles at the Easter Vigil, appearing as follows: -

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[446] Some historians, for example my informant Ellen Ryder, would say that this view of history as 'objective' is now rather outmoded, and that 'objectivity' is hard to achieve: it has also been said (by many people) that history is more often written by victors than by the vanquished, and therefore reflects a subjective viewpoint. See https://slate.com/culture/2019/11/history-is-written-by-the-victors-quote-origin.html

[447] See *Psalm* 78:12-16.

Ex. 4.1 – Easter Vigil Canticle 'Cantemus Domino' [448]

The Latin text may be translated as *Let us sing to the Lord, for he is glorious and to be honoured; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea: he has become my helper and protector, and will save me.*

Collective remembering implies that collective forgetting also occurs, and Zaromb's study looks at such forgetting in a particular context: how rapidly American presidents are forgotten! Behavioural and social scientists share certain views concerning the psychology of collective memory. They recognize (a) that 'collectivities' require a shared memory of the past as a basis for social identity, but also that (b) memory is malleable, subject to substantial distortion. The relationship between memory and history is one of continuous reassessment. A collective experience of the past is sustained on a basis of a corporate memory which is aided by monuments, memorial days, and rites of commemoration. While remembered history is a *subjective* and partial mode of relating to the past, commemorated history constructs a uniform shape that integrates various perspectives and can be shared by following generations.[449]

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[448] See *Liber Usualis,* online edition, p. 776R.

[449] See J. Prager, 'The Psychology of Collective Memory' in *The International Enclyclopedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences,* 2001, pp 2223-2227. See also A. Assmann, 'History and Memory', *ibid,* pp 6822-6829.

This is what seems to have happened in the history of ancient Israel: the Israelites believed that God had 'chosen' them to be his special people; the significance of this belief in the context of Christianity will be made clear in the next section.

4.3   MEMORY AND THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Marian's comment that the tracks reminded her of 'regular sung Eucharists in a previous parish church', is one of many exemplifying the fact that all participants associated plainchant with Christian worship, and (in most cases) specifically with the Mass, or Eucharist. One of the central features of this ritual is the notion of a 'covenant' between God and humanity. In recent years one of the most significant scholarly expositions of the theology of 'covenant' has been given by Joseph Ratzinger, who (as Benedict XVI) was Pope from 2005 to 2013.[450] Ratzinger refers to the belief of the Israelites that God had 'chosen' them to be his special people, and reminds his readers that the required response of the people (their side of the bargain) was to be obedient to his Law, as found primarily in the Ten Commandments[451] but also in '*Deutero-nomy*' the 'Second Law' as expressed in the book of that name. This book sets out a revised version of the Mosaic Law, placing particular emphasis on the notions of (a) God's presence in the Jerusalem Temple (as well as in heaven), and therefore (b) the desirability of worship being centralized there, but also (c) a particular concern for the poor of society – since, along with the formalities of worship, this is the essence of obedience to the covenant.[452]

Marian, with whom I discussed these ideas, said that as a trained Anglican Reader and preacher, she is very familiar with the notion of the Eucharist as 'covenant' and that such ideas are not new. For Marian an obvious backdrop to listening to plainchant is the Christian context of ἀνάμνησις (anamnesis, with a long 'e'), which translates as reminiscence, remembering or making a memorial; this refers supremely to obeying a command of Jesus, when, at his last supper with his immediate followers he performed particular actions with bread and wine, and said, 'Do this in memory of me'.[453] Marian

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[450] See Ratzinger, *Many Religions* (as above), pp 102, 106.

[451] See *Exodus* 20:1-17.

[452] See, for example, Alexander Rofé, *Deuteronomy: Issues and Interpretation,* T and T Clark, 2002, pp 4-5. See also John W. Rogerson, 'Deuteronomy' in J.G. Dunn and J.W. Rogerson (eds) *Eerdmans Commentary* (as above), pp 153ff.

[453] See *Luke* 22:19 and *1 Corinthians* 11:25.

knows that it was actually the Apostle Paul who gave us the earliest account of the Last Supper, when he wrote that …

> … the Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed, took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me'. In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me'.[454]

It is impossible to over-emphasize the importance of this tiny narrative for Christians throughout the centuries; and almost the entire repertoire of plainchant relates to texts associated with the development of the liturgical rites surrounding the Last Supper. For Ratzinger, scripture presents salvation history not as a dichotomy between the new covenant and those of the Old Testament but rather as a 'dynamic unity of the entire history'. Indeed, from the perspective of eternity [and Ratzinger's own perspective], there is only 'one covenant', between God and the human race, the 'eternally valid' covenant with Abraham now perfectly fulfilled in Christ. [455] Marian amplified her own view of the Eucharist as covenant, by expressing her conviction that the Eucharistic community must dedicate itself to serving the needs of the whole of creation, rejecting the notion that humankind must 'subdue' the earth as suggested in *Genesis*.[456] Some of her further thoughts are reflected in Chapter 6.

In the liturgical and ecclesiastical developments which I will now briefly outline, it is clear that much hinges on the ways in which different groups of Christians have sought to embody in worship their collective memories of Jesus and his Last Supper.[457] In the analysis of participant data in the second half of this chapter, I shall illustrate the ways

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[454] See *1 Corinthians* 11:23ff. The accounts of 'The Last Supper' in the Gospels date from approximately a generation later.

[455] As already mentioned, see Ratzinger, *Many Religions*, especially pp 640 and 646.

[456] See *Genesis* 1: 26-28.

[457] And the protestant tradition has sometimes been dominated by the individual memories and interpretations of charismatic leaders such as Martin Luther (1483-1531), John Calvin (1509-1564), and the Wesleys, John (1703-1791) and Charles (1707-1788). To this list might be added the names of John Wycliffe (1320-1384 – the proto-protestant?), Jan Huss (1369-1415), Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531), George Fox (1624-1691), John Bunyan (1628-1688) and William Penn (1644-1718).

in which collective memories of Jesus and this special meal have influenced people's experiences of listening to plainchant (see section 4.4 below).

By the end of the second century CE, it is clear from various writings that some kind of formal pattern was emerging for the 'Eucharistic Prayer' which framed the 'tiny narrative' referred to above.[458] And, as Gregory Dix sought to show, the whole eucharistic rite soon came to be based on a scheme of four 'actions': the *taking* or *offering* of bread and wine as they are placed on the table; the prayer of *thanksgiving* over the bread and wine; the *breaking* of the bread; and the *distribution* of bread and wine amongst all present.[459] It should be remembered that *eucharist* means 'thanksgiving'; and it is noticeable that in Paul's earliest comments above, there is also a clear ethical implication (derived from *Deuteronomy*) with regard to 'people who are in need' and this is re-iterated by other early Christian writers.[460] It is arguable that much of this emphasis was lost in the medieval period, when there was too much stress on the nature of the *substances* used, and how they were thought to be 'changed' in the process of 'consecration'; but in more recent writings, from about 1930 onwards, there has been a renewed emphasis on the *actions* of the Eucharist, and their clearly ethical implications.[461] And for this understanding it is highly significant that Ratzinger subtly converts the notion of 'transubstantiation' into that of the 'trans-substantive *action* of God in the Eucharist'.[462]

The consequences of the Protestant Reformation have been significant for the history of plainchant in Britain, since, for several centuries, 'catholics' were unable to profess their faith legally, with the result that much of the music of that tradition was also suppressed.[463] It is well documented that the monasteries of England were dissolved

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[458] See especially Justin Martyr, *First Apology,* chapter 66.

[459] See G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy,* (1945), London & New York: Bloomsbury, 2005, p. 48. I say 'sought to show' because more recent scholars have said that Dix was somewhat tendentious in his references to the early Christian writers, but there is no doubt about the influence which his basic thesis has had on modern liturgical revisions.

[460] See, for example, *Didache,* xiv,2, p.91, quoted in Dix. *The Shape of the Liturgy* (as above)*,* p.106.

[461] See, for example (ed) J.F. Baldovin, *The Eucharist: At the Center of Catholic Life,* Boston College, 2011, online. See also A.G. Hebert, *Liturgy and Society,* Faber, 1936, and Chapter 7, section 7.7, below.

[462] See Bennett Zon, 'Anthropology, Theology and the Simplicity of Benedict XVI's Chant', in *Logos,* vol.19, no 1, 2016, p.32 (my italics).

[463] I have used the term 'catholics' (in quotes) because that is how those loyal to the Roman Catholic Church were regarded by many in England for several centuries after the Reformation. It was not until the 'Catholic

under Henry VIII between 1536 and 1541. The reign of his son Edward VI saw the first two Prayer Books of the Church of England (in 1549 and 1552) with translations and adaptations overseen by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer: the 1549 book was quite conservative, maintaining many texts of the 'catholic' tradition; the 1552 book was much more 'protestant' in emphasis, seeking to move away from any notion of 'the sacrifice of the Mass'.[464] Following a long period of suppression of catholic worship in Britain, the twentieth century saw a growth in tolerance, understanding and co-operation between the various branches of the worldwide church. One result of this for plainchant is that it is no longer regarded as belonging solely to the Roman Catholic Church, as shown by the fact that it is used regularly in a number of Anglican cathedrals (even some parish churches); and it is significant that a number of my participants (nearly 70%) are 'non-catholics'. It is to the comments of all my participants that I now turn.

4.4.0   PARTICIPANT DATA – the stories people tell

This section presents some of the 'stories' told by my participants when they refer to their previously gained knowledge of plainchant and to their memories triggered by the three tracks. In this section their words, and the many things they choose to reveal about themselves, are analysed in detail. Reference is made to factual and academic background material in order to show how the participants' narratives illustrate the importance of both the formalities of worship, and the ways in which worship is 'lived out' by various individuals and groups, in service to the community at large.

The memories evoked (often from childhood) focus first on particular places and people, and are sometimes linked with olfaction (an important sense in memory studies as discussed in the review of cognitive approaches).[465] Some participants (Joanna for example) show that during the course of their lives they have become more familiar with plainchant, through repeated listening or performing, and have

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Emancipation Act' of 1829 that British Roman Catholics were allowed to sit as Members of Parliament and take public office.

[464] See *The First and Second Prayer Books of King Edward VI,* J.M. Dent and Sons, 1910 (reprinted 1964). The more 'protestant' emphasis of the 1552 book was maintained in the *Book of Common Prayer* (1662) which is still a foundational document for the Church of England, although the twentieth century saw many 'revisions' of liturgy culminating in *The Alternative Service Book* (1980); this was consciously designed as a temporary measure, and was succeeded in 2000 by *Common Worship.*

[465] See especially section 2.4.1 above.

developed a deeper knowledge of the genre. For others, such as Trebor, the memories are more simply nostalgic. Joanna wrote:

> I know some [plainchant] to listen to, recognise it as a source of musical quotation and as an element of liturgical worship. I attended a course on the Sarum Rite plainchant in the early 90s led by Mary Berry. I have encountered it in my varied experiences of singing and of Christian worship.

Dr Berry's work of a lifetime was one of the twentieth century's most important contributions to the revival of interest in plainchant.[466] She is mentioned here as an affirmation of Joanna's own love of plainchant, her experiences of its use in the context of worship, and her desire to improve her knowledge. It is significant that listening to the tracks has awakened this memory, and this renewed interest, in her mind.

Trebor wrote:

> As a boy treble in an RC church choir, the Sunday Masses were usually sung in Gregorian chant. It was an all-male choir which in my opinion produced a purer sound and didn't distract me from the singing! Those early chants have

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[466] During her student years Mary Berry visited Solesmes, and subsequently lectured in Paris on Gregorian chant and polyphony. She joined a French Order of nuns, professing her vows in 1945, and adopting the title of Mother Thomas More. On returning home to England during the 1960s, she embarked on a doctorate in musicology at Cambridge, receiving the degree in 1970. She then taught at the two principal womens' colleges in Cambridge until her retirement in 1984. To promote plainchant, she gathered together a chorus of amateur and professional singers, and was allowed to use the chapel of St John's College for a Solemn High Mass celebrated by the Roman Catholic Bishop of East Anglia. This was well attended and from 1975 onwards Berry's 'Schola Gregoriana of Cambridge' gave a number of concerts in the chapel. This 'Schola' was one of the first ensembles to perform and record music from the *Winchester troper* after research by Berry and others made the music accessible from the manuscripts. She travelled widely to promote interest and participation in plainchant, organizing many workshops and courses such as the one to which two of my participants have referred. She was a particularly keen advocate for the use of Gregorian chant in its proper liturgical context, and was instrumental in the founding of the 'Community of Jesus' in Massachusetts – a large ecumenical community which sings the full monastic day and night offices, with responsibility shared between clergy, cantors, religious, and married people. In the 1990s Berry was responsible for a number of recordings of plainchant in the USA and in Italy as well as in Britain. She produced two books introducing plainchant to beginners in the field: (M. Berry, *Plainchant for Everyone,* RSCM, 1979; and also *Cantors: a collection of Gregorian chants,* RSCM, 1979). and also wrote for *Gramophone* and the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians:* See, for example, her entry on Le Munerat, *New Grove Dictionary*, OUP, 1980, vol.10, p.659. Jean Le Munerat (c. 1435-1499) was a singer and author of two tracts on verbal accentuation in plainchant. In 2000 Mary Berry was awarded a Papal Cross by Pope John Paul II for her services to the Roman Catholic Church, and in 2002 she was made a CBE.

stayed in my memory for all my life and I often enjoy live performances in monasteries and churches.

One of the features of this chapter is its emphasis on the links between worship and service to the community, since all my participants perceived the clear link between plainchant and Christian worship. As already stated (see p. 27 above), the Mass ends with the words *Ite, missa est.* Whatever the literal meaning of these words may be in this context, there is clearly an implication that the group of people which has gathered to celebrate the Eucharist is now being 'sent' to live out the meaning of the sacrament in their lives, by proclaiming the Gospel and by serving others. So we shall see, through the memories of participants, various ways in which, over the centuries and in the present day, worship (including plainchant) has led individuals and groups of people to give service to their communities (and to other individuals) in a variety of ways.

For most of my participants, plainchant triggers memories of past events. As already quoted, Cheryl was clear on the power of music to evoke memories, writing that 'Music is very powerful….'. The 'power of music' is discussed in subsequent chapters.[467] It will also be clear already that some of the statements below relate to a sense of 'wellbeing', and also that some are verging on the 'spiritual' dimension of plainchant. I will defer discussion of these latter issues to Chapters 5 and 6. Here I analyse participants' remarks about their own memories, and link them with previously available ethnographical material.

4.4.1 Memories from childhood and early life

A number of participants referred specifically to childhood experiences. These are amplified in order to show the wide variety of their memories. Two things are demonstrated: firstly, that these comments all help to illustrate various aspects of Christian worship and its 'outworking'; secondly, it seems clear that the participants, as they comment on their reactions to the chants, want to communicate to the researcher and to the reader various aspects of their identities.

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[467] See especially sections 5.2 and 7.6 below.

Referring to his favourite Track, Stephen said, 'More than anything it reminds me of having a story read to me as a child'. The concept of 'story' (as I have already shown with reference to the 'simple narrative' at the heart of the Eucharist) is an important aspect of Christian worship. Academic research seems to show that reading to a child is 'one of the most effective ways to build the neural connections for language in his growing brain as well as a strong base for his cognitive development'; and a study published in 2019 pointed out that reading is a 'relatively recent human invention' and that therefore 'there is no hard-wired reading network in the brain'.[468] Various studies suggest that story-reading is an important ingredient in parent-child bonding. The concept of 'attachment theory' goes back to the work of John Bowlby in the 1950s and 1960s,[469] but more recent literature suggests that it is still widely accepted.[470] Stephen's comment is clearly a reminiscence of his own relationship as a child with his parents, or other adults who read stories to him. His words might imply that plainchant has a comforting effect; it is also arguable that the power dynamic between parent and child has an effect on the adult's perception of God.[471]

David too connects his experience of plainchant with childhood memories, and more particularly the distinctive childhood experience of being at school (in this instance specifically a boarding school). David writes: -

> I went to a boarding school run by Benedictine monks. At that time plainsong did nothing for me. I'm not sure that the singing was that good, certainly not to the standard of [Track] C.

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[468] See J.S. Hutton et al., 'Associations Between Home Literacy Environments, Brain White-matter Integrity and Cognitive Abilities in Pre-school-age Children', in *Acta Paediatrica*, 2019, at
https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/apa.15124

[469] See J. Bowlby, 'The Nature of the Child's Tie to His Mother' in *International Journal of Psychoanalysis,* vol. 39*,* 1958, pp 350-371. See also J. Bowlby, *Attachment,* New York: Basic Books, 1969.

[470] See M.D.S. Ainsworth, 'Attachments and Other Affectional Bonds Across the Life Cycle', in C. M. Parkes, J. Stevenson-Hinde and P. Marris (eds), *Attachment Across the Life Cycle,* Routledge, 1991, pp 33-51. See also S.A. McLeod, *Attachment Theory*, Simply Psychology, 2017, at
https://www.simplypsychology.org/attachment.html

[471] See C.G. Schoenfeld, 'God the Father — and Mother: Study and Extension of Freud's Conception of God as an Exalted Father', in *American Imago*, vol. 19, no 3, 1962, pp 213–234.

David's connection of childhood (school) with plainchant is not particularly positive, and although the comment about the quality of singing is light-hearted it might suggest a less than positive early experience of church worship.

Dawn's memories from her early life are rather more positive. She refers to her …

> … childhood [and] visiting a monastery at Caldey Island and not really understanding anything other than this was something that was sacred but also frightening because it was beyond my experiences to this point.

In another answer, perhaps looking back to the same experience, she refers to a…

> … holy place, sacred and intimate where one can meet with a higher presence in an act of simple listening and worship.

The monks of Caldey have a reputation for 'cheerful faith and robust prayer' as well as for the production of perfumes based on lavender and the profusion of wild flowers on the island.[472] Listening to the plainchant reminded Dawn of her visit which took place many years earlier in the 1970s. This participant uses the word 'sacred' which suggests that listening to the chant evoked a sense of 'the holy'. This latter phrase was used by another participant, Mark, and the whole idea will be discussed further in Chapter 6. Dawn also remembers the visit as being 'frightening', because it was beyond her normal experience. It seems that listening to the plainchant brought to the mind of this participant the immensity of religious experience, inspiring fear as well as awe. This also will be relevant to the discussion of 'Transcendence' in Chapter 6.

Another participant, Elsa, referred back to a childhood visit to a specific place, and identified the significance of hearing plainchant for the first time. She wrote that it …

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[472] See https://caldeyislandwales.com/cistercian-monks. See also https://www.caldey-island.co.uk/Perfume-Making.htm

> … reminded me of when I was a teenager and my parents took me to a 'medieval' banquet at Coombe Abbey.[473] As we entered there were men dressed as monks singing plainchant. It was probably the first time I had heard it.

Katisha referred to 'a childhood memory of wax polish on pews'. Commenting on Track C, she added that it …

> … brought back memories of the church I attended as a teenager, so I saw the Lamb above the altar, the windows to the left and the trees outside.

This participant's reference to 'the Lamb above the altar' is significant with regard to the ways that plainchant evokes memories through different senses. Katisha has since died, and so I am unable to verify which church it was that she attended as a teenager; but similar images are found on a panel behind the altar (the 'reredos' as it is known) in many churches. Some of these images are undoubtedly inspired by the famous 'Ghent Altarpiece', also known as 'The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb', a fifteenth-century polyptych in Ghent Cathedral, attributed to the Van Eyck brothers (as illustrated below).[474] The image of the 'enthroned lamb' has a firm biblical basis, and it is interesting that Katisha refers to it. It may be that the memory of the image in the church of her childhood is actual. In some ways her recounting of the image alongside the memories of the polish on the pews seems like an assertion of the validity of that memory – it really did smell of polish, the pews were really there (very likely) and there really was an image of a lamb. Katisha is validating the memory evoked by the Track in her response. It is also possible that the memory of the lamb may be a 'false memory' inspired by the prevalence of such imagery in religious iconography. This does not make her memory invalid in any way, in fact this possibility reinforces the notion of the power of plainchant to evoke a wide range of sensory memories associated with spiritual imagery as well with mundane matters like wax polish.

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[473] Coombe Abbey, near Rugby, was once a Cistercian house, but after the Dissolution it was privately owned as a country mansion for over three centuries, and was never restored to monastic use. The house itself, even though traces of the cloisters remain, is now a hotel; in the 1960s the extensive grounds were bought by Coventry Council and opened to the public as a country park.

[474] One scene from this famous altarpiece has already been included in Chapter 1 (see page 40). This is a close-up of the Lamb, showing the shedding of his blood.

Ex. 4.2 – A further illustration from the 'Ghent Altarpiece'[475]

The Ghent Altarpiece – the most famous illustration of such a heavenly scene – also includes some singing angels, and other noteworthy musical references mainly drawn from the book of *Psalms.* This reinforces the association between the 'lamb' imagery and music/plainchant/singing which perhaps helps to confirm the potential for a 'false memory' in the most positive sense.

In this sub-section we have seen examples of the way in which participants re-construct their memories of the past, including experiences which evoked fear and awe, as well as more mundane memories. Questions may be raised about the accuracy of some of these reminiscences, but this is not to deny the value of such memories for the participants themselves.

4.4.2 Identity and Expertise

A number of participants made reference to aspects of their own identity or their vocation in describing memories evoked by plainchant. Cantor, for example, made reference to his expertise as an organist, being reminded of 'playing for an Anglo-Catholic mass … [and] Easter Saturday at my church [where] the Vicar sings the

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[475] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghent_Altarpiece

Exultet in English'. Tim (one of the retired cathedral precentors) referred to his experience of plainchant as '14 years, every Wednesday, Choral Evensong, men's voices, psalms, sang alternate verses'. For Tim, plainchant has associations with 'Monks. Medieval. Liturgical music'. This participant (writing his answers very briefly in note form) is asserting his own extensive experience of religious music and its background in describing the memories evoked by the chants. He is asserting his religious identity as an ordained priest who held a cathedral post for fourteen years; and now, in retirement, it was listening to the chants that prompted him to reflect on this experience.

Paul, referring to two churches where he was the organist, wrote of ...

> … late night first Mass of Easter at St Paul's [Hockley, Birmingham] on Easter Eve with great choral music [and] early mornings at Wordsley [Stourbridge] for the Sunrise vigil service.

As an international recitalist he mentioned experiencing plainchant 'live mainly at ND [Notre Dame] Paris, at least once a year'.

With similar attention to personal identity, and with specific reference to vocation, Holly recalled her time as a Nun, writing: -

> I used to be a Nun and we sang plainchant. I used to be Cantrix regularly. I could read it on the original 4-line stave though I am rusty now.

On hearing Track A, Holly clearly remembered some of her past experiences in a religious order, and said that she saw a picture (appropriate for Advent) of 'darkness with a single beam of light shining in a pure manner'. In a subsequent conversation by email, Holly quoted 'one Archbishop of Canterbury' as saying that the religious life was 'a well-kept secret in the Anglican communion'. [476] This phrase also occurs in the title of a book edited by Nicolas Stebbing, a Zimbabwean member of the Community of the

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[476] Holly thought that this might have been George Carey (Archbishop from 1991-2002) whom she had met on a couple of occasions.

Resurrection.[477] Holly (echoing this approach) described the monastic presence in the Church of England as 'very hidden but a powerful force, praying and working behind the scenes and sustaining the wider church.' She described the 'rule' which her community followed as 'part Augustinian [with] bits picked from several other sources like Jane de Chantal'. She added that….

> …. there are different sorts of Orders that have different charisms. Some are enclosed, and in others some people go out. Some wear the habit, some do not. It is all on the continuum of Mary and Martha. My community was a mixed community so combining a calling of prayer and service. I think it was 23 hours a week of corporate and private prayer and then work as designated. I did various jobs: laundry, archives, infirmary wing and latterly I worked in the parish as part of the Ministry Team.

Holly refers to the Augustinian *Rule.* This was created by Augustine of Hippo (354-430), a distinguished Christian writer (not to be confused with Augustine the first Archbishop of Canterbury, nearly two centuries later) who was a bishop in North Africa from 395 until his death.[478] His most famous writings include his *Confessions, The City of God, The Harmony of the Gospels,* a *Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, and (of special significance for musicians) *De Musica,* in which he touches on what he regards as the cosmological and theological aspects of music.[479] Holly also refers to 'the continuum of Martha and Mary': the different personalities of these two sisters have provided, for generations, the extreme 'poles' of a model for the role of women in the Church (and this is now a model which is equally applicable for men). The story of the two sisters is told in the *Gospel of Luke* in these words: -

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[477] See N. Stebbing (ed), *Anglican Religious Life: a Well-kept Secret?*, Dominican Publications, 2003. The Community of the Resurrection is based at Mirfield, Yorkshire. This is the same community to which another of my informants belongs – Peter Allan, the Precentor of the community and also (until recently) the Principal of the theological college based there.

[478] Augustine's *Rule* is (on present evidence) the oldest monastic rule in the Western Church. It was originally written for the community which he established in the grounds of the bishop's house at Hippo before becoming bishop there. It is based primarily on the injunction found in the *Acts of the Apostles* that the community must live in harmony, 'being of one mind and heart on the way to God.' (See *Acts* 4:32). This means respecting the needs of all members of the community irrespective of the circumstances of their birth or their social status. The *Rule* seems to suggest that its adherents, though practising poverty, (common ownership of possessions) chastity and obedience, will not be 'set apart' entirely, but will be associated with their local church, in terms of common worship (a daily celebration of the Eucharist) and caring for the poorer members of society.

[479] See https://pdfcoffee.com/on-music-de-musica-pdf-free.html

As Jesus and his disciples went on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha welcomed him in her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat down at the feet of the Lord and listened to his teaching. Martha was upset over all the work she had to do, so she came and said, 'Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to come and help me!' The Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha! You are worried and troubled over so many things, but just one is needed. Mary has chosen the right thing, and it will not be taken away from her.[480]

It is clear in this short passage that Jesus seems to favour Mary's way of serving him; but it is also clear from *The Acts of the Apostles* (also written by Luke) that from the earliest times Christians gave considerable weight to the practicalities of serving their communities, particularly the most needy members. Consequentially, the aim for Christians today (within monastic houses and in the wider community) is to achieve a good balance between, on the one hand, devotion to Jesus and his teaching and, on the other hand, community service. It seems that this emphasis on the equal importance of 'prayer' and 'work' (as expressed in the Benedictine motto *laborare est orare*) was exemplified in the community to which Holly belonged. Her references here to knowledge about her order, to the religious life and to Martha and Mary are an example of how listening to the plainchant tracks encouraged this participant to remember aspects of her spiritual identity, her expertise in aspects of religious worship, and her continuing desire to express her religious commitment in service to the community. Holly now makes a valuable contribution to the life of her present parish as a Youth Leader. This is an illustration of how one person's past experience (in which plainchant played a considerable part) affects her present life.

In this sub-section we have had glimpses into the perceptions of two parish organists (one of whom is an international recitalist), a retired cathedral Precentor and a former Nun; in their various ways they have helped to reinforce the clear links between plainchant and Christian worship. There are links (especially in Holly's case) between past and present; such links will become even more prominent in the next sub-section.

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[480] See *Luke* 10:38-42.

4.4.3 Space, place and time

For a number of participants, the tracks evoked memories of specific locations and people. Some of these memories have already been mentioned in passing, but here they will be discussed more fully. They are important because they help to demonstrate a wide variety of approaches to worship, and to the way in which such commitment can be 'lived out' in everyday life.

Cantor stated that he had 'several recordings of plainsong including some from Solesmes Abbey, where I have attended Vespers on two occasions'. Cantor's reference to Solesmes is interesting as it is a very significant site for the development of plainchant. I have already made several references to Solesmes, in Chapter 2 above.

Also finding that listening to the tracks evoked memories of specific places, Mr Bucket recalled a visit to Glasshampton Friary [near Stourport], and he connects this with another specific location, in Assisi. Beginning with a reference to Glasshampton, Mr Bucket writes that he visited…

> … with a friend who, soon afterwards, became a Franciscan friar. At the time the Friary was occupied by some 15 friars and the singing [on Track B] reminded me of them. Prior to that retreat, I had taken my friend to Assisi to experience the brotherhood at its source and the plainchant there was simply out of this world!

Here the plainchant stimulates recollection of two distinct places and the participant puts these two memories together in his response, suggesting that these place-based memories become connected to each other through the activity of listening to the music. Also reporting an association with specific places, Sally liked Track B because 'it came from Spain, or at least I thought it did'; and she added 'it reminded me, oddly, of being in the Amazon ...'[481] Sally was correct in thinking that this track 'came from Spain'. She had presumably (in accordance with my instructions) not read the

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[481] To use Sally's word, this is 'odd'; I wondered if it was perhaps the language that evoked the link in her mind, but then I realised that in Brazil the normal language is Portuguese. However, this was Sally's perception, which I respected, and therefore it did not seem to warrant further interrogation.

Commentary before answering the questions. The track was in fact from The Abbey of St Domingo de Silos, a Benedictine monastery in northern Spain, said to date back to 929. In the early days, Mozarabic (Spanish) chant melodies were used there but in the eleventh century the monks began singing Gregorian chant. In the late nineteenth century, they were influenced by the scholarly work at Solesmes and adopted that method of chanting. The track (with others on the same disk) was first recorded in the 1970s, but in 1994 the disk was re-released after an invitation from the seminary at Lograño to submit recordings for circulation among the local churches to try to generate greater interest in plainchant. Amazingly, over five million copies of the disk were sold by the end of 1995 including three million in the USA, qualifying for a 'triple platinum' certificate. The total has now topped six million. It is clear that this music 'touched a nerve' amongst listeners. Audiences ranged from Christian traditionalists who sought music with a deep spiritual feeling to casual listeners who were attracted to any sort of soothing background music for reflection or meditation. Reviewers have referred to the atmosphere of spiritual calm which has been described as 'transporting — a potent antidote to the jagged noise and hectic pace that are part of modern living'. An anonymous reviewer wrote as follows: -

> If you want a Gregorian Chant album and you are not sure which one to get, this is the one you want. I remember when it came out. It was a big hit. Some thought it sounded creepy. The cover is iconic. There are a few reasons why one might want to own an album of Gregorian Chant. First, it provides a base line for Western music. Classical music developed from chant and so this provides a starting point for exploring early western music. Second, it provides calming music. Most people will purchase an album of chant for its soothing effect on the mind. If this is your motivation, the Monks of Santo Domingo de Silos will not disappoint. Third, it provides an otherworldly sound-world that you want to escape to, hovering in the heavens with floating bricks.[482]

Sally's experience of listening to this track certainly seems to reflect a peaceful, idyllic, and tranquil scene. It took her back, she says, to the house she lived in, with its 'tiled floors, wooden furniture and small windows, and a goat in the back garden'. For Joanna

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[482] Found on the Amazon website, review dated Jan. 2018,

who recalled 'jumbled up memories of hours spent in church on different occasions', the place labelled as 'church' is more generic. It is interesting however that despite the vagueness of the memories which the music has evoked, she nevertheless refers to a sense of 'place' to locate these memories.

Edingale actually uses generic words relating to this theme (place and space) to imply that listening to the tracks evoked particular memories. He writes: -

> Plainsong gives me a very specific sense of place and space; [and he goes on to say that] being a church/cathedral attending Catholic makes [these recordings] very relevant to my experiences of church services; these are both 'past' (from my singing youth) and recent from church attendance.

Edingale's identification of himself as a Catholic worshipper is interesting here in that the plainchant encourages him to connect his youth (singing) with his present as a church attender. His reference to his own past and the more recent present in conjunction with the generic ideas of 'place' and 'space' also raises philosophical issues about the significance of time.

I wrote this chapter in the context of a Coronavirus lockdown which has made a drastic difference to many people's way of life, including the discontinuation of public worship.[483] It has been suggested that this situation forces (or at least enables) us to re-consider the nature and the importance of time. A very recent book by a physicist-philosopher helps us to explore the mystery of time. Carlo Rovelli writes that: -

> Perhaps time is the greatest mystery. We inhabit time as fish live in water. Our being is being in time. Its solemn music nurtures us, opens the world to us, troubles us, frightens and lulls us. [But] we still don't know how time actually works. Curious threads connect it to those other great open mysteries: the nature of mind, the origin of the universe, the fate of black holes, the very functioning of life on earth. Do we exist in time, or does time exist in us? What

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[483] It was first written during the first 'lockdown' which began in March 2020, and was revised under similar restrictions early in 2021.

does it really mean to say that time passes? What ties time to our nature as persons, to our subjectivity? [484]

Rovelli's answers to these questions take us into the realms of quantum physics, thermal time and gravitational fields. I come back to this in my Conclusion (see section 7.8); but at this point we might just note the way in which Edingale makes links between plainchant, memories, place and time.

For some participants, the tracks reminded them of a very specific location. Sacristan (preferring Track B), for example, wrote that it evoked a picture of 'a Cistercian Abbey Gate Chapel', specifically that of 'St Mary (The Blessed Virgin), Merevale [near Tamworth, Staffordshire]'. The Cistercian Order originated at Cîteaux in 1098 as a reformed version of the Benedictine Order; the monks followed the Rule of St Benedict, but with stricter discipline. One striking feature in the reform was the return to manual labour, especially agricultural work in the fields around the monasteries, a special characteristic of Cistercian life. In reclaiming marginal land and in increasing production, especially that of wool in the large pastures of Wales and Yorkshire, the Cistercians played a considerable part in the British economic progress of the twelfth century and in the development of the techniques of farming and marketing. The Cistercian Order was innovative in developing techniques of hydraulic engineering and the use of waterwheels for power.

Mark referred to Buckfast Abbey where he 'once listened to Evensong sung by the monks'. This Abbey (in Devon) is another Cistercian establishment, dating back to 1018, famous for its tonic wine and for bee-keeping. One of the brothers (who died in 1996) was responsible (for over seventy years) for the creation of a disease-resistant strain known as the Buckfast Bee which is now bred all over Europe.

Finding connections between past and present locations, Lanzada remembered…

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[484] See Carlo Rovelli, *The Order of Time*, tr. E. Segre and S. Carnell, London: Penguin, 2019, pp 1-2.

> … a visit to a convent with a nun who was also studying at the then [Birmingham] School of Music. More recently, a service at a Spanish monastery and Holy Week / Greek Easter celebrations of the Orthodox Church.

Dawn, acknowledging her 'very limited experience of plainchant' mentioned that she once 'went on a pilgrimage to Walsingham Abbey for a few days'. This participant's reference to her lack of experience is noteworthy – firstly because she wants to tell us that that is the case, and secondly because she nevertheless makes a connection between the plainchant and her personal memory of visiting a place well known for significant religious experiences. The Anglican shrine at Walsingham is the result of pioneering work by one dedicated man, Alfred Hope Patten (1885-1958) who was appointed as Vicar of Walsingham in 1921.[485] His vision entailed the establishment of the ancient Abbey as a destination for pilgrims, on a par with sites such as Lourdes and Fatima. He, and other 'Anglo-Catholic' priests at that time thought that it was important to stress a sense of continuity between the pre-Reformation Church and the post-Reformation Church of England. An informant (The Revd Martin Ennis) who is a parish priest and who organizes visits with his parishioners to Walsingham, writes as follows: -

> In some Anglican, Orthodox and Roman Catholic parishes in England, a pilgrimage to Walsingham with its shrines is seen as something which can help to re-vitalise the individual faith of parishioners, and consolidate their understanding of the Communion of Saints; consequently, it can help to renew the parochial congregation in its commitment to both worship in church and service to the community.[486]

In this sub-section we are made more aware of the links between the relatively recent experiences of the participants and events in the long-distant past such as the work of the medieval Cistercians. And we have been introduced to 'the mystery of time', to which I will return in Chapter 7.

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[485] There are also Orthodox and Roman Catholic shrines, sadly separate!
[486] The Revd M. Ennis, by email, 28th Jan. 2021.

4.4.4 Memory and Olfaction

Several participants, when referring to their memories, raised the issue of smell. Among them, it was Stephen who described most convincingly the link between memory and smell, when he wrote of the 'spiritual significance' of burning candles and incense: -

… our sense of smell is very acute and often carries the strongest associations. For me the scent of burning candles and of incense comes to mind most strongly. I know that for some (many?) people this would not be at all positive - an annoyance, a distraction or probably an irrelevance – but I find it helps me identify with the spiritual significance and for me it serves as another channel of offering and prayer (just as the music does) when words alone seem inadequate.

Three other participants also referred to the significance of olfaction. Katisha, referring to Track C wrote that …

… as the track progressed it took me to Oronsay Priory (Inner Hebrides) with the view of the sea and the peace and tranquillity that is found there; [and I was reminded of] the smell of the air when recalling Oronsay…

and Grazia wrote of the …

… smell of Sardinian typical Easter cakes, biscuits, bread and [the] smell of my home country at Easter, Mediterranean flowers and fruit trees, sunny days and the noise of the waves of the sea.

I have already suggested that Mr Bucket's recalling of his visit to Glasshampton is an important memory connecting two places and significant events associated with them. This participant also recalled, with humour, an olfactory sensation on that same visit, as follows: -

When we were at Glasshampton, I remember sitting in the chapel listening to the friars and all the while there was pheasant cooking for the meal which had

been donated to the friars by a local farmer and the wonderful aroma of this pervaded the whole chapel!! I'll always remember it!

Recent scientific work has explored the significance of olfaction in the construction of memory and the processes of remembering. Matthew Cobb, for example, states that…

…our sense of smell – or olfaction as it is technically known – is our most enigmatic sense. It can conjure up memories, taking us back to very specific places and emotions, whilst powerful smells can induce strong feelings of hunger or nausea. In the animal kingdom smell can be used to find food, a mate, or a home; to sense danger; and to send and receive complex messages with other members of a species. Yet despite its fundamental importance in our mental life and in the existence of all animals, our scientific understanding of how smell works is limited.[487]

Smell is also mentioned in the survey of psychological theories in Chapter 2 (section 2.4.1) above. Richard Atkinson and Richard Shiffrin tell us that information enters the sensory memory when for example we see a picture, smell food or hear music;[488] and the connexion between memory and olfaction was studied in much more detail by Arnie Cann and Debra Ross, amongst others.[489] The participants in this sub-section have given us some vivid real-life examples of the links between olfaction and memory, referring to the smells of incense and burning candles (perhaps an obvious link with worship) but also to the very different smells of the sea-air around the Inner Hebrides, of Sardinian Easter cakes and of pheasant being cooked in a Friary.

4.4.5 Memory and Familiarity

Many academic studies on the 'false' memories seem irrelevant to the experience of plainchant listeners.[490] What they value are their memories, yet some of those

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[487] See M. Cobb, *Smell: A Very Short Introduction,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020 (Abstract).

[488] See R.C. Atkinson and R.M. Shiffrin, 'Human Memory: A Proposed System and its Control Processes' in K.W. and J.T. Spence, *The Psychology of Learning and Motivation,* New York, Academic Press, 1968, pp 89–195.

[489] See A. Cann and D. A. Ross, 'Olfactory Stimuli as Context Cues in Human Memory', in *The American Journal of Psychology,* vol 102, no 1, 1989, pp 91-102.

[490] See, for example, E.F. Loftus and J.C. Palmer, 'Reconstruction of Auto-mobile Destruction: An Example of the Interaction between Language and Memory', in *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, vol. 13, 1974,

memories may have become corrupted over time: this is a possibility with Katisha (see section 4.4.1 above). But it should be noted that people are unlikely to be aware of that, except in an intellectual sense: meaning, they may know, factually, that memories can become distorted, but more significantly they treasure their own memories for what they are, now, as a present-day phenomenon. I empathise with this because of my own experiences as a cathedral choirboy in the 1950s. Some of what went on then is best not remembered in detail; but I treasure the good memories: the sense of camaraderie, the experience of leadership (as head chorister for a time), the excellent repertoire that I learned (even though our standards of singing at that particular place in those days were not very high, as I only realised later), and, above all, the love and respect that was generated in me for the whole experience of worship. However 'misremembered' some of my thoughts may be, I still value enormously the time that I spent in that role and in that environment. My empathy with this issue allows special insight into the meanings of participants' responses. Memory contributes very strongly to the notion of familiarity. When asked if the music served as a reminder of any past experiences, Cheryl wrote 'Yes! I have sung and heard this sort of music many times before throughout my life'. Paul (as already quoted) referred to his 'familiarity with this form from years of Easter Day vigils'. When we hear a piece of music, it may or may not resonate with what we have heard before. If it does resonate, we are more likely to say we 'like' or appreciate it, because it is familiar. If it does not 'correspond' to something already in our memory, we may find it 'challenging' – this can sometimes be a positive experience, and sometimes a negative one.

Holly, who has already been discussed in the context of the connection between identity and memories of plainchant, provides some important material on the issue of familiarity. She recalls her familiarity with plainchant because of her vocation in a religious order. She kindly sent me a copy of the plainchant manual which they used in her order. The version of plainchant used in her community owes much to the renowned work of the Solesmes monks, but had been adapted with English texts. In spite of the title *Gradual,* all the 'Propers' are included (Introit, Gradual, Alleluia, Offertory and Communion). What is particularly interesting is that the very first of these

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pp 585-589. See also J.C. Yuille and J.L. Cutshall, 'A Case Study of Eyewitness Memory of a Crime', in *Journal of Applied Psychology,* vol. 71, 1986, p. 291.

chants, the Introit for Advent Sunday, *Ad te levavi,* is the one which featured as 'Track A' in the clips which I originally sent out to participants. This is illustrated below, in its English version. Moreover, Holly chose this as her favourite track, commenting on the 'simple solo voice' (though in fact there were three voices, in remarkable unanimity) and saying that, of the tracks, this one 'seemed more pure and easiest to be absorbed into'. [491]

Ex. 4.3 – Advent Introit 'Ad te levavi' (English version) [492]

Holly's response is particularly significant for an analysis, as it tends to demonstrate a positive correlation between familiarity and appreciation. Interestingly, the identification of Track A as a favourite is not accompanied by a statement about remembering singing it. This is significant as it implies the interconnected roles of forgetting and remembering, and the place of familiarity within that nexus.

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[491] This is more obvious in the video version of the track, which Holly had not seen at the time.

[492] See *The Plainchant Gradual* adapted by The Revd G.M. Palmer, Mus.Doc. and F. Burgess, St Mary's Press, Wantage,1946, 2nd edition, 1965.

A number of participants raised the issue of familiarity particularly in relation to Track C – the Easter Proclamation or *Exultet*. This was a 'favourite' track for a substantial majority of the participants, showing again that familiarity and appreciation are often connected. Peter and Tim (both with experience as cathedral precentors) stated that they preferred Track C to the other two tracks because they had sung it in their respective cathedrals. Paul's comment on 'years of Easter vigils' has already been noted. Edingale wrote 'I'm familiar with the *Exultet* chant so that immediately worked for me'. Danielle noted that Track C 'sounded most familiar. [I] felt most relaxed listening to it'. Melanie connected familiarity with happy memories saying, 'I think that the reason I preferred [Track C] was because it was the only one with which I was already familiar, from hearing it at the Easter Vigil Mass each year'. Zoe, also expressing a preference for Track C, and making a similar connection between happiness and familiarity, wrote 'because it's familiar and has happy associations with Easter!'. EH added, 'As with most things, repeated listening increase[s] enjoyment of something unknown'. Conversely, and therefore reinforcing the importance of remembered familiarity for the appreciation of plainchant, Lanzada wrote that 'the first time I felt slightly uneasy because the plainchant was unfamiliar but, by the third time, I felt that I could relax into it and be held by it'.

All of the comments in this sub-section serve to reinforce one another on the importance of familiarity, which is also linked with knowledge, as the next section will show.

4.4.6 Memory and Knowledge

The term 'memories' is understood in this Chapter in a deliberately broad sense, to encompass not only the emotional memories that participants have expressed, but also their knowledge and experience of plainchant. This is gained, in some cases, over many years. Everything that we 'learn' is either forgotten or stored away in our long-term memory, as Saul McLeod and others have described.[493] Sometimes memories which had disappeared from our conscious minds can be 'resurrected' by a particular experience, such as listening to a specific piece of music. And by the word 'learn' I

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[493] See S.A. McLeod, 'Loftus and Palmer', retrieved (2014) from https://www.simplypsychology.org/loftus-palmer.html. See also section 2.4.1 above.

mean to include not only our gaining of factual knowledge (or artistic knowledge, be it in the musical or literary sphere, or in the appreciation of any work of art) but also all the experiences of our past lives which have affected or changed us in ways too numerous to count.

The 'knowledge' that my participants claimed to have of plainchant and its origins varied considerably. Edingale recalled that he 'spent a number of years singing in a group that although not church-based, sang a lot of liturgical music including plainchant'. Sally, who admits to 'a very limited knowledge of plainchant', nevertheless remembers having heard a little, years ago: 'someone once gave me a cassette tape…of Gregorian chanting [she says] and I loved it and listened to it until the tape distorted'. She could not remember much about the chant or 'who it was singing'.

A specific request for a definition of plainchant elicited a range of responses with participants drawing on specialist knowledge and experience to different degrees. Cantor, for example, whose identification of his expertise in the field of church music and liturgy has already been discussed, gave a definition which intertwines knowledge of musical technicalities and the interplay of text and music, together with views concerning the historical background of plainchant. He states that:

> Plainchant is the earliest type of Christian music we know about as it was written down. It uses a simple monodic texture although melodies can range from monosyllabic to highly intricate melismatic. Rhythm is dictated by the rhythm of the text rather than time signatures and varied note lengths. It derives from Jewish religious chant.

Ann, who also serves as a church organist, but who has not been mentioned previously in this chapter, gives a definition which expresses (a bit inaccurately) some knowledge of musical and historical issues, as follows:

> It is early music written about 600 CE and dedicated to St. Gregory. The melody was written in neumes and in certain modes which predated scales. Not particularly easy to sing.

David, whose childhood experience (boarding school) has already been mentioned also chose to define plainchant in a manner which expresses a degree of musical and historical knowledge. He states that plainchant is…

> … vocal music of generally free metre and modal rather than diatonic. Written around 9th to 13th centuries. Exclusively for use in churches, generally sung by monks. Use of 4-line stave instead of 5 lines and different notation. Dynamics left to performers. May be accompanied (usually chordal to guide singers and maintain pitch) or unaccompanied.

These 'memories' (however accurate or inaccurate they may be) undoubtedly help the respective participants to enjoy their experiences of plainchant, and so they have value for that reason. It might of course be argued that the more one tries to be specific about such matters, the more likely one is to get something wrong; and perhaps there is a parallel here with theological and doctrinal issues. One participant (Lanzada) was honest about her memories when it came to knowledge of Latin, saying: 'As a person whose Latin was learnt long ago (and mostly forgotten), there is no attempt to try to listen to the words'.

The sense of familiarity with any serious music can often be increased by repeated listening, as well as by gaining knowledge about the background of the music. It was for this reason that I included (as part of the 'listening exercise') a Commentary on the three tracks (see Appendix 2), with some information about the nature of plainchant in general. A question was asked about whether repeated listening, or reading the Commentary affected in any way the participants' responses to the tracks. Several participants replied in the negative; for example, Frank, Katisha, Tim and Melanie wrote 'No to both'; Katisha added: -

> My thoughts in music apply the same criteria as in art, reaction is a gut feeling, one either likes a piece or not. Reading about it may assist the understanding of the artist or composer but in my case would not alter my initial reaction.

Danielle, however, wrote that the Commentary 'made me want to listen more'. Ann wrote that Tracks A and B 'improved with listening after I'd read your helpful Commentary' adding:

> Being able to follow the chants in modern notation also helped me to better understand them. I didn't need this for C as I know the general shape of the Exultet setting reasonably well including the English translation.

Helpfully elucidating a process connecting increased understanding with repeated listening and the acquisition of knowledge, Elsa stated:

> I think I noticed more details each time I listened and I liked the feeling of familiarity and knowing what to expect. I enjoyed reading the commentary. It was very informative, particularly on the modal system; and seeing the music written down was a huge bonus for me.

One of Stephen's comments is a useful reminder that personal preference also plays a large part in what is appreciated, and how that might encourage the listener to learn more. He noted:

> I felt I appreciated track A better after hearing it several times. Repeated listening to track B didn't really affect my reaction to it. I've enjoyed track C each time. The Commentary was very helpful. Especially the text and translation of track A and the full text of track C. The historical introduction and notes on the tracks were most interesting.

Mark said, 'I found the Commentary fascinating and it explained a lot. Thank you for including it'. On the same question asking if the Commentary and information had an impact on the listening experience, Joanna wrote, "YES to both." Joanna also continued with a narrative of how the Commentary informed her experience of the plainchant by making it easier to follow and that this in turn enabled her to access a lost piece of knowledge, she wrote:

It was easier to engage with it while following the text and the music. I also realised at this point that the tune in the second part of [Track] C is virtually the same as that used at the consecration prayer by the priest in most high Anglican and catholic churches [the *Sursum Corda*].

David was also quite emphatic about the Commentary. He wrote, 'Very much so'. This is actually the point at which David identified his childhood experience which has already been analysed. His sentence goes on, '…I went to a boarding school run by Benedictine monks; at that time plainsong did nothing for me'.

In conversation, Sally (who claimed to have little knowledge of plainchant but who identified the tranquil memories that listening to it evoked) also related how she saw a link between the corporate performance of plainchant and the experience of campanology: in both spheres there is only 'a limited number of notes' but also there is a strong sense of relationship and inter-dependence with the others in the group.[494] Sally's reference to 'a limited number of notes' resonates obviously with plainchant. But it also resonates, more symbolically, with the Christian liturgy in which plainchant found its home. The liturgy uses a limited number of words and thoughts, although in modern liturgies there is considerable variation. Limitations are an inevitable condition of human life. We all have a limited number of skills and attributes. In spite of considerable advances, there are limitations to medical knowledge and skills: as Alan Morinis and others state, medical error is estimated by the Institute of Medicine to be responsible for more deaths than are produced by many feared diseases or injuries.[495] For Bret Stetka, other limitations to human abilities are revealed in sport.[496] Our planet has limited resources and it has been said that we are at a point in human history when the scale and rate of growth of economic expansion, the consumption of natural resources, and the increasing human population can be seen as unsustainable (as

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[494]As a 'listener' it is still possible (in certain circumstances) to identify with the performers, even if one is not oneself performing. Reference to this fact was also made by Joanna who commented with reference to Track C 'Although I was only listening, I could hear and appreciate the participation of the soloist'.

[495] See A. H. Morinis, 'Human Cognitive Limitations. Broad, Consistent, Clinical Application of Physiological Principles Will Require Decision Support', in *Annals of the American Thoracic Society,* vol.15, 2018. See also L. Kohn et al. (eds), *To Err is Human: Building a Safer Health System*, National Academy Press, Washington DC, 1999.

[496] See B. Stetka, 'Have We Reached the Athletic Limits of the Human Body?', in *Scientific American,* vol.315, no 2, 2016.

Stephen Salmony reports).[497] We all have limited time on the planet, and it has been shown that 'time constraints' limit the number of social relationships which are possible for us.[498] All these limitations are the realities of our human condition. But are there perhaps other realities which are more enduring, or is there perhaps another Reality which is eternal? I shall return to this question in Chapter 6.

4.5   CONCLUSION

All the participants (93% of the total cohort) whose responses have been analysed in this chapter, are valuable witnesses to the main thrust of my argument – that Christian worship (the ancestral home of plainchant) has made, and, in its out-working continues to make, significant contributions to the life of society as a whole. This can be seen, to name just a few examples, in the scholarly achievements of Mary Berry, in the spiritual devotion and determination of Alfred Hope Patten, in the down-to-earth practical service of Holly and her sisters, in the 'antidote to a hectic life' provided by the monks of St Domingo de Silos and others who record plainchant, in the stimulus to philosophical thought when we are urged to contemplate the mystery of time, in the economic progress prompted centuries ago by the Cistercians, and by the (quite recent) work in environmental preservation by the Benedictines of Buckfast. These are significant achievements; and the link to plainchant is real, as my participants have demonstrated, in the way they tell their stories and relate their memories, providing rich data to lead the reader on such a fascinating journey. In the next two chapters we shall follow these same participants as they explore further their emotional responses to plainchant, looking inwards to their own sense of wellbeing and purpose in life, and for some, looking upwards to the transcendent realities of which worship gives them a glimpse.

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[497] See S. E. Salmony, 'The Human Population: Accepting Earth's Limitations', in *Environmental Health Perspectives,* December 2004. See also D. Attenborough, *A Life on Our Planet,* London: Ebury Witness Books, 2020, p. 129ff.

[498] See M. Takano and I. Fukuda, 'Limitations of Time Resources in Human Relationships Determine Social Structures', in *Palgrave Communications*, 3, Article 17014, 2017, at https://doi.org/10.1057/palcomms.2017.14.

5

PLAINCHANT

AND

SERENITY

5.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter is a significant bridging point in the thesis. The previous chapter has shown how the experience of plainchant leads many people *back* to recalling memories of the past. In Chapter 6 it will be shown that plainchant can also raise people *up* to an awareness of higher realms beyond the physical world. The overall conversation to which this thesis contributes falls under the broad heading of *music and emotion*. The issue of memories (Chapter 4) and perceptions of transcendence (Chapter 6) both fall under this very broad heading: emotions are involved to varying extents in all cases. But between the elements of *back* and *up*, there is another avenue to explore, and I have labelled this *in*: it concerns what goes on in the minds of those who listen to and are moved by plainchant. So, it is under this heading that issues of music and emotion come mainly to the fore; this chapter will examine how music (in this case plainchant) affects the minds of listeners and performers (in this case the minds of my participants and other informants). The use of the term 'serenity' in this chapter's title is a convenient peg on which to hang an exploration of a number of different responses to plainchant which my participants have described; these include happiness, joy, thankfulness, and comfort (see section 5.4b below).[499] In the light of this I would say that it indicates an over-arching (but perhaps transient) feeling that 'all is well'; it is a complex of feelings that can be engendered by many types of music, but specifically, for some of my participants, by plainchant. As the previous chapter mentioned, over 6 million people bought copies of a particular plainchant disk, and it seems unlikely that all those people would have been committed to regular Christian worship in any formal sense. That recording clearly meant something to

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[499] The term 'serenity' (used by participants Edingale, Elsa, Lanzada and Trebor) requires a 'multi-variate' definition that includes acceptance, forgiveness, letting go, mindfulness, empathy, coping, detachment and meditation. See G.J. Connors, R.T. Toscova, and J.S. Tonigan, 'Serenity', in W. R. Miller (ed), *Integrating Spirituality into Treatment: Resources for Practitioners,* American Psychological Association, 1999, pp 235-250.

many people beyond the purely religious aspects of the music and texts: it was described as having a 'soothing effect on the mind', and (more poetically) as providing 'an otherworldly sound-world that you want to escape to, hovering in the heavens with floating bricks'.[500] This could be described as a kind of 'secular transcendence', but for the fact that this is really a contradiction in terms, as will be explained in an exploration of the true meaning of transcendence in Chapter 6. One of my participants (Edingale, quoted in more detail below) refers to 'a sense of growing serenity'; this participant has identified himself as a 'a church/cathedral attending Catholic', so it is clear that he is a religious man. But the kind of experience he describes when using the word serenity is perhaps similar to the feelings experienced by some people who are not formally religious, when they hear or perform plainchant. This chapter will seek to explore such feelings through the evidence that I have available in the words of my participants and in theoretical studies. In the course of the chapter, I will introduce three chants which have been selected by informants as having features which (to them) are redolent of emotion. The first chant (see Ex.5.1 below) is the Communion Antiphon for the Feast of SS Peter and Paul, Apostles, transcribed into modern staff notation.[501]

Ex.5.1 – Communion Antiphon, 'Tu es Petrus' [502]

You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church.

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[500] Review dated Jan. 2018, and found on the Amazon website.
[501] For the second and third chants see paragraphs 5.2 and 5.7.
[502] See *Liber Usualis,* online edition,1961, page 1521.

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It has been observed by one informant (Peter Allan) that the three notes on the first syllable of 'petram' (technically, in the notation of the *Liber Usualis*, a *torculus* with horizontal *episema*) suggest a picture of stability, and therefore give rise to the emotion of confidence and security: this is the 'rock' on which (Jesus says) 'I will build my church'.[503] It is highly unlikely that this emotion was put into the music by an anonymous composer; but it is a perception in the mind of one exponent of plainchant, who may well (as an example of 'invitational rhetoric' – see Chapter 3, section 3.C.2) persuade others that this is a convincing picture to see, and therefore a valid emotion to feel, when singing or hearing this particular antiphon.

5.2   THEORETICAL ISSUES

Music has often been described (for example by Deryk Cooke) as a 'language of emotion'.[504] At this point, in order to set the context for more recent research, it is necessary to go back to earlier scholarship. Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) argued that music is a kind of language, which (in contrast with other art forms) represents the nature of the world, not by expressing or describing any particular emotions, but by expressing the nature of different emotions, such as joy or grief. This is sometimes known as the *semantic* theory. In Schopenhauer's words (as quoted by Caroll Pratt) : -

> The effect of music is so very much more powerful and penetrating than is that of the other arts, for these others speak only of the shadow, but music of the essence.[505]

The power of music has already been affirmed by Cheryl's comment that 'music is very powerful and can bring back a memory in an instant' (see section 4.2 above). But what might Schopenhauer's statement mean? A twentieth-century exponent of his views was the American philosopher Susanne Langer (1895-1985) who wrote of music as 'the purest of symbolic media', adding that….

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[503] Fr P. Allan, CR, Precentor, Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield, Yorkshire. The scripture reference is to *Matthew* 16:18.

[504] See D. Cooke, *The language of music*, London, Oxford University Press, 1959.

[505] See C. C. Pratt, 'A Psychological Interpretation of Schopenhauer's Theory of Music', in *Bulletin of the American Musicological Society,* no 5, 1941, pp 8-10. See also L. D. Green, 'Schopenhauer and Music' in *The Musical Quarterly,* vol.16, no 2, 1930, pp 199-206.

> … Schopenhauer has rightly given [music] a special place among the arts, because in not employing any mythical 'literal meaning' it can represent its actual object with less obstruction than [other] arts. Could it be that the final object of musical expression is the endlessly intricate yet universal pattern of emotional life?[506]

Langer writes of the 'meaning' of music as 'semantic, not symptomatic'. She says that it is neither 'a stimulus to evoke emotions' or 'a signal to announce them'.[507] An early twentieth-century precursor of Langer was the philosopher Albert Balz (1887-1957) who wrote of his amazement at the 'truly astounding fact' that …

> … mere air-vibrations should form an exciting agency for the whole gamut of human feelings, its martial ardors, its loves and hates, its joyance and sadnesses, ….. [and that, in contrast with the visual or literary arts] the medium of music apparently is so diaphanous and intangible, and its appeal so intimate and organically profound, that the ostensible inefficiency of air-vibrations to elicit such responses seems all the more glaring.[508]

Balz writes of the 'age-long alliance between music and the dance, between music and religion', and of 'the universality with which music is utilized as a means of man's self-expression'.[509] Although this is an early study, Balz lays out very clearly the issues as they were perceived in his day. He states that 'the feelings evoked by sound are often regarded as 'less definite subjectively than feelings as ordinarily occasioned'. But with 'some individuals' [those who are particularly sensitive to music] the 'musically-evoked emotion appears to be as precise as a beggar's rejoicing over the gift of a needed coin'.[510] Balz asks 'What differences in the various complexes of air-

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[506] See S. Langer, *The Practice of Philosophy*, New York: Holt and Co., 1930, pp 160-1.

[507] See S. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art* (1957), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963, 3rd edition, 1995.

[508] See A. Balz, 'Music and Emotion' in *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods,* vol. 11, no 9, 1914, pp 236-244. We should note that he uses the word 'exciting' in the technical sense of the way in which a piano key or hammer 'excites' a string to generate air vibrations and so produce a sound that is recognized as music.

[509] See Balz, 'Music and Emotion' (as above), p. 236.

[510] See Balz, 'Music and Emotion' (as above), p. 237.

vibration can be found to account for the specific differences in the experience of the listener?' This question is of particular importance for me in a thesis which is primarily concerned with the responses of listeners. For Balz: -

> The emotions are not vague, at least not to the musically enlightened. We say 'such and such music renders us gladsome; [or] other tone-sequences depress'. If the emotions differ specifically, we must seek specific differences in the stimuli to correlate therewith, just as we correlate one vibration of the ether with a certain red, another with a certain green, and so on.[511]

Balz identifies two important factors in the discussion, and writes in considerable detail about both. The first factor 'concerns our innate organisation' the second deals with 'familiarisation'. The first, he says, is biological; the second is a product of history. He expands these concepts very fully, but a very brief summary will have to suffice here. By 'organisation' he means that …

> … in music the primitive link which relates music to the heart of our inner lives, and so to human instinct and emotion, is the utilization of the innate correlations between sound-characteristics and emotion, and the additional fact that the habitual expression of an emotion on the part of one person is itself apt to evoke a similar emotion in others.[512]

By 'familiarisation' he means that …

> … the influence of experience, of associations and conventions, supervenes upon the innate factor and develops it. We learn to associate types of music with activities, events, sentiments and moods.[513]

A number of my participants remarked on the way in which Track C, (the one which was most familiar to most of them) evoked activities and moods. For example, CP said

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[511] See Balz, 'Music and Emotion' (as above), p.237. The perception of colour is of course a 'grey' area [!] and Balz's idea of vibrations of the ether would be unlikely to be found convincing to 21st-century specialists in this field.

[512] See Balz, 'Music and Emotion' (as above), p. 242.

[513] See Balz, 'Music and Emotion' (as above), p. 243.

that it evoked an image of the 'lighting of the Easter fires'. Balz refers to 'the associations that cluster about a funeral march, or a Mass by Gounod!'[514] He alludes to the fact that 'many musical experiences remind one of religious experiences [; and] the difficulty of analysing the latter is well known.' He concludes in typically florid style that 'the power of music over those "whose heart-strings are a lute" is not wholly inexplicable [neither is it wholly explicable].[515] To such [people] ….

> … the magic of tone and the wings that music lends to imagination are phenomena so profound that nothing less fundamental than inherited tendencies of our organism would afford a satisfying basis of explanation. Our responses to such stimuli themselves unavoidably suggest that the secret power of music arises from, and comes to rest in, certain intricate tendencies of our innate structure.[516]

At the very end of the twentieth century, a 'new theory' of music's power to represent emotions was advanced by Laird Addis (1937-2018).[517] This writer sought to give a philosophical account of the 'ontological affinity of mind and music', defending Langer's theory of symbolism, and arguing that music's importance can best be explained in terms of the connection between sounds and states of consciousness. Addis declares that passages of music can serve as 'quasi-natural signs' of feelings and emotions. He rejects the notion that the composer causes the emotions to appear in the music, but he seems to espouse a 'pure-inherence' theory: that an emotion like sadness is an objective property of a musical passage because 'the connection of that music to sadness by way of human nature is a matter of certain laws of nature connecting certain properties of the music to sadness'. On the part of the listener, some 'learning' is involved if s/he is to understand the 'message' of the music.[518] Addis

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[514] See Balz, 'Music and Emotion' (as above), p. 243, his punctuation.

[515] Balz does not indicate the source of the quotation, 'whose heart-strings are a lute'. It occurs in the poem 'Israfel' by Edgar Allan Poe. The poet attributes the phrase to the 'Koran' [his spelling] but according to an Islamic commentator it does not in fact occur in 'the Holy Qur'an'; see https://www.islamicboard.com/creative-writing-amp-art/134301285-quranic-verse-poem But, for a more scholarly (and Islamic) study of Poe's references to 'the Orient', see A. M. Wazzan, 'Islamic Elements in Poe's Poems "Al-Aaraaf" and "Israfel"', in *Islamic Studies,* vol.27, no 3, 1988, pp 221-229.

[516] See Balz, 'Music and Emotion' (as above), p. 244.

[517] See L. Addis, *Of Mind and Music,* New York: Cornell University Press, 1999.

[518] See R.W.H. Savage, Review of Addis, in *Notes*, Second Series, vol. 56, no 3, 2000, pp 683-5. Savage finds Addis's discussion of the philosophy of time 'superficial at best'. He also complains that, whilst making brief

follows Langer in the importance he places on time in understanding music's affective power; but whereas 'Langer … regards music's primary illusion as the sonorous image of time's passage, Addis … identifies time as the basis of sound's ontological affinity with conscious states'. Addis also develops Langer's notion of 'isomorphism', saying that music 'represents' states of consciousness, but …

> … only *to* or *for* a person in some way *because* of the nature of the human mind
> – the mind as *intermediary* in a broad but proper use of that word – but here in
> respect of its nature and not of its will or choice [author's italics].[519]

Addis admits that this is indeed a 'murky notion'; and he is not fully clear how the connection between consciousness and sound 'works in detail'. It may be that the matter is elucidated to some extent by the composer David Keane (see below).[520]

Two frequently quoted authors of this period are Leonard Meyer (1918-2007) and Daniel Berlyne (1924-1976).

Meyer (over the course of 40 years) interpreted musical structure on *Gestalt* principles: he believed that listeners are drawn to perceive musical patterns as wholes, as tending towards closure; music sets up expectations in the listener … which are in general fulfilled or realised, but often only after postponement or apparent diversion. Drawing from the psychology of his day, Meyer stated that 'emotion or affect is aroused when a tendency to respond is arrested or inhibited'.[521] Meyer's *magnum opus* has been

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mentions of Husserl and Heidegger, Addis overlooks Ricoeur's major contribution in his *Time and Narrative* (3 vols).

[519] See Addis, *Of Mind and Music* (as above), p. 41.

[520] See D. Keane, 'A Composer's Approach to Music, Cognition, and Emotion', in *The Musical Quarterly,* vol. 68, no 3, 1992, pp 324-336.

[521] See L.B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956, p. 14. 'Gestalt' principles (in psychology) are still in use today. See Marie-Anne Chidiac, *Relational Organizational Gestalt: An Emergent Approach to Organizational Development*, Routledge, 2018. This author claims that her book provides a comprehensive view of the application of Relational Gestalt theory to Organizational Development and change interventions in organizations, explaining that uncertainty and frequent change are the hallmark of our times. In the field of Organizational Development and Change, fixed methodologies no longer adequately address the uncertainty and uniqueness of today's more complex change situations, and more adaptive approaches to change are needed. Gestalt is a relational, dialogic, and emergent approach which means that it views individuals and organizations as embedded in their context, dependent on, and emerging from within a web of relationships and interactions. As such, Gestalt offers a transformative, integral and bespoke methodology for working with this complexity. This approach encourages practitioners to attend to their presence, seek out the most pressing

described by Peter Kivy as 'the book that taught many of us for the first time that you can talk about music without talking nonsense'.[522] His theory has, however, been criticized by Stephen Davies for over-emphasizing the status of the unpredictable at the expense of the structural significance of similarity'.[523] But he has been praised for 'the novel and pioneering spirit of his work' and for 'anticipat[ing] the conclusions of cognitive neuro-science by half a century'.[524] A later disciple of Meyer, Eugene Narmour developed the Implication-Realization theory: that similarity implies (or is a predictor of?) further similarity, and differentiation implies further differentiation. Narmour's work on melody is relevant to my work on plainchant: thus P (for process – as in procession?) signifies a small melodic interval followed by another in the same direction; this can be seen at the start of *Aeterna Christi munera* (G,G,A,B,B)[525] whilst R (for reversal) signifies a large melodic interval, (as at start of *Puer natus*) followed by a small interval in the opposite direction.[526] Among my participants it was Mr Bucket who referred to the 'melodious' character of *Puer natus* (my Track B) saying that it evoked a sense of 'thanksgiving, happiness and joy'; and it was Stephen who (whilst he did not remark on the rising fifth at the start) commented on the 'flattened seventh' – the highest note of the piece which occurs on the second syllable of *imperium* as well as several times in the psalm-verse ('Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvellous things').

Berlyne was an experimental psychologist who focused on how objects and experiences are influenced by and have an influence on curiosity and arousal.[527] In relation to aesthetic perception generally, he identified four psycho-physical types of response: electrical signals from brain cells, motor-neural activity, sensory changes and autonomic responses such as variations in heart-rate and respiration. He showed

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issues and mobilize for sustainable change. Gestalt has at its heart the notion of 'use-of-self-as-instrument' which allows practitioners to be responsive to emergent issues and situations.

[522] See P. Kivy, 'How Music Moves', in P. Alperson (ed), *What is Music? An Introduction to the Philosophy of Music*, University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1987, p. 153.

[523] See S. Davies, *Musical meaning* (as above), p. 289.

[524] See D. Huron and E.H. Margulis, 'Musical Expectancy and Thrills', in Juslin and Sloboda, *Handbook,* pp 575-604, specifically p. 585f.

[525] See *The New English Hymnal,* Canterbury Press, 1986, no 213 (1) – melody line only. The given accompaniment transposes the melody down by a minor third.

[526] See E. Narmour, *The Analysis and Cognition of Basic Melodic Structures*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990. See also E. Narmour, *The Analysis and Cognition of Melodic Complexity*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

[527] See D.E. Berlyne, *Aesthetics and Psycho-biology*, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1971.

that artworks, including music, contain stimulus patterns that have specific arousal-influencing potential, which can induce affective experiences. His work has influenced more recent researchers, particularly in the area of *measuring* perceived emotions in music.[528]

In 1980, Robert Panzarella reported on an 'intense joyous experience of listening to music or looking at visual art; this is echoed by my participant Edingale when he refers to music that 'sends a feeling akin to a "shiver" down the top of my spine'. For Panzarella the major factors were (a) an altered (more ecstatic) perception of the world; (b) physical responses; and (c) withdrawal.[529] Some other studies have focused on 'thrills, chills or shivers': in 1991, John Sloboda referred to physical responses to a specific theme, phrase, motif, bar, chord or moment (e.g. a shiver) produced by a sudden change of harmony.[530] It's arguable that with plainchant the aim is NOT to convey or stimulate such human emotions, but inevitably this does sometimes happen, and it has been observed that …

> …the music performance that touches us the most does not necessarily come from someone who plays and sings with the grace of a god, but from someone 'bold enough to act as a messenger of the heart'.[531]

Following Berlyne, two modern researchers, Michael Thaut and Barbara Wheeler, postulate five steps in which music exploits stimulus properties that 'facilitate perception by … controlling exploration, attention, motivation and refinement'.[532] The steps are (firstly) music stimuli entail arousal-influencing properties that can influence the state of **readiness** to perceive; (secondly) **exploratory** behaviour can be promoted by music – [because of a sense of] reward through changes in arousal; (thirdly) processes of **selective attention** and abstraction can be achieved by

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[528] See, for example, F. Nagel et al., 'EMuJoy [*sic*]: Software for Continuous Measurement of Perceived Emotions in Music', in *Behaviour Research Methods*, vol. 39, pp 283-90.

[529] See A. Gabrielsson, 'Strong Experiences with Music', in in Juslin and Sloboda, *Handbook,* chapter 20. See also R. Panzarella, 'The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Peak Experiences', in *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, vol. 20, 1980, pp 69–85.

[530] See J.A. Sloboda, 'Music Structure and Emotional Response: Some Empirical Findings', in *Psychology of Music*, vol. 19, 1991, pp 110-20.

[531] See M. Schumacher, *Crossroads. The Life and Music of Eric Clapton*. New York: Hyperion, 1995, p. 314.

[532] See M.H. Thaut and B.L. Wheeler, 'Music Therapy', in Juslin and Sloboda (eds), *Handbook* (as above), chapter 29, section 29.4, para 7.

conveying stimulus information in a particular (musical) sensory modality that results in inhibition of information from stimuli in other modalities; (fourthly) the **perceptual process** can have emotional accompaniments that may lead to perception-enhancing experiences: pleasure, reward and positive feedback; and finally: music may function as a mediating response, adding distinctive **stimulation** to an external stimulus and facilitating discrimination learning.[533]

Returning briefly to Addis's 'murky notion', it may be that the matter is elucidated to some extent by the composer David Keane.[534] Also writing in the late twentieth century, Keane sets out to 'combine what information we presently have about how we hear music with [his] own notions of how the gaps in that information might be filled'. Keane asks himself, 'What makes music both interesting and pleasurable?'. These two predicates, it should be noted, are not synonymous: Keane links the term 'interesting' with what he calls the 'cognitive' aspect of music (or what the music – in itself – 'signifies'); and he links the term 'pleasurable' with the emotional affect that the music might have on the listener. The 'cognitive attractants' (interestingness) are the result of the perceived complexity of the music, which involve the conscious mind in symbolic representation, processing and prediction, as 'the conscious mind becomes engaged in understanding functions and relationships both within the work at hand and in contrast to previous experiences'. On the other hand, the sensory attractants (pleasingness) imply an appeal primarily to the subconscious mind when 'perhaps conscious activity is … suspended for a time because the sensation is pleasurable'. Keane explains that 'these two categories are of course ideal extremes [:] no musical work … is entirely based upon cognitive or sensory attractants'; but these 'attention-drawing mechanisms' are important nonetheless.[535]

One particular example of an 'attention-drawing mechanism' is referred to by an informant (Fr Guy Nicholls) who, when asked about emotive qualities in plainchant, wrote as follows: -

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[533] I have devised the mnemonic RESPS to cover these items: R=Readiness, E=Exploration; S=Selection; P=Positivity and S=Sensitivity.

[534] See D. Keane, 'A Composer's Approach' (as above)

[535] See D. Keane, 'A Composer's Approach' (as above), p. 334.

> One example … which surely cannot be ignored, is the Communion for Sunday Post Epiphaniam II, the wonderful short narration of the miracle at Cana. The astonishment of the steward is unmistakable!

The chant to which he refers is quoted below.

Ex. 5.2 – Communion Antiphon, 'Dicit Dominus' [536]

The 'astonishment' to which this informant refers is seen in the fourth stave of the chant, setting the words *Servasti vinum bonum usque adhuc* ('You have saved the best wine until now'). The musical phrase contains a motif of three notes C E D which are higher in pitch than all the rest of the chant; and this same motif occurs three times: on the second syllable of *servasti*, on the first syllable of *vinum*, and on the first syllable of *usque*. The heightened pitch of the musical motif suggests the raised voice of the speaker, which in turn suggests excitement. Could it be, in this example, that the 'emotion' is somehow *in* the music? The informant himself wrote as follows: -

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[536] See *Liber Usualis,* online edition, 1961, p. 487.

> There is much dispute among scholars as to the existence, let alone the frequency, of such forms of 'word-painting' in Gregorian i.e. Roman chant. I believe that it does exist, though it may be largely a matter of subjective interpretation.[537]

The conundrum remains: it is clear from all of the above (including some of the observations in Chapter 2) that there are many conflicting views amongst scholars as to exactly how music affects human emotions: Michael Spitzer has commented that '… understanding how emotion maps onto specific properties and passages of real musical works remains one of the field's most elusive challenges' and there is still very little agreement, except on the point that 'much music is perceived to have emotive qualities'.[538] If we look at attempts to analyse what gives rise to such a perception, we find, as might be expected, much use of analogy, metaphor and simile, such as is often found in debates of a theological nature. Even in the latest academic papers the issue of 'how it all works' is treated as a speculative area: some of these tend towards a 'constructivist' approach.[539] And still the word 'mystery' occurs.[540] For me the most helpful way of coping with the 'mysteries' of both theological and psycho-musical debates, is by reference to Wittgenstein's notion of 'seeing-as', to which I have already alluded, and to which I will return again. [541]

5.3   INTRODUCING 'SECULAR SPIRITUALITY'

It will be clear from many of the words and phrases used by participants (as set out in this chapter) that their thoughts are often led into the area of 'spirituality'. The specific issues related to that area will be discussed more fully in the next chapter. But, since this chapter is concerned with the *in* rather than the *back* or the *up*, I am setting out the comments and discussing some of them here, so that we can see something of what goes on inside the minds of these particular listeners to plainchant. It has been

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[537] This informant is Fr G. Nicholls who was recommended to me by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Birmingham as an expert in plainchant.

[538] See M. Spitzer, 'The Emotion Issue' (Guest Editorial) in *Music Analysis,* vol. 29, Special Issue, 2010, p. 1.

[539] See (for example, as mentioned in Chapter 2), J. Cespedes-Guevara, at psyarxiv.com/sfzm2

[540] See (for example, R.R. McCrae, 'Music Lessons for the Study of Affect' (as already quoted at greater length in Chapter 2, section 2.2.3).

[541] See sections 5.6 and 7.10e.

pointed out that musical emotions depend to a considerable extent on the goals and motives of the listener.[542] Sometimes people choose particular pieces of music to accompany a range of daily activities, and it is the case that to achieve a strong emotional effect requires an act of will on the part of the listener. This of course applies to music-listening in general, but it is also relevant in the specific context of plainchant. And it is often pointed out that emotional responses to music occur in a complex interaction between the music, the listener and the situation.[543] But once this occurs, what are the consequences for the listener? The answer is that they are many and varied. One consequence is, quite unashamedly, physical pleasure and excitement, as described by Edingale who is quoted more fully below – see section 5.3b.

My participants declared themselves to be very clear about the power of music to affect the emotions, using phrases such as 'Calmness and serenity' (Elsa); 'Sadness, nostalgia, peace' (Danielle); 'Devotion, restrained excitement' (Cantor); 'Reassurance, comfort and safety' (Katisha); 'Joy, peace, happiness' (Melanie); 'Joy and peace' (Grazia); 'Peace, relaxation, serenity, continuity of life, quietness away from the normal hustle and bustle of life' (Lanzada). Another participant, Craig, stated that plainchant 'allows you to be in touch with your inner self'. And according to my informant Jonathan Arnold, many people who are not religious in the formal sense find benefit in sacred music, because …

> …music is not just an art form that imparts pleasure, but…at its most profound…it can lead us to an understanding of a greater truth, …. beyond the material, which enhances the reality of existence and leads us to a greater sense of what it means to be a human being.[544]

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[542] See P. N. Juslin and P. Laukka, 'Expression, Perception, and Induction of Musical Emotions: A Review and a Questionnaire Study of Everyday Listening', in *Journal of New Music Research*, vol. 33, no 3, 2004, pp 217-238.
[543] See J.A. Sloboda and P.N. Juslin, 'At the Interface Between the Inner and Outer World: Psychological Perspectives', in P.N. Juslin and J.A. Sloboda, *Handbook.,* chapter 4, specifically pp 86 and 90f. The importance of the situation (context) is exemplified by one of my participants (Tim) who referred to the difficulty of listening to plainchant at home.
[544] See J. Arnold, *Sacred Music* (as above), p. 87.

In the minds of my participants, emotional responses were generated by imagined pictures, leading to various feelings and sensations. These are explored in the next two sections.

5.3a. Pictures

The most commonly evoked pictures in the minds of participants were churches or monasteries, often occupied by singing priests and choirs. Ann, for example, described visualising 'a monastic choir in the chancel singing their office'. The quality of the light in these settings was frequently mentioned. Candlelight (the typical lighting) was identified by both Cheryl and Elsa. Cheryl referred to 'monks, monastery, candlelight, stained glass windows', whereas Elsa mentioned 'candle-lit old church interiors'. Also making reference to light, Frank referred to a 'peaceful church with sunlight streaming through the windows'. Frank's image is very much of daytime, and he seems to draw a connection between the sunshine and the peacefulness of the scene. Also making reference to the same monastic architecture, Joanna uses different words for the effect of candlelight, describing instead 'dim lighting'. As with Frank's reference to sunlight, Joanna also identifies a time of day: in her case it is night. She writes of the …

> … dim lighting of the architecture and the knowledge that monastic offices are often at night. Over a period of time, it has a hypnotic effect so that tiredness and discomfort are no longer noticed.

Joanna's second sentence is significant because she moves from the picture that several participants report to an idea about the impact of the music over a period of time: her words specifically refer to the 'hypnotic effect' and the ways that this can serve to reduce feelings of tiredness and pain.

For most participants, the notion of a worshipping community was never far away. Cantor, for example, describes '…a robed cantor/priest in a Gothic cathedral singing, and bathed in lots of incense.' EH describes 'large ancient abbeys, processing monks, medieval worshippers'. Other participants locate their image at a particular time in the church calendar, such as Easter. CP reports an image of the 'lighting of the Easter fires, … being in church at Easter [and] … an image of a monk and choir singing in a

beautiful church'. Paul also makes reference to Easter with 'sunrise, candles, incense, early mornings, Easter-related images'. Similarly, Melanie identifies 'images of the Resurrection, the Easter Vigil Mass, the Paschal Candle, and priests singing this in my parish over the years'. The last point refers to the *Exultet,* the content of Track C. Melanie's response also brings the image into the personal realm of her own church in a way which suggests the power of the music to evoke personal experiences as well as generic images. Tim and Zoe also both make reference to a specific place with which they have personal connections: Tim thinks of 'Leicester Cathedral in the dark' and Zoe thinks of 'the [Lichfield] cathedral nave by candlelight'. Stephen's picture of a worshipping community is significant in this context: he uses the emotive word 'intimate' in his description of the 'huge' religious building. He writes of …

> …a community gathered together in a huge cathedral or monastery – a vast space but somehow very intimate as though the space around it didn't matter. A figure leading and inspiring a group of people – in procession then in some sort of ritual, with deliberate and graceful movements.

Sally, who (as already noted in Chapter 4) professed 'no religious allegiance' defined plainchant as …

> … a very old way of singing psalms or prayers. It is something I relate to monks and monasteries, (think of Brother Cadfael) and woven into their lives, ritual and worship.[545]

Referring to her 'favourite' track (Track B) she explained that it 'evoked calm' with a picture of 'a medieval church in Spain around 17th century and the monks all cowelled in black. No conductor, just a group of men and boys, singing together'. It may be recalled (from Chapter 4) that Sally, years back spent some time 'in the Amazon', living in a house with 'tiled floors, wooden furniture and small windows, and a goat in the back garden'. She told us that 'someone once gave me a cassette tape…of Gregorian

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[545] *The Cadfael Chronicles* is a series of historical murder mysteries written by the linguist-scholar Edith Pargeter (1913–1995) under the name "Ellis Peters". Set in the 12th century during the Anarchy in England, the novels focus on the Benedictine monk Cadfael who aids the law by solving murders.

chanting, and I loved it and listened to it until the tape distorted'. The notion of evoking calm is taken up at several points below (see especially 5.5d).

Danielle (who also claimed to have 'no religious allegiance) juxtaposed two very significant words, 'candles' and 'crucifixion'; the connection between these two words has profound implications linked with the notion of 'transcendence' which will be explored in more detail in Chapter 6 (see section 6.8).

Edingale's comment acts as a useful reminder about the ways in which the 'pictures' described by participants might be 'conditioned' by experience and expectation. He wrote: -

> I'm afraid that prior conditioning means that I "saw" a gothic cathedral with a single cantor straight away. I first listened to the track without reading its title and so it took me a few seconds to compute that I was familiar with the piece. After which I "saw" the signs of Easter – the candle, the fire and the colour yellow and so on.

So, in this section we have seen in the 'pictures' evoked in the minds of participants, a general consensus in terms of large sacred buildings and their imagined occupants forming a worshipping community. The participants have also imagined in their different but similar ways the kind of lighting that is apparent in these buildings, either by day or night. There is an element of 'prior conditioning', which probably affects most participants, even though it was only specifically mentioned by Edingale. This 'conditioning' does not nullify the significance of the pictures people see. Rather, the variety of descriptive words and phrases for these stereotypical images helps to give some insight into concepts of transcendence which will be explored in Chapter 6.

5.3b. Feelings and sensations

Alongside pictures, there were also 'feelings' and 'sensations' evoked by the music. With regard to feelings, most participants gave fairly brief answers, such as Calmness and prayerfulness' (Cheryl); 'Sadness, nostalgia, peace' (Danielle); 'Devotion, restrained excitement' (Cantor); 'Reassurance, comfort and safety' (Katisha); 'Pleasure at good singing' (Frank); 'Joy, peace, happiness' (Melanie); 'Joy and peace'

(Grazia); 'Peace, relaxation, serenity, continuity of life, quietness away from the normal hustle and bustle of life' (Lanzada).

A few participants made reference to feelings linked with 'spirituality'. These are mentioned here but will be explored in more detail in Chapter 6. Dawn, for example, described 'A feeling of peace and tranquillity, a place of deep reverence for God, feelings of awe and wonder'; she added that her favourite track made her think of …

> the beauty of creation, and the quieter, lovelier things in life – an escape from the darker things like wars and the turmoil of modern living; perhaps [she added] this is why plainsong has become more popular.

Two other participants gave (characteristically) more detailed replies concerning the link between feelings and spirituality. Edingale wrote: -

> I *s*uppose all three tracks make me feel a sense of growing serenity: of life going a little more slowly – time to reflect and so on. Something about the rhythms of antiquity ... But something else I sense from modal music is a "yearning" for something. I'm not entirely sure what it is that I'm yearning for – but obviously "yearning "and "serenity" shouldn't really occupy the same space in my head. And yet they somehow do. And plainsong gives me a very specific sense of place and space. The acoustics in each setting make me sense a big space – that I immediately rationalise as a large gothic church/chapel/cathedral.

Stephen, who also had in his mind the picture of a large space (see above) picks up Edingale's sense of 'yearning' when he mentions 'a sense of expectation'. He describes …

> … a feeling that something was happening that in itself was very beautiful, that had a measuredness [his underlining] – a regularity and pattern and inevitability about it. It felt relaxed yet there was also a sense of expectation and a sense of expressing a shared experience, heightened by the rise and fall of the music.

EH (also preferring Track C) echoes Edingale's reference to 'the rhythms of antiquity' referring to …

> …a sense of timelessness and solitude. An awareness of the importance of the faith of previous generations, for centuries. A reminder of the disciplines which monastic life imposed – some good, some bad.

Two participants made reference to feelings evoked specifically by Track B. Mr Bucket stated that 'there were feelings of thankfulness, happiness, joy and comfort in Track B'. Such feelings will be explored further below. And Sally wrote as follows: -

> As you'll be aware, I had some negative feelings [including boredom] generated by C, but B evoked calm. Funny the abrupt change. I think it was one I liked and one I didn't, and it went from there.

Several participants (preferring Track C, as did Stephen) made references to Easter, and particularly to feelings of expectation or anticipation associated with that most important season of the Christian year. CP is a singer, and was one of the participants who recalled singing the *Exultet* herself on Easter Eve years previously. Listening to Track C clearly brought back to her this memory with its associated feelings, and she wrote, '…it makes me experience a sense of anticipation of the   Easter celebrations [which would take place on the following day] and gives me a peaceful and prayerful feel'. Peter (who had also sung the *Exultet* himself) referred to 'the excitement of the resurrection, although that will be enhanced through personal association with the piece, and its use in the most dramatic liturgy of the year'. Zoe, similarly, referred to 'that Easter Vigil feeling of expectation'.

Answers to the question about 'sensations' concentrated mainly on the sense of smell, and a good rationale for this was given by Stephen when he wrote that '… our sense of smell is very acute and often carries the strongest associations; (see section 4.4.4 above where olfaction is discussed in the context of memory). With specific reference to 'sensations' some participants (such as Danielle and Paul) mention 'incense'; others embellish this: Ann, for example, describes 'using my own breviary and the smell of incense' and CP refers to 'the smell of incense and candles'. Peter explains that 'as

the Exultet sung live is usually accompanied by incense, so listening to a recording certainly brings that to mind'. Picking up the candles theme, and associating this with olfaction, Zoe thinks of 'the light and smell of candles'. Cantor writes simply, 'Smoothness (touch), Incense (smell)'. Interestingly no other participants mention the sense of physical touch. Perhaps this is because we British (particularly in the older age group) are not very 'tactile' by nature.

Grazia (whose native habitations are far from these shores, and who therefore gives us a much more international perspective) recalled a more domestic image, referring to 'the smell of Sardinian typical Easter cakes, biscuits, bread, and [the] smell of my home country at Easter, Mediterranean flowers and fruit trees, sunny days and the noise of the waves of the sea'. This description nicely draws together the anticipation of Easter (mentioned above) and the various references already made to olfaction.

Like Grazia, some other participants linked olfaction with other sensations. Lanzada links olfaction with architectural and/or imagined spaces when she describes 'the mustiness of old religious buildings'; Katisha's reference to 'the smell of … wax polish on pews' has already been discussed in Chapter 4. The theme of (imagined) spaciousness is echoed by David, who refers to 'a sense of spaciousness [as well as] more specifically the smell of incense'. Mark also connects smell and the sense of space, referring back to the musical echo to justify his reference to a 'cavernous building'. He writes: -

> Smell to some extent I suppose. Not sure whether this falls into this category, but I got a sense of a cavernous building in which just a few people are singing. This is not just because of the associations mentioned above [Mark had previously referred to associations with prayer and a sense of 'the holy' and this will be taken up in chapter 6], but there is a sort of echo in the singing that implies large space.

Edingale referred to the famous 'goose-pimple effect', and other physical sensations, writing as follows: -

> A lot of music that I "like" (read "love passionately") seems to hit me somewhere

high in the back of my head. Sometimes this sends a feeling akin to a "shiver" down the top of my spine. This isn't a real shiver – but a sense of a shiver (although just occasionally, the right music at the right moment sends an actual shiver down my spine). I felt this more listening to the third track. But (for example) I feel it listening to Mozart's ensemble writing or the best of folksong too. Despite not being overly patriotic, some of Elgar's or Walton's "pomp" music also gives me strong physical reaction even though I don't necessarily want it to. This can often include bringing tears to my eyes.

It is clear from all the above quotations that issues of 'emotion' came to the forefront of the minds of my participants when they were answering the question about 'pictures and feelings evoked by the plainchant tracks'. For example, Peter, referring to Track C, highlighted three pictures: he wrote in note form, 'Rejoicing in heaven. Friendships. The reaction of those who went to the tomb on the first Easter morning'. For him, the Gospel narrative of the resurrection of Jesus (to which the *Exultet* alludes), led to a perception of 'the excitement of the resurrection', when the women who first went to the tomb to anoint the body, and finding the tomb empty, ran away to tell the other disciples, who in turn raced to the location. Peter seemed to sense the shared excitement which those disillusioned followers of Jesus suddenly experienced, and the way in which that experience enhanced their sense of loyalty to each other ('friendships') and of a common purpose – to tell the world what they had seen. Peter explained that his perception was 'enhanced through personal association with the piece and its use in the most dramatic liturgy of the year'. He added a reference to incense, which, when it is burned, gives off a rising cloud of smoke, often associated in Christian tradition with (as Peter puts it) 'rejoicing in heaven'. Notions of 'heaven' will return again in Chapter 6.[546] Further references to feelings and sensations (linked with pictures) are explored in the next two sections below, concentrating on two individual participants.

5.4a. Breathing, participation and lighting: Joanna

Participants were asked a series of questions regarding pictures evoked by their favourite track, past experiences, other sensory associations, and feelings. In

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[546] See sections 6.10, 6.11, 6.12, 6.16.

response to the question about pictures, Joanna (who chose Track C) responded describing 'a vision of cathedral architecture which the sound was able to recreate'. Regarding past experiences, she said that the track evoked 'jumbled up memories of hours spent in church on different occasions ... [and] ... the experience of chanting while processing, which I did on Mary Berry's course'. Concerning 'other sensory associations', she again referred to the architecture of the imagined building, but added the notion of 'dim lighting … and the knowledge that monastic offices are often at night'. She described the experience as having 'a hypnotic effect over a period of time … so that tiredness and discomfort are no longer noticed'. In answer to the question on 'feelings', Joanna referred to …

> … a devotional involvement which I find can be achieved by actual participation. Although I was only listening, I could hear and appreciate the participation of the soloist. The way that phrasing encourages regular breathing is an aid to contemplation and prayer.

It is clear from the tone of this set of responses by Joanna that her knowledge of plainchant is important in her experience of listening (at least, it is important to her to report knowledge derived from various different sources – repeated experiences, a training course, etc). Joanna is, and implies that she is, highly attuned to listening (she is critical of the poorer recordings, describing them as 'distracting'). For Joanna, then, her experience and perception of plainchant seems be bound up in her knowledge, and she chooses to articulate her responses to the 'listening exercise' in this way: her answers each give a sentence of reflection and a sentence based on some form of knowledge.

The aspects of dim lighting, in a cathedral or monastic setting have already been discussed in Chapter 4 (and are held in common by a number of participants). It is interesting here that the reference to dim lighting is followed immediately by the use of the word 'knowledge' and the factual aspect characteristic of Joanna's responses – here it is knowledge about monastic offices.

Commenting on 'feelings', Joanna identifies participation and involvement in worship. There have been many studies on the importance of 'participation' and 'involvement'

in various areas of life, for example in relation to political issues,[547] health and social care,[548] or even architecture.[549] With regard to the significance of participation in religious worship, studies in this area (for example that by Joseph Sirgy) have also explored the extent to which the individual's personality type makes a difference.[550] Research among Australian church-goers has produced some results which might well apply on a more universal basis. One study (by Ruth Powell and Miriam Pepper) seeks to answer the question, 'Do personality differences account for any links between religiosity and wellbeing?' [551] It seems to show that, across the Christian denominations, subjective wellbeing varies for different psychological types among church attenders, but that there is a positive relationship between extraversion and subjective wellbeing. However, for both extraverts and introverts, the sense of wellbeing is enhanced in proportion to the strength of their religious commitment.

Joanna reports that she responded to the recorded music almost as if she were participating in the worship. Her response is phrased in part as if to demonstrate that her own advanced experience as a participant in this kind of music enables her to be transported into the devotional experience, and yet at the same time the response gives an impression of the participant experiencing and appreciating the 'spiritual' power of the music.[552] Joanna uses the phrase 'even though I was only listening' giving a strong impression of her awareness of the distinction between listening to a track and participating in worship, and she goes on to note that yet she could 'hear' and 'appreciate' the involvement of the soloist in the religious experience. It should be

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[547] See, for example 'The Psychology of Political Participation and Social Movement Activism: An Embedded Perspective', in *Report of the European Consortium for Political Research*, General Conference, Prague, Sep. 2016, at https://ecpr.eu/Events/SectionDetails.aspx?SectionID=587andEventID=95

[548] See, for example, D. Taggart, 'Community Psychology as a Process of Citizen Participation in Health Policy' in *The International Journal of Health Policy Management,* vol. 7 no 2, 2018, pp 180-182 and at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5819377/   At the time of my final revision (Sep 2023) the need for the involvement of patients and relatives in hospital care has been brought starkly to the fore by the death of a 13 year-old girl and her mother's proposal for 'Martha's Rule'.

[549] See, for example, R.J. Bower, *Towards an Articulation of Architecture as a Verb; Learning from Participatory Development, Subaltern Identities and Textual Values*, PhD Thesis, University of Plymouth, 2014.

[550] See M.J. Sirgy, *The Psychology of Quality of Life: Hedonic Wellbeing, Life Satisfaction, and Eudaimonia,* Springer Netherlands, 2012.

[551] See for example, R. Powell and M. Pepper, 'Subjective Wellbeing, Religious Involvement and Psychological Type Among Australian Church-goers', in *Mental Health, Religion and Culture,* vol. 18, no 1, 2015, pp 33-46, at http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2014.1003170

[552] This aspect will be taken up in detail in Chapter 6.

noted that in answer to the question directly asking about spirituality, Joanna resists answering, pointing to a previous answer.

The final sentence of Joanna's answer contains this participant's characteristic 'knowledge' sentence – here, with reference to 'regular breathing as an aid to contemplation and prayer.' There are many testimonies by academics and others as to the importance of 'regular breathing' both for physical and emotional wellbeing, including the calming effects of regular breathing and its potential medical benefits. In conversation, Joanna responded very positively to some comments by David di Salvo who writes of a wealth of ways in which controlled breathing benefits the brain: such breathing helps to regulate blood pressure; the rhythm of one's breathing affects memory by generating electrical activity; counting breaths also taps into the brain's emotional control regions; and it is even possible that controlled breathing may boost the immune system and improve energy metabolism**.**[553] For Joanna, such '**research findings … do not come as a surprise'. Joanna comments further, with reference to plainchant as well as other types of sacred music, when she says: -

> When one is in the act of singing there is automatically a certain amount of breath control because of the need to regulate the breath to fit the phrases. In certain types of religious music, notably the Orthodox litanies with responses, Anglican psalm chant, Catholic responsorial psalms, or Bach chorales, as well as plainchant, the spiritual impact can be heightened by exaggerating the pause at the end of each line/response/phrase which is done in a single breath. The pregnant pause while a new slow intake of breath is made is an opportunity to meditate on that line and feel prayerful. I become very conscious of the slow calming rhythm that can develop in this situation. Taken together

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[553] D. DiSalvo is described on his website as 'a science and technology writer working at the intersection of cognition and culture'. He refers to a number of studies, including (a) K. Yackle et al., 'Breathing Control Center Neurons that Promote Arousal in Mice' in *Science,* vol. 355, 2017, pp 1411-1415, describing an accidental discovery of the neural circuit in the brainstem that seems to play the key role in the connection between breathing and brain control; (b) J. L. Herrero et al., 'Breathing Above the Brain Stem: Volitional Control and Attentional Modulation in Humans', in Jou*rnal of Neurophysiology*, vol. 119, no 1, 2018, pp 145-159, on the value of counting breaths; (c) C. Zelano et al., 'Nasal Respiration Entrains Human Limbic Oscillations and Modulates Cognitive Function', in *Journal of Neuroscience*, vol. 36, 2016, pp 12448-12467, describing the positive effects of rhythmic breathing on memory; (d) H. Benson with M. Z. Klipper, *The Relaxation Response,* Harper-Torch, 1975, re-issued 2000: a book which popularized the notion of the 'relaxation response.' See
https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/neuronarrative/201712/how-breathing-calms-your-brain.

with the act of procession (as a choir entering with a processional hymn for evensong, for example) it can be a whole-body act of worship.

Further research from a different angle alludes to breath-control in oriental practices of meditation, telling us that breathing is intimately linked with mental functions. In the millenary Eastern tradition, the act of breathing is an essential aspect of most meditative practices, and it is considered a crucial factor for reaching the meditative state of consciousness. The breath is called 'Prana' which means both 'breath' and 'energy' (i.e., the conscious field that permeates the whole universe). 'Prana-Yama' (literally, 'the stop/control,' but also 'the rising/expansion of breath') is a set of breathing techniques that aims at directly and consciously regulating one or more parameters of respiration (e.g., frequency, deepness, inspiration/expiration ratio). Pranayama is primarily related to yoga, but it is also part of several meditative practices.[554] Andrea Zaccaro's study summarizes and reviews many others, with the comment that …

> … it is commonly acknowledged that breathing techniques are profoundly intermingled with cognitive aspects of meditation, and in eastern culture their role for achieving altered states of consciousness is undisputed. A common belief of western culture is that breathing control has beneficial effects on health, facilitating relaxation and reducing stress. Nevertheless, western science has paid little attention to the investigation of the effects of pure breathing control on neural correlates of consciousness, and on specific mental functions. [Regarding] meditative practices, the main issue in unveiling the basic mechanisms underlying their effects is to disentangle those related to breathing control from those associated with non-respiratory cognitive components such as focused attention and mental imagery. [555]

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[554] See also Chapter 6 below, section 6.15.

[555] See A. Zaccaro et al., 'How Breath-control Can Change Your Life: A Systematic Review of Psycho-physiological Correlates of Slow Breathing', in *Frontiers of Human Neuroscience,* vol. 12, 2018, p. 353ff, esp. 'Introduction-rationale', para 3. Interestingly, as I was carrying out my final revisions, BBC News carried an item about the benefits of 'meditation' for helping to prevent heart disease. See https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-66807432

So, it is clear from the whole of this sub-section that regular breathing, the sense of involvement and participation, and the atmosphere created by dim lighting are all important aspects of one participant's appreciation of plainchant. The more obviously 'spiritual' aspects of Joanna's comments will be taken up further in Chapter 6.

5.4b.   Happiness, Thankfulness, and Joy: Mr Bucket

In answer to the question about 'pictures', Mr Bucket (preferring Track B) identified an image of a 'lofty abbey' but proceeded to describe feelings rather than pictures, saying that '… it had an overwhelming feeling of joy and praise about it…'.   This answer seems to diminish the pictorial element, and Mr B gives an obvious stereotypical answer concerning the imagined abbey in favour of more abstract feelings, which are not clearly associated with pictures or images.

In answer to a further question specifically about feelings elicited by the favourite Track, Mr B stated that he experienced 'feelings of thanksgiving, happiness, joy and comfort'. He repeats the term 'joy' which he had previously used in answer to the question about pictures. The 'joy' element seems particularly important to this participant in the choosing of his favourite Track, as he distinguishes between this one and the other two on the basis that they are 'more dour'. In his description of his reason for choosing Track B as his favourite, Mr Bucket notes that he 'found Track B to be the most melodious of the three'. He added a further comment about this choice, and his experience of the melodiousness which demonstrates the significant connection (for Mr B) between his own identity as a singer (a 'first tenor') and the (joyful) experience of listening to this Track. His precise words are: -

> I found Track B to be the most melodious of the three, possibly because it was definitely sung by a group of singers whereas the other two were possibly solo voices (except for the responses in C). Also, it was in a higher register and, as I sing first tenor, it was much more in my range of normal singing.

Altogether, Mr Bucket has now mentioned five different feelings: happiness, joy, thanksgiving, comfort and praise. Mr B was clearly a Christian believer, and he

mentions those feelings here in that context.[556] He uses 'joy and praise' specifically in contrast with the 'more dour' sounds of the other two tracks. He uses the list 'thanksgiving, happiness, joy and comfort' in answer to the question about feelings; and it's possible that his choice of words, and the way in which they are grouped, carries some particular significance for him. His answer to the question about images (already noted) seems to re-emphasize the significance of the abstract feelings by being placed alongside the obvious image of a 'lofty abbey'; and the phrase 'joy and praise' is qualified by the adjective 'overwhelming'. This is an extreme word, used for heightened feelings or experiences, and is perhaps particularly suited to describing the power of religious or 'spiritual' awareness. When Mr B strings together a list of feelings, his choice of words seems to imply distinctions between their meanings – otherwise why use all these words? In this context the view of another participant, Tim, is useful: in conversation he described a particular understanding (on the basis of his theological insights) of the qualities of joy and happiness, expressing the view that they are not the same.[557] Tim regards happiness as …

> … a rather transient sensation, largely dependent on external circumstances, [and one which] we should not necessarily expect as Christians, [whereas joy is] a gift that comes with the new life of resurrection, and therefore more powerful.

The word 'praise' has obvious religious implications, and it seems to have been meant in this sense by Mr Bucket, when he referred to Track B, which features *Puer natus*, the Introit for Christmas Day, with its striking opening of a rising fifth. But Mr B spent his working life as a geography teacher, and he would have known the significance of praise in an educational context. When a 'teacher' (at school or university level) points out some particular strength that a 'student' may have, that student's confidence is boosted so that he then builds on that strength in subsequent work.[558]

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[556] Mr Bucket died, early in 2020.

[557] By email, 17th May 2020.

[558] One great benefit that I derived from the 'Sacred Music Studies' course at Bangor University, occurred when a professor (who did not know me personally at all) wrote whilst marking an essay that I was 'good at summarising'.

Thanksgiving is also a key concept in Christian theology, since its Greek version *eucharistia* is one of the terms used to describe the central act of Christian worship, otherwise known as Holy Communion or the Mass or The Lord's Supper. I have already referred to this concept in Chapter 4, and will refer to it again (thanksgiving in its theological sense) in Chapter 6. But in modern psychology the synonymous term 'gratitude' was given prominence by the psycho-analyst Melanie Klein (1882-1960) who specialized in work with children. The dictum that one should try to 'start each day with gratitude not grievance' is clearly based on her thinking;[559] but it also goes back to the Stoic philosopher Epictetus (50-135 CE) who advised his disciples as follows: -

> Remember to conduct yourself in life as if at a banquet. As something being passed around comes to you, reach out your hand and take a moderate helping. Does it pass you by? Don't stop it. It hasn't yet come? Don't burn in desire for it, but wait until it arrives in front of you. Do this with regard to children, to a wife, to public posts, to riches, and you will eventually be a worthy partner of the feasts of the gods.[560]

And nearly 200 years before Epictetus, we find words often attributed to the Roman statesman and philosopher, Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BCE) that 'gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others'.[561] All these insights arise out of a consideration of the primary data from Mr Bucket.

5.5   Secular spirituality – four specific themes[562]

Danielle revealed her sense of what might be called 'secular spirituality' when she mentioned feelings of 'putting external worries into proportion through link with so many past generations'. This is similar to Elsa's statement that listening to plainchant 'does encourage thoughts of things beyond day-to-day matters'. Sally, by contrast, in her responses to the listening exercise, seemed unwilling to acknowledge any 'spiritual' dimension in plainchant because it struck her (as a feminist) as 'just men doing their thing' but in conversation, subsequently, she mentioned the notion of

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[559] See E.B. Spillius et al., *The New Dictionary of Kleinian Thought,* London: Routledge, 2011.

[560] See Epictetus, *Enchiridion* 15. See http://classics.mit.edu/Epictetus/epicench.html

[561] See M. T. Cicero, 'For Plancius', 33: 80, in *The Orations of Marcus Tullius Cicero*, tr. C. D. Yonge, London: Wentworth Press, 2019.

[562] For the four specific themes, see paragraphs 5.5a, 5.5b, 5.5c and 5.5d.

'cohesiveness': Sally is a keen bell-ringer, and she saw certain similarities (in terms of performance) between campanology and plainchant: both require intense concentration; and Sally recalled that on a few occasions when she had sung plainchant as a member of a choir it was very important to listen to each other. She actually said that plainchant is sometimes 'boring to listen to' but (just like bellringing) it is 'very engaging to actually do'. Another aspect of the comparison is that both bellringing and plainchant 'use very few notes'. She explained the issue as follows: -

> The thing for me about bellringing is that, whilst it involves a supreme effort to remember what you are supposed to be doing, it is also extremely communicative but in a very subtle way. You are leaning just a little bit towards people, or just glancing … and they know what you mean. I love that [feeling] when your eyes meet across the room and you think 'Yes, I know – I'm working around you' and it feels very harmonious.

Even more significantly, Sally said 'I do love bellringing' and she noted that when doing this she experiences 'what the occupational therapists call *flow*'. Absorption in music-listening (for which terms such as 'attention' and 'flow' are sometimes used) tends to be increased in cases where listeners have previously practised 'mindfulness'. Frank Diaz quotes one participant in his research saying: -

> Compared to other times when I have listened to this music, I felt like I was less distracted, and this made me hear things I haven't heard before. I really do think that the time I spent meditating was what caused me to listen better.[563]

Arising from participants' comments, my own exploration of absorption in music falls under four sub-headings: 'flow', imagination, wellbeing and comfort/security.

5.5a   'Flow'

The concept of 'flow' was described in 1990 by the Hungarian psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (b. 1934), who began as a child and teenager after World War II to

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[563] See F. M. Diaz, 'Mindfulness, Attention and Flow During Music Listening: An Empirical Investigation', in *Psychology of Music,* vol. 41, 2013, p. 52.

ask himself, 'What contributes to a life worth living?' As well as studying various aspects of philosophy, art and religion, he discovered the work of Jung on the roots of happiness. He found that happiness was not generally related to material wellbeing, but rather to a sense of being completely absorbed in what one is doing, whether it be in creativity, business life or more menial tasks. In a lecture filmed in 2004 he gives three examples based on different categories of person.[564] Firstly a composer (not identified) saying 'You are in an ecstatic state to such a point that you feel as though you almost don't exist. I just sit there [looking at my hand moving on the page] in a state of awe and wonderment. And the music just flows out'. Secondly, a poet (not identified) saying 'It's like opening a door that's floating in the middle of nowhere and all you have to do is … let yourself sink into it'. Thirdly, a businessman (Masaru Ibuka, the founder of Sony) expressing a wish to 'establish a place of work where engineers can feel the joy of technological innovation, be aware of their mission to society, and work to their heart's content'.

Csikszentmihalyi and his team conducted interviews with over 8,000 people 'from Dominican monks to Himalayan climbers' as well as rural Indian shepherds, and concluded that there are seven conditions which define 'flow'; these are the senses of

- complete involvement, concentration, focus,
- being outside everyday reality,
- inner clarity, knowing what needs to be done,
- having skills adequate to the task,
- serenity, growing beyond the boundaries of the ego,
- timelessness, when hours seem to pass by in minutes,
- intrinsic motivation, when, whatever produced the sense of flow becomes its own reward.

With respect to music-listening, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) has written that in every known culture music of various kinds has been used extensively to improve the quality of life. It helps to 'organize the mind … and reduce psychic entropy' or the disorder people experience when random information interferes with goals. Listening to music

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[564] See https://www.ted.com/talks/mihaly_csikszentmihalyi_on_flow?language=en

(for this writer) wards off boredom and anxiety, and when seriously attended to, it can induce flow experiences.[565]

In an attempt to measure absorption in music, Gillian Sandstrom and Frank Russo report that they created an Absorption in Music Scale (AIMS), a 34-item measure of individuals' ability and willingness to allow music to draw them into an emotional experience.[566] They tested this on 166 participants, seeking to evaluate the ability of music to help people recover physiologically after experiencing an acute stressor: they induced stress by telling participants that they needed to make a speech, and then they played two minutes of either peaceful music or white noise. They speculated that the emotion conveyed by the music would accelerate participants' recovery compared to the neutrality of emotion [or maybe increased stress!] conveyed by white noise. Their results suggested that the emotion conveyed by music may help people recover following an acute stressor, and that individuals who are high in absorption may have a stronger emotional response to music, since they exhibited a more complete recovery.

It might be observed that the value of listening to music is far greater than that of enabling people to recover from the stress of preparing a speech. And, according to Diaz, investigating music-listening presents a number of unique challenges. Specifically, any measure taken while a person is in flow must be minimally invasive, as the presence of distractions would undoubtedly interfere with or perhaps even prevent flow states from occurring. In this connection it is significant that two of my participants (Joanna and David) noted that they were 'distracted' by the 'poor recording quality' of Track A (see also section 6.6 below).

5.5b   Imagination

There are numerous references above to the role which imagination played in the minds of my participants (imagined spaces and buildings for example). David Hargreaves has argued for 'a more fundamental view of *imagination* as the cognitive

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[565] See M. Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, New York, Harper and Row, 1990, pp 108-109.

[566] See G. M. Sandstrom and F. A. Russo, 'Absorption in Music: Development of a Scale to Identify Individuals with Strong Emotional Responses to Music', in *Psychology of Music,* vol. 41, 2013, pp 216-228.

basis of musical activity': he states that the creative aspects of music listening have been neglected and should be put at the centre of musical creativity; listening (he believes) is as important as the activities of composition, improvisation and performance.[567] Hargreaves argues that imagination is the essence of the creative perception of music, adding that there is new research interest in the emotion-arousing properties of music as well as in the nature of musical beauty. He says that recent advances in neuroscience appear to confirm the functional similarities between these different areas of creative activity in music. Thus, he sees it as regrettable that 'imagination seems to be of marginal interest in contemporary philosophy'.

Hargreaves refers to the views of the sceptical empiricist philosopher, David Hume (1711-1776) who distinguished three different 'faculties' (or functions) of the imagination: firstly, the 'scientific' function, which he regarded as 'permanent, irresistible and unchangeable' because it is related to known facts about the world; secondly, the 'metaphysical' function, which is 'changeable, weak and irregular' because it concerns matters of belief and speculation; and, thirdly, the 'artistic' function, which is the capacity to produce new ideas by reorganizing or simplifying past impressions: otherwise known as creativity. Hargreaves explains that 'empirical aesthetics' (the scientific study of the nature of beauty and its appreciation) is one of the oldest topics in experimental psychology. Gustav Fechner (1801-1887), a pioneer in this field, adopted the 'objectivist' position: that beauty lay in the properties of a given work of art. But the antithesis of this is to say that 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder', or, musically speaking, in the ear of the listener.[568] Hargreaves develops the notion that it is not a matter of one or the other, but rather the interaction between them. He refers to the view of Rolf Reber et al., that 'beauty is grounded in the processing experience of the perceiver that emerges from the interaction of stimulus properties and the perceivers' cognitive and affective processes'. [569]

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[567] See D. J. Hargreaves, 'Musical Imagination: Perception and Production, Beauty and Creativity', in *Psychology of Music,* vol. 40, 2012, pp 539-557.

[568] The phrase 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder' has been attributed to M. W. Hungerford in her novel *Molly Bawn* (1878).

[569] See R. Reber, N. Schwarz and P. Winkelman, 'Processing Fluency and Aesthetic Pleasure: Is Beauty in the Perceiver's Processing Experience?, in *Personality and Social Psychology Review,* vol. 8, 2004, pp 364-382, esp. p. 364 (Abstract).

But in addition to the musical performance and the listener's attention, Hargreaves (together with Adrian North) has argued that a further factor is important, namely the 'context' of the listening experience, whether it be, for example in a bank or shop, a church or cathedral, or when the phone is on hold.[570] One participant (Tim) echoed this sentiment when he wrote: -

> I find listening to plainsong at home quite difficult. In the context of liturgy, it can relax the mind and add enormously to the words. But I find it hard to focus when surrounded by domesticity and things 'to be done'.

It is sometimes argued that too much emphasis has been placed on creativity, which is 'only one facet of a much broader phenomenon, the central core of which is imagination'. For David Hargreaves, 'listening to music is an active, creative process which exists at different levels of engagement'. He refers to 'networks of association' involved in the appreciation of music, and he links these with the 'three main human psychological needs', namely competence, relatedness and autonomy. The first is reflected in the nature of the music itself, its structure, clarity, etc; the second is reflected in the cultural associations that we all have. The third is more personal, as 'listeners create their own personal networks of association which act as reference points for their mental representations of their musical worlds'. Hargreaves explains that …

> … all music processing involves centrally-stored personal networks of association … or schemata, which mediate all musical activities and not just the act of listening itself: these include composition, improvisation and performance ... [; and] … the active processes of revision which our minds perform are most usefully described as musical imagination.[571]

The music, the listener and the context are in a constant state of mutual interaction. Thus, we have what Alexandra Lamont described as 'a new model of musical

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[570] See D.J. Hargreaves and A.C. North (eds), *The Social Psychology of Music,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997; and also A.C. North and D.J. Hargreaves, 'Lifestyle Correlates of Musical Preference' in *Psychology of Music* vol. 35, 2007, pp 58-87.
[571] See Hargreaves, 'Musical Imagination' (as above), p. 549.

communication, attempting to account for [the roles of] both performer and listener'.[572] Musical communication is then seen as the 'spark' which occurs when a performance gives rise to a significant response.

5.5c   Wellbeing

In 2016 a study by Jenny Groarke and Michael Hogan looked at ways in which music-listening can enhance the listeners' sense of wellbeing.[573] The researchers worked with informants in different age-groups selecting people (a) between 18 and 30 and (b) between 60 and 85. They found that there were similarities as well as differences between the responses given: both groups said that music was good for relaxation, reducing stress and giving 'meaning' to life; the younger people placed more emphasis on the use of music for entertainment and reducing boredom, whereas the older people placed more emphasis on the 'therapeutic' value of music ('it brings the body and the brain to life') and the perception that by 'listening to music you can be transported away from the mundane'. This chimes in with Trebor's comment that he had 'a feeling of belonging to a centuries old musical and liturgical tradition, feelings of calm, peace and rest'. Both groups in Groarke and Hogan's experiment noted the social function of music-listening, but in different ways: the younger people emphasised the practical aspects of socializing ('you can listen to music together and go out dancing, so there's a social aspect to it'); for the older age-group it was more internalized ('I live on my own, and so the radio is my companion, it feels like there is someone with me when I have the music on'). Groarke and Hogan used 'the collective intelligence methodology [known as] Interactive Management': this entailed group discussion to generate ideas as well as an individual voting process to determine which functions of music-listening were considered the most important within the group. Also in 2016, John Hogue et al looked at the effects of gender, depression, and absorption on 'liking music that induces sadness and music that induces happiness'. They comment that …

> … liking music that induces sadness is a perplexing paradox. It appears to be
> counter-intuitive that people would like something that increases their sadness,

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[572] See A. Lamont, reviewing Hargreaves, in *Musicae Scientiae*, vol. 10, 2006, pp 287ff.

[573] See J. M. Groarke and M. J. Hogan, 'Enhancing Wellbeing: An Emerging Model of the Adaptive Functions of Music-listening', in *Psychology of Music,* vol. 44, 2016, pp 769-791.

but liking music that induces sadness is a very common experience. Studying this phenomenon can help explain how people mitigate negative experiences, find pleasure in suffering, and use music to cope with challenges.[574]

Hogue et al report that an earlier study by Punkanen, Eerola, and Erkkila (2011) asked depressed and non-depressed individuals to listen to music clips that evoked sadness, happiness, anger, high energy, low energy, positive valence, and negative valence. The people who were depressed liked the high-energy and angry songs less than the non-depressed people. The depressed and non-depressed people showed similar liking for the low energy songs, songs that induce sadness, and songs that induce happiness. This may perhaps have been because the high energy of the music may have disrupted the depressed people's low energy systems, and this energy mismatch was thought to lead to lower liking. [575]

5.5d Comfort, calmness and security

'Comfort' (a term used by both Mr Bucket and Katisha) is a word that has two meanings (linked but separate): in its everyday meaning it might be associated physically with soft cushions, and emotionally with an 'easy' life. But its etymological meaning is related to 'being strengthened'; it is with this meaning that it is used in *The Gospel of John* when Jesus is quoted is saying that when he 'goes away', the 'Comforter' come.[576] This meaning is taken up in some versions of the Christian liturgy for marriage, when it states that 'Marriage is given, that husband and wife may comfort and help will each other…'[577]

Elsa, commenting on Track C wrote that it evoked for her a feeling of 'calmness and serenity'. These two words are not exactly synonymous but their meanings are closely linked with a sense of emotional security, together with freedom from the troubles and

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[574] See J. D. Hogue, A. M. Crimmins and J. H. Kahn, 'The Effects of Gender, Depression, and Absorption on Liking Music that Induces Sadness and Music that Induces Happiness', in *Psychology of Music,* vol. 4, 2016, pp 816-829, esp. p.816.

[575] See M. Punkanen, T. Eerola, and J. Erkkila, 'Biased Emotional Preferences in Depression: Decreased Liking of Angry and Energetic Music by Depressed Patients', in *Music and Medicine*, vol. 3, pp 114–120.

[576] See, for example, *John* 16:7 KJV. In more modern translations other terms are used for the Greek word παρακλητοσ *parakleetos.*

[577] See, for example, 'The Marriage Service', in *The Alternative Service Book,* 1980, OUP and other publishers, Section 6 para 3.

anxieties of life. The English poet William Cowper (1731-1800) who was admired by both Coleridge and Wordsworth, used the two words adjectivally in a poem which is sometimes used as a hymn. The first line is 'O for a closer walk with God' and the relevant verse is: -

> So shall my walk be close with God,
>   calm and serene my frame;
> so purer light shall mark the road
>   that leads me to the Lamb.[578]

5.6   A 'WITTGENSTEINIAN' APPROACH – 'seeing-as' and 'hearing-as'

Having explored as far as possible the comments and thoughts of my participants on this topic of 'serenity', and its links with music (specifically plainchant) there remains an issue of how the linking process actually works, and the question I pose is, 'What is it about the music that causes such emotions to be evoked?'. I suspect that this question is unanswerable, but that we can elucidate the issue somewhat with the help of Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) one of the twentieth century's greatest philosophers. A 'Wittgensteinian' approach is suggested by the philosopher David Carr, who provides much food for thought when he points out that any application of emotional language to human feelings is not without its problematic aspects; and the problems increase when we try to work out how the '*bona fide* language of emotion latches on (in an inevitably "second-hand" way) to music'. Appropriate ways of applying emotional terminology to music (as to feelings) …

> … have to be learned in the course of participation and engagement in human institutions and practices (of celebration, devotion, mourning, and so on) and … the learning in question is less a matter of the discovery of general causal laws or semantic rules, than the cultivation of individual judgement against a background of some established agreement in judgement. [579]

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[578] The hymn is to be found in many sources, for example *Ancient and Modern: Hymns and Songs for Refreshing Worship,* 2013, no 131. There is also a setting of these words by C. V. Stanford (1852-1924), which beautifully conveys the text's sense of calmness and serenity.

[579] See D. Carr, 'Music, Meaning and Emotion', in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism,* vol. 62 no 3, 2004, pp 225-234, esp. p. 233.

Carr raises questions about 'whether much human signification is properly understood as representative at all'; and he refers to 'modern analytical philosophers' who might say that the words 'Good morning' as a greeting are undoubtedly meaningful, but *not* 'by virtue of representing the morning, or the weather or even [the speaker's] state of sociability'. 'Indeed', says Carr, 'on the approach pioneered by Wittgenstein, it may be a mistake to think of our language of feeling and emotion as representing anything (especially anything inner) at all'. For Carr, this might help to avoid 'a tangle of problems [caused by] too much emphasis on meaning as representation'; and this may be why Laird Addis rejects the resemblance-inherence account, because it focuses on the physical behaviour or psychological symptoms of emotion rather than on emotion itself.[580] This implies that 'any ascription of emotion to human agents … is somehow more "literal" or less analogical than any emotional characterization of music … BUT [says Carr] why should this be so?' The crux of Carr's argument seems to be expressed in the following sentence:

> Music is emotionally meaningful (if and when it is), not as the subjective effect of emotionally charged composition, or as the cause of emotional states in the listener, but *in and of itself* [Carr's italics]; …

… and, following, as he says, 'a broadly Wittgensteinian analysis of the sense of psychological terms, it seems reasonable to hold that "inner processes stand in need of outward criteria", and that we learn to identify joyful or sad feelings as precisely the feelings that are appropriately felt on joyful or sad occasions'.[581]

Let us consider the analogy of how we *see* things, and the well-known dictum that 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder'. There is an extent to which this is true. There are times and situations, undoubtedly, where one wants to say that a particular person or thing is 'objectively' beautiful. But again, much depends on the mind, personality and circumstances of the perceiver.

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[580] See L. Addis, *Of Mind and Music,* New York: Cornell University Press, 1999, p.19. 'In fairness [says Carr] Addis recognizes that some philosophers would reject this distinction, but he insists on it regardless.
[581] See D. Carr, 'Music, Meaning and Emotion' (as above), p. 228.

So, the conundrum remains, and, as many psychologists (including Johan Wagemans) have said, 'we see with the mind as well as with the eyes'.[582] We might also legitimately say, with regard to music and emotion, that we hear with the mind, as well as with the ears. But pursuing a little further the issue of seeing, we might now consider again that image which was particularly significant for Wittgenstein, the duck-rabbit.[583] Wittgenstein's use of this image cannot be applied directly to a listener's perception of emotion in music, but perhaps there are valid implications for solving the 'conundrum' which I have described. One of the points made by Carr is that emotional states can be induced not only by the music itself, or by one's own inner disposition, but by the reactions of other listeners. Here again, consideration of various peoples' perceptions of the duck-rabbit might be enlightening, and they can be easily applied to the sphere of music (see Chapter 3, section 3.C.3 above).

5.7   CONCLUSION

This chapter has sought to show (from the comments of participants and others) that music in general, and plainchant in particular, can help listeners and performers to experience a sense of calmness, serenity, and 'quietness away from the normal hustle and bustle of life'. Listening to my three tracks evoked pictures of natural phenomena such as light and darkness, together with feelings of thankfulness and joy. Participants also felt encouraged to express their views on the importance of regular breathing and having a sense of involvement. On the theoretical side it is far from clear how music leads to such perceptions in the minds of listeners and performers, but there can be no doubt that it does. The insights of Wittgenstein – that a lot depends on the mind of the 'subject' as well as on the intrinsic nature of the 'object' – may be some help in solving this conundrum.

Finally, to return plainchant, a third example (to which one informant refers) is the Gradual for the solemn evening Mass on Maundy Thursday (shown as Ex.5.3 below).

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[582] See, for example, J. Wagemans, 'A Century of Gestalt Psychology in Visual Perception' in *Psychological Bulletin*, vol. 138, no 6, 2012, pp 1172-1217.
[583] See sections 2.2.4 and 3.C.3.

Ex.5.3 – a Gradual for Maundy Thursday (from Liber Usualis) [584]

The text here has been translated thus: -

> [Christ] … walked the path of obedience all the way to death – his death on the cross. For this reason, God raised him to the highest place above, and gave him the name that is greater than any other name.[585]

My informant refers to [a] 'the abasement of the Cross [where the music] descends to the lowest note in the piece at *crucis*, and [b] the melisma on *exaltavit*, which soars above the rest of the piece.[586]

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[584] Ex. 5.3 is from *Liber Usualis,* online edition, 1961, p. 669.
[585] See *Philippians* 2: 8ff (TEV).
[586] Fr G. Nicholls, again.

The second syllable of *crucis* descends to a low C. This chant makes abundant use of *melismata*, as befits the solemnity of the occasion. The *melisma* to which my informant refers is actually on the second syllable of *illum*: it 'soars' up to a high G (a twelfth above the low C) and is also the longest melisma of this chant, consisting of 34 notes. Further examples and perceptions such as these will be highly relevant in the next chapter.

6

PLAINCHANT

AND

TRANSCENDENCE

6.1   INTRODUCTION

Having illustrated from participants' comments how plainchant can trigger various memories (chapter 4) and how this often leads to strong emotional reactions (chapter 5), I now turn to consider the specifically spiritual aspects of my participants' responses. After dealing with the *back* and the *in*, I now use the adverb *up* to characterize the comments in this chapter's exploration of plainchant's impact on its listeners, particularly when it seems to lead them into the realm of the 'ineffable'. This current chapter explores 'the idea of the holy' referring first to biblical concepts, and then to the notion of 'being with God'[587] in the modern world. We look at the ways that, when listening to plainchant, participants differ on the relative importance of music and text, between musical content and spiritual meaning; and we seek to examine how and why the ability of specific plainchant tracks to evoke spiritual awareness is often affected by quite mundane issues, such as tone of voice, pitch, or background noise.

The chapter then turns to examining the ways that plainchant evokes elements of time and space for participants who may or may not have any specific religious allegiance. With regard to time, I refer to the liturgical calendar with particular reference to Easter; with regard to space, I note again the ways (already described in chapter 4) that plainchant evokes memories of particular places. I extend the previous analysis to show how these and other factors all affect the spiritual power of the music**.** As a detailed example, I explore one participant's juxtaposition of the two words 'candles' and 'crucifixion' which suggests some profound theological insights.[588] In this chapter, as well as introducing fresh material from a number of participants, it is also important to re-visit some of the comments quoted in chapters 4 and 5, to bring out particularly

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[587] This phrase was used by participants Holly and Peter.
[588] This was Danielle, who professed 'no religious allegiance'.

the *transcendent* aspects. It will be seen that the *way in* (or rather the *way up*) to experiences of the divine can be characterized as follows: Christian liturgies (both words and music) going back over centuries of tradition form the foundations for a 'bridge' between the human and the divine worlds. It was Peter who put this most succinctly when he wrote as follows: -

> Worship enables us to develop a sense of 'being with God'.[589] This is best achieved when the liturgy (consisting of words and music) is performed well; and it is also helped by the environment of a beautiful building such as a cathedral.[590]

Since we are dealing with 'ineffability' and matters which go beyond the range of normal human thought, poetry as well as music can often help us on this journey, as can ritual actions such as processions and pilgrimages. The belief that God is *unknowable* goes back to medieval times (or even earlier), but often today it is necessary to de-mythologize much of the material found in traditional theology. In Christianity there is a central paradox, and a sense of mystery. When it comes to transcendence in music, much work has been done recently on *music and the brain*; and one writer in particular sees music as 'a perfume not an argument' – a bearer of 'ineffable' truth (see section 6.14). Music can be seen as 'gnostic' – something to know – but it is often more effective when it is seen as 'drastic' – something to do, and which does something to those who participate in it (see section 6.15). Music creates and releases tension; and the physical processes involved can lead people in some circumstances to an experience of God when (as it were) 'divine and human meet' (see section 6.16).

6.1a   DEFININITIONS: TRANSCENDENCE and related terms

The term 'transcendence' tends to be used very loosely in modern parlance, but in Christian theology, it refers to the notion of an Absolute Reality, beyond the world of earthly experiences; this is a Reality which is ineffable – beyond the scope of human

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[589] 'Being with God': this phrase was also used by another participant, Holly, and (in a slightly expanded form) by Rowan Williams, a former Archbishop of Canterbury, who uses the phrase 'to live with and before God'. See J. Arnold, *Sacred Music* (as above), p. 95.

[590] On 'performing well' see also the comments of J. Arnold quoted at the end of section 6.8 below.

description or even human imagination – and conceivable only through the use of metaphor and analogy: it is therefore in the nature of the case that this subject needs to be approached obliquely. In some of the conversations I have had with participants, there has been a sense of 'reaching for meaning' – struggling to find words with which to express the inexpressible. As Wittgenstein put it (so simply yet profoundly), 'We are engaged in a struggle with language'.[591] Wittgenstein applies this to philosophical problems generally, but it is all the more true when we are attempting to describe the ineffable. It should be noted in passing that Plato, referring to his notion of an ultimate reality, used the term 'ὁ Ὤν – the One who Is.[592] In the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, this Reality has a name, or rather a variety of names, one of which is 'I AM', based, just like the Platonic term, on the verb 'to be'; but the most usual term in English is 'GOD'. In the Bible, this God is described, anthropomorphically, as One who 'speaks' and 'acts': in fact, the same Hebrew word represents both of these English verbs: God's 'speech' is also His 'action', as when, in the story of Creation, we read that 'God said, "Let there be light", and there was light'.[593] It was God's 'word' (a word of command) that brought light (and all the rest of creation) into being.[594] This version of the myth of Creation dates from about the sixth century BCE, coinciding in time with the oracles of 'Second Isaiah' to whom reference is made below (see section 6.3) because in the words of this prophet we find the clearest biblical exposition of the notion of transcendence. In the literature (see Chapter 2) there are many musicological references to transcendence and ineffability, but often these do not correspond to the primary (theological) meaning of the terms.

6.2   THE IDEA OF THE HOLY[595]

A cluster of participants' comments read like an invitation to explore what 'the holy' might mean; and this is the theme on which this whole chapter concentrates. Peter, for example, writes: -

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[591] See L. Wittgenstein, ed. G. H. von Wright, *Culture and Value, A Selection from the Posthumous Remains,* tr. P. Winch, amended 2nd edition, Oxford: Blackwell, 1992, p. 13, quoting MS 153a 35r, 1931.

[592] 'ὁ Ὤν: this expression consists of the definite article (a short o with an aspiration, pronounced 'ho' as in 'hot') followed by the substantive form of the verb to be (with a long o, and pronounced like the English word 'own'). An informant who is a Hebraist has advised me that the sense of the Hebrew name for God is not just a matter of 'being': God is rather the one who 'turns up' to help his people – to be 'on their side' cf *Psalm* 124:1, 'If it had not been the Lord who was on our side....'

[593] See *Genesis* 1:3.

[594] Again, it is my Hebraist informant who has urged the emphasis on 'command' – a saying with purpose.

[595] This heading is also the English title of a famous book by R. Otto; see section 1.4.4 above.

At one particularly significant point in the Eucharistic liturgy, God is addressed as 'Holy, holy, holy': such words can take us a long way on the route towards the 'divine'; but there comes a point where paradox overwhelms the normal sense of words and we are left with the notion of 'mystery', which is best expressed through sacred music such as plainchant.

Echoing Peter's thoughts, another participant, Mark, refers to plainchant as 'associated …. with prayer and a sense of "the holy" or "the Holy" whatever that may mean'. But much of what is traditionally meant by the term 'holy' (especially in the Hebrew scriptures) is challenged or even negated in what Christians call the New Testament – the new 'covenant' or agreement between God and humanity. And such biblical concepts often lack meaning for modern readers, unless they are first understood in the light of the cosmology of the first century CE, and then de-mythologized to become compatible with the scientific knowledge of our present age.[596]

6.3   Holiness in the Bible

In the Bible, specifically in the Hebrew scriptures, we find that the *holiness* of God is often described in terms of his 'beyondness' or transcendence. We find this most notably in Deutero-Isaiah when the prophet quotes the thoughts of God as follows: -

> For as the heavens are higher than the earth
>
> so are my ways higher than your ways
>
> and my thoughts than your thoughts;
>
> and as the rain and snow come down from heaven
>
> and do not return until they have watered the earth ...
>
> … so shall the word which comes from my mouth prevail ...[597]

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[596] See section 6.11

[597] See *Isaiah* 55:9f (NEB). The term 'Deutero-Isaiah' is used to refer to the section of this biblical book encompassed by chapters 40 to 55. It is generally accepted that the author of these chapters was a post-exilic prophet (6th century BCE), as opposed to 'First Isaiah' who prophesied in Jerusalem in the latter half of the 8th century BCE.

This passage expresses two notions, two *modes* of transcendence: (a) the transcendence of height and (b) a transcendence of purpose, which might alternatively be characterized as a transcendence of depth.[598] In the above quotation God's ways are seen as far 'above' those of humanity: just as the mysteries of the weather seemed inexplicable to the minds of the ancients, so the 'thoughts' of God are ineffable, beyond the power of humans to understand. But also, the passage indicates the belief that the 'ways', the purposes, of God could not be ultimately thwarted, in spite of the political vicissitudes which God's 'chosen people' had suffered, and would continue to suffer. The first 'mode' of God's transcendence finds supreme expression in the passage just quoted from Deutero-Isaiah.[599] The second 'mode' is sometimes referred to by the term 'immanence'; but whether we are looking 'up' to 'higher forces' or 'down' into the depths of the 'inner self' it is important to state that both are aspects of divine transcendence. In the Hebrew scriptures, there are further hints of a transcendence of depth and purpose. *Psalm 139* is a classic text: the Psalmist states that, wherever he goes, he cannot escape from God's presence. The first few verses contain these phrases: -

> O Lord, you have searched me and known me ...
>
> You … are acquainted with all my ways …
>
> Even before a word is on my tongue,
>
> > O Lord, you know it completely. [600]

It is in the Christian writings of the New Testament that the notion of God's immanence (transcendence of depth and purpose) is more fully expressed. For example, the anonymous author of *The Letter to the Hebrews* writes as follows: -

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[598] 'Transcendence of depth' is my own term for what is sometimes described as the 'immanence' of God. Transcendence and immanence have sometimes been perceived as opposites (see J.S.K. Ward, 'Existence, Transcendence and God' in *Religious Studies* vol. 3, no 2, 1968, pp 461-476). However, for Ninian Smart (see, 'Myth and Transcendence' in *The Monist,* vol. 50, no 4, 1966, pp 475-487), immanence is an aspect of transcendence, not its antithesis – this view was expressed in a talk to a theological society in Cambridge (c.1965): Smart had been asked to speak on 'dispensing with transcendence', but expressed the view just stated.

[599] Such notions are also found in other parts of the Hebrew scriptures, particularly those which date from the same era, around the sixth century BCE. The 'priestly' account of Creation (in *Genesis* 1) is notably more magisterial than the more primitive account (in *Genesis* 2). The descriptions of Solomon's temple in *Chronicles* are more gold-encrusted than those of the earlier accounts.

[600] See *Psalm* 139: 1, 3, 4.

> Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. [601]

In spite of the somewhat dated physiology, there can be no doubt that this passage refers to something deep within the human mind**.** So, from the ancient scriptural texts we now turn to the ways in which some of my participants (and others) have a sense of 'being with God' in the modern world, noting how they recognize the contribution made by plainchant in fostering that sense.

6.4   'Being with God'

Holly's description of plainchant as 'a profound and primal way of praying and of being with God' echoes Peter's comments quoted above. Holly is very clear about the spiritual significance of plainchant. She defines it as an 'ancient way of Christian worship. One melody line with no strict timing. Expressive of the heart not an exact science'. Having listened to all the tracks three times, Holly chose as a 'favourite' (with considerable difficulty) Track A, explaining her preference in these terms 'Simple solo voice, stripping all the melody back. Seemed more pure and easiest to be absorbed into'. In fact, this track features three singers, but they do produce a remarkably unified effect. Track A evoked for her a picture of 'Darkness with a single beam of light shining in pure manner'. The track reminded her 'of being a Nun and the delight of some of the plainchant sung'. It reminded her, too, 'that there is a deeper level to life that we normally do not access'. To the specific question regarding 'spiritual significance' she gave this answer: -

> Yes, because it is a profound and primal way of praying and of being with God. It reaches one's depths in a way that is deeper than a lot of music.

The phrase 'being with God' is also used in a slightly amplified way by Rowan Williams when he states that 'to listen seriously to music and to perform it are among our most potent ways of learning what it is to live with and before God'.[602] We should note, first,

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[601] See *Hebrews* 4:12f
[602] For Rowan Williams see section 1.4.5.

that Williams uses the phrase 'to listen seriously'; this is the opposite of treating music as background, and there are analogies to be made between serious listening and prayer.[603] Williams refers specifically to plainchant, and even more specifically to the *Kyrie Orbis Factor* which is quoted below: -

Ex. 6.1

Kyrie (Missa Orbis Factor)

For Williams: -

> There are certain values which plainsong embodies which are important aspects of sacred music. Plainsong doesn't expect you to come up with required emotions [...]; because it's repetitive, it assumes that you are prepared to take time … [which is important for] understanding the role of liturgy as something that takes time, requires a measure of attention, physical settling, patience, etc.[604]

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[603] See Bernard Salter, 'The Path to Paradise: an exploration of spirituality in music', five illustrated lectures.
[604] See J. Arnold, *Sacred Music* (as above)*,* p.96.

Williams adds that, in spite of these demands which plainchant makes, it can be intensely emotional because …

> … the music so carries the narrative that you're present in it and with it ... that's why people sometimes burst into tears when they hear plainsong.[605]

Williams refers to the need for 'physical settling'; such a comment suggests that there are a number of practical issues which affect the reception of plainchant, and to such issues (as illustrated by some of my participants) I now turn. In this next section I will discuss the statements made by those participants whose experience of plainchant has been in an obviously 'liturgical' context, referring particularly to the comparative importance of text and music, the effect of performance and recording quality, and the relevance of seasonality and intentionality.

6.5   Words and Sound – or Silence ?

Participants expressed different views in relation to the relative significance of the text versus the music of a chant. For some, the 'spiritual' content rests primarily in the words: it is the words which are primary and the music which serves to 'add' to them; so, as Tim writes, 'in the context of liturgy, [plainchant] can relax the mind and add enormously to the words'. Some respondents made positive reference to the text of the chants. Zoe (referring to Track C) affirms that it is spiritually significant 'probably because I know what the words mean and I can't separate them from the music'. Joanna states that words are very important' for her, and that 'any plainchant is essentially spiritual'. But for Trebor, it helps meditation that the words are in Latin and mostly unfamiliar; so, for him, it is really the sound of the music that is important.

For Holly, plainchant 'communicates something to God without needing words of one's own'. The sense of 'communicating' with God has of course been an aspect of worship from the earliest times. Several participants found spirituality in the way in which plainchant creates links with 'the centuries of Christian worship using these words and music' as an 'aid' to meditation and prayer.[606] EH wrote that …

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[605] See J. Arnold, *Sacred Music* (as above)*, p.97.
[606] For example, CP.

… to a person with faith or a spiritual awareness it speaks to the 'soul', as understood by that person. Part of this may be because it has resonances over many centuries and is known to [have been] an expression of faith for centuries. The development of plainsong may have been a way of people showing God their gratitude, obedience, and belief in him.

And when God is 'addressed' in worship, there is a sense that 'he' responds. As Holly says: -

I think [plainchant] has a worship and prayerful quality to it that is not found in secular music. I think that when anything is given (be it music or otherwise) as an act of worship, God takes it and uses it in a way where 'it' becomes greater than the sum of its parts.

For some, this kind of 'communication' in worship is 'nurtured' by silence. Sacristan (who initially preferred Track B, but subsequently felt 'drawn' to Track C) wrote: -

… plainchant has a calming influence which is conducive to emptying one's mind in preparation to listen to what God might say…. [then she added:] I enjoy silence to nurture my spirituality, but listening to plainchant I have a sense of being alone and at peace despite the rush of the world around me.

For Stephen it is the imagined smell (evoked by the music) of burning candles and incense which helps him to 'identify with the spiritual significance'; and for him the olfactory sensation serves as another channel of offering and prayer (just as the music does) when words alone seem inadequate. Stephen further expounded his views on the subject of spirituality in plainchant in a technical and analytical way; and because he took so much trouble over this, he deserves to be quoted fairly fully. He listened to all three of the given tracks five or six times (more than most participants). He found it 'very difficult' to choose a 'favourite' track, because they seemed to him to be 'so different'. This seemed to him to illustrate 'the richness and variety of the plainchant tradition'. He gave an analysis of his responses to the three tracks as follows: -

I found the opening of [Track] A (down a 4th then back up via a flattened note) a bit unsettling at first. I got to like [Track] A more on repeated hearing. It's the most interesting musically. But while it has a wonderful sense of contemplation and detachment, this can tend towards rootlessness and ambiguity. So, it's rich in meaning spiritually but not what I could really call [my] 'favourite'. Track B is a simpler chant which is much more 'rooted'. The flattened 7th is a high note which adds a certain folky charm. The voices sound pleasant and it's obviously a happy piece intended to express joy and to raise the spirits, but I think they sing with too much gusto and unnecessary accentuation near the beginning of phrases. [Track] C is also simple. I like it because it is so obviously an act of worship. The liturgical character is emphasized by the repetition and the rise and fall of each phrase. There is a real sense of telling a story or at least of development through the repetitions. And I think it's a beautiful performance by a singer with a lovely voice. So not perhaps the most satisfying as regards musical content, but the word 'favourite' implies affection and I do love C.

There are many themes in this answer, to be explored. At first glance it is interesting that he distinguishes between Track A which he finds 'rich in meaning spiritually' as well as 'the most interesting musically' and Track C which he finds less satisfying 'as regards musical content' but which he likes 'because it is so obviously an act of worship'. His analytical comments give way in the end to his feelings of affection when he says 'I do love C'. Pictorially, the music seemed to him to suggest 'a community gathered in a huge cathedral or monastery - a vast space but somehow very intimate as though the space around didn't matter'. There was also (in his mental picture) 'a figure leading and inspiring a group of people – in procession, then in some sort of ritual with deliberate and graceful movements' (see Chapter 5, section 5.3a).

In terms of 'feelings generated by the music' Stephen again writes more expansively than any other participant, describing a feeling (already quoted in the previous chapter at section 5.3b) of a sense of 'measuredness' (his underlining). He mentions that he felt…

> … a very strong sense of community, engendered by one person singing and acting on behalf of all. The music itself seemed not a lot more than an embellishment of the spoken text, but added to it enormously.

These last two sentences stress the themes of (a) 'participation in liturgical Christian worship' and (b) the sense of 'being part of a community….in direct continuity with the early church'. These themes will be developed further below (see section 6.10).

The importance of the quality of performance is taken up by Jonathan Arnold (whom I number as one of my 'expert' informants) when he writes: -

> Firstly, music is theologically stronger when performed well …; theologically the biblical idea that we are bidden to praise God with our music and voices is most powerfully performed when it is done well: in offering the very best of art, we too as human beings receive the best from creation. Secondly, music can transform a relatively mundane text into one with authority and persuasiveness, that can inspire both performer and listener alike and bring them closer to an understanding of the mystery of God, albeit inarticulate and non-rational, than we might ever achieve with words alone.[607]

And when we are dealing with recorded music (as I was, mainly, in my research) it is also the quality of the recording which can make a significant difference to the effectiveness of the music for the listener. For this reason, I now turn to some of the practical issues raised by my participants.

6.6   Performance and Recording Quality

For several participants the choice of a 'favourite' track was affected by issues related to vocal quality or the quality of the recordings. But more people made comments of a general nature regarding the 'atmosphere' created by the three different tracks. Cheryl 'liked the greater use of crescendo and diminuendo in [Track] B; [she] also thought B had a slightly more interesting and unusual rhythm'. CP found Track C 'familiar'

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[607] See J. Arnold, *Sacred Music* (as above), p. 82. On 'performing well', see also the comments of Peter quoted in section 6.3 above.

because she had at times sung it herself; she 'liked the simplicity of the single voice and the pace of this track', together with 'the contrast and responsorial element with the treble voices'. For Sacristan: -

> Track B seems softer, but more defined than A and C. The multiple voices have clearer definition than on Track A and are more distinguishable as multiple voices. I am not drawn by singular voices – although Track C has the addition of the female voice which is pleasing to the ear.

David described Track C as 'musically better', adding: -

> The fact that there was only one singer (I think!) helped the diction come across more clearly. He phrased carefully, allowed the music to breathe – I particularly liked his drawn-out phrase endings'.

Frank opined that in Track B 'The voices had a more pleasant tone and the melody was better'. Craig regarded Track B as his favourite because of its 'haunting melody and optimal acoustics'**.**

Marian wrote in note-form, commenting on the three tracks as follows: -

> First track very slow, low-pitched, indistinct, tedious; Second track: emphasis on first syllable irritating, overdone; Third track: very clear, especially solo voice, engaging pace.

Lanzada, similarly preferring Track C, wrote that … the repetitive nature gave it a form which made it easier to follow aurally than the others, which seem to 'wander' rather aimlessly. The theme of 'wandering' has already been mentioned in Chapters 1 and 3, and will be taken up further in Chapter 7.[608] Edingale wrote that in his view 'the solo voice [on Track C] worked pretty well and the track was quite clear, so that may have influenced the choice'. Katisha preferred the same track and mentioned 'the clarity of the single voice, and the even tone'. She added that 'the comfort and reassurance,

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[608] See sections 1.5.3, 3.B.4, 7.0 and 7.12.G

together with a spiritual uplifting engendered, made this track one that I would listen to in the future'.

Tim, writing from a 'professional' point of view, as a former Precentor, explained that he …

> … sang [Track C] every year at [the] Easter Vigil/Confirmation service. *Exultet* addresses the Easter Candle – only light in dark cathedral. I thought [it to be] highlight of service!! Service itself totally inappropriate to congregation – parents and friends of confirmands totally ignorant of Christian worship. Long readings, long service. But new Light into Church and *Exultet* made some sense. [I feel it needs to be sung] much quicker [than on Track C].

Tim had no doubt about the 'spiritual significance' of the Track, relating it to a 'First moment of faith'. But it is clear that as a 'professional', and as a priest, he was concerned about how the *Exultet* might 'come across' to infrequent church attenders; and this includes a concern about the precise manner and speed of the singing. Peter affirmed the spiritual significance of plainchant, adding 'but then I believe all music to have a spiritual significance in that it is one of the principal mediums which penetrate the soul and thus impacts upon the whole person'. The fact that Peter referred to 'all music', (just as Tim referred to the emotive qualities of 'a Haydn string quartet') invites us to broaden the discussion; this will be done later in this chapter and in Chapter 7.

On recording quality, Joanna wrote as follows: -

> I was continually distracted with A because of the poor quality of recording which meant that some phrases seemed to begin sharp. B was a more engaging tune but again the recording was hard to make out and, being several voices, I felt at times they did not blend. In all recordings I found it hard to make out the words, which was important to me.

Whilst I initially found many of these comments surprising, they should not have been; such practical issues of what we might call 'embodiment' follow logically from the 'incarnational' emphasis of the Christian faith. A central aspect of this faith (see section 6.12 below) is that God (the true essence of reality, or *Dasein*) is seen (however

literally or metaphorically) as having been 'made flesh' – incarnate – embodied – in Jesus of Nazareth. And, as an extension of this notion, God can be perceived as 'present' in every human being, and (as some would say) in the whole of the 'created' order of the universe. This is very much the view expressed in the poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, who wrote that 'The world is charged with the grandeur of God'.[609] There is a parallel concept in music when it is realised that the 'transcendent' aspects of music, so lovingly alluded to by people such as Vladimir Jankélévitch (see section 6.14 below) can only be perceived through the lens of human activity, which may entail writing and reading printed music, or performing and hearing music in a concert setting or in an act of worship, or through recordings. Thus, the religious notion of 'incarnation' is somehow mirrored in the practical 'embodiment' of music in the physical bodies of performers and listeners, as well as in the physicality of George Herbert's lute, or Wagner's orchestra, or in the simple singing of plainchant by a group of monks or nuns, or by a choir or congregation in a great cathedral. In the light of all this, it is not surprising that participants in my research, when asked to comment on the emotional and spiritual resonances of the recorded tracks that I had sent them, in a number of cases referred to very practical issues regarding the way in which the music was 'embodied' in the voices of the singers, or in the 'atmosphere' of the 'performance' as received through the medium of microphones and playback devices. For some there is also a degree of 'grounding' represented by the Christian calendar, as the next section shows.

6.7   Seasonality, Intentionality and Wholeness

A number of references to Easter have already been quoted, and it is clear that some participants conveyed their sense of the spirituality of plainchant by making references to the seasons of the Christian year. It is the observation of this liturgical 'year' that enables many Christians to respond best to their awareness of divine love, as expressed in 'salvation-history.[610] As James Crichton puts it:

> The history of salvation is …. the record of God's self-disclosure, made in and
> through the events [of history], the disclosure of a God who gives himself. This

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[609] See G.M. Hopkins, 'God's Grandeur', https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44395/gods-grandeur. I refer to this poem again in Chapter 7 (see section 7.11).

[610] For 'salvation-history' (*heilsgeschichte*) see Chapter 4 (section 4.2.2) above.

is the deepest meaning of salvation-history. The whole record can be seen as the self-giving of God, who takes the initiative, who approaches mankind to bring them nearer to himself, to make them his own people, and by covenant, which is the expression of his love, to bind them to himself.[611]

It is clear that Track C had a particular effect on many participants (it was, by far, most people's 'favourite') not only because it was more familiar than the other two tracks, but because of its associations with Easter. Peter (like Tim, quoted above) recalled that he had sung the *Exultet* on a number of occasions, 'most recently in Lichfield Cathedral in the darkness of early morning on Easter Day 2017'. He was also reminded of 'singing it in the Cathedral almost 30 years ago'. Edingale (with regard to Track C) wrote that he had 'experienced [this] chant in use in the liturgy'; Trebor said he would describe the chant as 'spiritual', adding that '... listening to chant sometimes helps me to practice meditation, by distracting thoughts of other things'. Grazia, whose first language is not English, wrote: -

The track is connected with Easter which is my favourite Feast and the chant incourage to exult of joy for the good new of the Resurrection of our Lord.

Stephen liked Track C, finding that 'there is a real sense of telling a story…' This notion is central to the Abrahamic faiths, as has already been emphasized (particularly in Chapter 4, sections 4.2.2 and 4.3) with reference to the 'covenant' between God and humanity. Liturgy also depends very much on 'telling a story': not just the story of Jesus at the Last Supper, but all that led up to that moment (the covenants with Noah, Moses, David etc) and all that follows from it – the story of the Christian Church through the ages, and the stories of individual believers.

For Cantor (a parish organist) Track C was a reminder of 'playing for an Anglo-Catholic mass, attending Vespers at Solesmes' and of 'Easter Saturday at my church [where] the Vicar sings the *Exultet* in English'. Mary (also referring to Track C) found it 'powerful', having recently heard it sung at the Easter Vigil; and she 'liked the lone

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[611] See J.D. Crichton, 'A Theology of Worship', first chapter of C. Jones et al (eds) *The Study of Liturgy,* revised edition, London: SPCK, 1992, p. 10.

voice, together with [the] ... responses showing that it is an act of community.' It evoked feelings for her of 'solemnity and awe'; she added that 'words are very important for me' and that 'any plainchant is essentially spiritual.' Ann was reminded of her 'many visits to Quarr Abbey';[612] she appreciated the spirituality of the chant, but noted the subjective aspects of this, writing that …

> … it is meant to raise the heart and mind to God but only if one has that intention and unites with it. Am not sure what effect it would have on someone who is not interested in spirituality. I suppose it could be soporific. I don't think my family would listen to it for long.

This notion of intentionality has a firm biblical basis, as illustrated in the following quotation from the Pentateuch: -

> Today you have obtained the Lord's agreement to be your God; and for you to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, his commandments and his ordinances, and to obey him. Today the Lord has obtained your agreement to be his treasured people, as he promised you …[613]

Mark (preferring Track A) wrote 'I think I took note of the seasons to which the tracks referred. The Christmas and Easter chants didn't seem to resonate with the season so much as the Advent one [which] reminded me of a couple of times when I experienced monks singing the office'. There is an issue here concerning the relationship (or lack of it) between the various musical modes and the moods associated with the seasons.[614] Lanzada points out that for 'the inexperienced, it is hard to differentiate between the plainsongs for different festivals'; but this participant

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[612] St. Mary's Abbey at Quarr (on the Isle of Wight) was founded in 1132 by Baldwin de Redvers, 1st Earl of Devon, fourth Lord of the Isle of Wight. The founder was buried in the Abbey in 1155, and his remains, along with those of a royal princess, Cecily of York (died 1507), second daughter of King Edward IV of England and godmother of Henry VIII, still lie on the site of the mediaeval monastery, as do the remains of other important personages. The location was used as a refuge by the monks of Solesmes, after French law banned religious orders in 1901. The monks settled at Quarr and built a magnificent new Abbey church, which was completed in 1908.

[613] See *Deuteronomy* 26:17f. The next verse is too narrowly nationalistic to be relevant here.

[614] See C.J. Mews, J.N. Crossley and C. Williams, 'Guy of Saint-Denis on the Tones: Thinking about Chant for Saint-Denis c. 1300', in *Plainsong and Medieval Music*, vol. 23, 2014, pp 153ff.

seems to find spirituality in the *simplicity* of plainchant, 'because it seems to touch something deep inside which … more complex music can fail to reach at times'.

For some it is the way in which the music evokes particular places (see Chapter 4, section 4.4.3) which gives it its spiritual significance: Cantor wrote that 'plainsong always transports me to a religious setting, [and] it couldn't work in a concert hall unless part of a larger piece like the Monteverdi *Vespers*'. Cantor hints here that there *is* a possibility that plainchant (and other religious music) can be appreciated in a secular setting, and this notion is taken up in section 6.8 below.

But it will also have been noticed (in the previous section, 6.6) that Peter makes reference to the effect of music on 'the whole person', and this suggests a further theological point: w*holeness* and *healing* are closely related, but we can no longer think of healing as it was regarded in biblical times, namely as the casting out of demons. Rather, healing and health should be seen in a holistic context. As defined recently by Anna Lydia Svalstog, et al., in a medical journal,

> Health is an aspect interwoven with all other aspects of life, everyday life, working life, family life, and community life. Health is viewed as a resource and a total, personal, situation-specific phenomenon. Absence of disease is not enough – the life situation as a whole must be taken into consideration.[615]

In short, it can be argued (with Harold Koenig) that health and wholeness can be seen through the eyes of faith as gifts from God, and from early times, care for the sick has been practised in monasteries and other religious houses.[616] As another journalist (Brian Uderman) has stated,

> Strong scientific evidence suggests that individuals who regularly participate in spiritual worship services or related activities and who feel strongly that

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[615] See A. L. Svalstog, et al., 'Concepts and Definitions of Health and Health-related Values in the Knowledge Landscapes of the Digital Society', in *Croatian Medical Journal,* vol. 58, no 6, 2017, pp 431-435 esp. penultimate section.

[616] See H. G. Koenig, 'Religion, Spirituality, and Health: The Research and Clinical Implications', in *ISRN Psychiatry,* 2012, Article ID 278730.

spirituality or the presence of a higher being or power are sources of strength and comfort to them are healthier and possess greater healing capabilities. Numerous research investigations have reported positive correlations between spirituality and decreased rates of stroke, cancer, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, drug abuse, suicide, and general mortality.[617]

6.8   'Without the Walls'

It has been argued that sacred music is one of the main ways in which spirituality is expressed in our society, even for people with no religious allegiance: As Jonathan Arnold writes: -

> The level of interest in sacred music in Western society is … an indication of a society that is seeking a deeper understanding of reality than can be grasped with a purely materialistic view of the world. Sacred music, released from its liturgical and ecclesiastical walls is one of the main ways, if not *the* [his italics] main way in which spirituality is expressed in our society: not in words but in sound.[618]

In this section I now look in more detail at the comments made by those of my participants (three in number) who professed 'no religious allegiance'. All three are female, spanning the age groups. Danielle is a student in the 18-25 group; Sally is a senior lecturer (45-64) and Elsa is in retirement. Although they have 'no religious allegiance' it is clear that all three have some background experience of religion in a Christian context. Elsa (a member of a chamber choir which performs both religious and secular music) wrote as follows: -

> My parents had a strong faith and I was brought up as a Methodist and I even taught in the Sunday school but I did not want to be confirmed. I have a degree

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[617] See B. E. Udermann, 'The Effect of Spirituality on Health and Healing: A Critical Review for Athletic Trainers', in *Journal of Athletic Training,* vol. 35, no 2, 2000, pp 194-197. See 'data synthesis' at
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1323417/
[618] See J. Arnold, *Sacred Music* (as above), p. 87. Among Arnold's interviewees were some musicians who are engaged in the performance of 'sacred' music outside a strictly 'liturgical' setting (such as Harry Christophers, director of *The Sixteen*).

in theology. I enjoy singing in church and the Anglican services have been an interesting experience.

Elsa defined plainchant as 'sacred music, sung in unison with free rhythm', adding that 'it does encourage thoughts of things beyond day-to-day matters'. Her 'favourite' track was C (chosen with moderate difficulty). She listened to this track three times and responded very positively to it (see previous chapter, section 5.5d). Sally (by contrast in one respect) 'confessed' to 'being bored by Track C'. Like Dawn (see section 4.4.3) she admitted to a 'very limited experience of plainchant', adding …

> …. I have heard a little, someone once gave me a cassette tape (that's how long ago it was and I can't remember who it was singing) of Gregorian chanting and I loved it and listened to it until the tape distorted. I tend to prefer the spoken word, but I sometimes listen to music stations and they play bits on there.

Danielle wrote that she had 'never had religious allegiance although brought up in a church-going family'. She put herself in the category of those who 'enjoy listening to plainchant (live or recorded)', and she is familiar with plainchant as a performer. She listens to recorded music 'regularly' and her favourite types of music are 'baroque and folk'. She defined plainchant as 'monastic chant, sung in Latin and in unison'. She listened to each track once and chose Track C as her 'favourite', with relative ease, because it 'sounded most familiar'. She mainly gave very brief answers: with regard to pictures, feelings and sensory associations she used the words 'candles, crucifixion, sadness, nostalgia, peace, smell of incense'. With regard to the Commentary, she wrote that it 'made me want to listen more'. Sally brings us back to practical issues, when she writes: -

> I confess to being bored by Track C; it was quite long compared to the other two. It felt out of context in my house rather than in a church, and whilst, at first, I liked it … then I began to feel a bit annoyed. It was all men, doing 'their thing' in church, as usual, and I felt a spike of anger. The feminist in me lies relatively quiet, but emerges at odd moments, I realise it was unreasonable, but once I'd felt it, I didn't listen to any more. Maybe I liked B because the name of the singers was on the file I clicked onto rather than A or C, I liked that it came from

Spain, or at least I thought it did.

6.9   Candles and Crucifixion

I was struck by the way in which Danielle juxtaposed the two words, 'candles' and 'crucifixion'. We have already seen how a number of participants recognized the message of Easter in Track C (the *Exultet* – with words which are actually addressed to the Paschal Candle as representing the risen Christ); and, of course, the Resurrection of Christ can only be seen as meaningful (at least for Christian believers) as a sequel to the Crucifixion. But here we are concerned with those who profess no religious allegiance. And, as Jonathan Arnold comments: -

> Sacred music is in the public domain today and is a powerful witness to an alternative reality which is beyond materialism and secularism. It encourages us to consider the numinous and ineffable.[619]

A grain of evidence to justify this assertion is found in one of Danielle's other comments when she writes, slightly more expansively, with regard to the 'spiritual significance' of Track C: -

> Yes, inner relaxation, feeling of putting external worries into proportion through link with so many past generations.

In the light of these statements, I feel it would be helpful to unpack Danielle's juxtaposition of the words 'candles' and 'crucifixion'. In the *Gospel of Luke,* we find the origin of the medieval feast of Candlemas, still observed by many Christians today. Luke tells us that, at the appropriate time, Joseph and Mary took the child Jesus to Jerusalem 'to present him to the Lord'.[620] The child was taken into the arms of a good and devout old man named Simeon, who then proclaimed that he was ready to die because now he had seen 'the Lord's promised Messiah'. The short 'canticle' which he uttered reads as follows: -

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[619] See J. Arnold, *Sacred Music* (as above), p. 82.
[620] See *Luke* 2: 22ff. The appropriate time (according to *Leviticus* 12:6-8) would be approximately 80 days after the child's birth.

> Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
>
>> according to your word;
>
> for my eyes have seen your salvation
>
>> which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
>
> a light for revelation to the Gentiles
>
>> and for glory to your people Israel.[621]

In the condensed chronology of the liturgical calendar (which packs the whole life of Jesus into half a year), it became customary to celebrate this event on 2nd February; and because of the mention of light in Simeon's canticle, it also became customary for large numbers of candles to be lit, and so the feast became known as Candlemas. But it is significant that the Lukan narrative continues by telling us that Simeon said to Mary: -

> This child is chosen by God for the destruction and the salvation of many in Israel. He will be a sign from God which many people will speak against, and so reveal their secret thoughts. And sorrow, like a sharp sword will break your own heart.[622]

Thus, the writer of the third Gospel portrays the aged Simeon, under the influence of the same divine Spirit which guided the ancient prophets, foreseeing the sort of hostility to Jesus which would eventually lead to his crucifixion. It has often been noted by commentators that one of Luke's principal themes is that it was '*necessary* for the Messiah to suffer these things and then to enter his glory'.[623]   And so, whilst the celebration of Candlemas points forward to the suffering that Jesus will have to endure, it also anticipates his triumph over death, symbolised by the lighting of the Paschal Candle on Easter Eve, the candle which is apostrophised is the text of the *Exultet.* This candle, incidentally, before it is lit, is pierced by five sharp studs, symbolising the five wounds of Christ (in hands, feet and side), and also it has inscribed on it the number of the year, as it is blessed with the words 'Jesus Christ,

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[621] See *Luke* 2:29-32.

[622] See *Luke* 2:34f (TEV).

[623] See, for example, G.B. Caird, *Saint Luke,* London: Penguin, 1963, p. 64, and *Luke* 24:26 (my emphasis on the word 'necessary').

yesterday and today, the beginning and the ending, Alpha and Omega; all time belongs to him, and all ages; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever'.[624]

In Chapter 5 (see section 5.3) I have already referred to Danielle, Sally and Elsa under the heading of 'secular spirituality'; but now I hope I have shown that Danielle's juxtaposition of 'candles' and 'crucifixion' (in spite of her denial of any religious allegiance) has provided the basis for some significant theological thinking.

6.10   Processions and Pilgrimage

It was observed in Chapter 5 (see sections 5.3a and 5.4a) that several participants referred to the singing of plainchant in procession, and there is a close link between processions and pilgrimage. For Stephen, in particular, a procession could be said to be a micro-pilgrimage; or a pilgrimage to be an extended form of procession. Both can be seen as symbolic of the notion of life as a journey;[625] though Stephen does clarify the similarities and distinctions between the two concepts. This section seeks to explore more fully these concepts, and to demonstrate how they can aid our appreciation of the transcendent qualities of plainchant. A biblical illustration of a significant procession in ancient Israel is shown at Ex.6.2 below. It relates to the restoration of the 'ark of the covenant' which had been lost but which is now on its way to its rightful place in Jerusalem.

Ex.6.2 – King David returns the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem[626]

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[624] See https://www.liturgybytlw.com/Easter/EastPasc.html

[625] The concept of life as a journey is normally attributed to R. W. Emerson (1803-82,) American essayist, lecturer, philosopher, abolitionist and poet who led the transcendentalist movement of the mid-19th century.

[626] This illustration is taken from the 'Good News Bible' (TEV) with reference to *1 Chronicles* 13:8 – 'David and all the people danced with all their might to honour God. They sang and played musical instruments – harps, drums, cymbals and trumpets'. The Chronicler narrates that (after some delays) the 'ark' eventually reached Jerusalem (see *1 Chronicles* 15:28)

In conversation, Stephen expressed in more detail his views on the historical and theological significance of processions. He said: -

> Perhaps the history of processions is a pointer to what they actually mean … but it's a complicated issue isn't it?

Stephen identified 'some overlap between the concepts of procession and pilgrimage' when he wrote that both entail 'a journey to a place of spiritual significance'. He expressed the view that whether the 'journey' is a short one (within a building) or a long one covering many miles, the spiritual elements of a 'ritual communal activity' are similar. Stephen wrote that: -

> A procession may or may not return to the starting point. In the case of the procession, there is more emphasis on it as an event or activity and often less emphasis on the destination than there might be with a pilgrimage. A procession may be a part of a pilgrimage. But whereas a pilgrimage may be undertaken by an individual, a procession is always communal. It enables the participants to demonstrate through rhythmical movement, usually combined with prayer/singing, their shared ideas, convictions and experiences and it can engender a sense of solidarity and cohesion.

Stephen is here declaring his own personal faith that 'shared ideas, convictions and experiences', expressed in ritual actions, can give believers a greater sense of solidarity. When humans work in solidarity with each other, they come closer to fulfilling what is described in the traditions of the Abrahamic faiths as the will of God. Here Stephen's view is in accord with those of Holly, Peter, and Rowan Williams (quoted above) on 'being with God' – an experience of a transcendent reality – an experience that can often be enhanced by listening to plainchant.

Stephen refers to an occasion narrated in the *Book of Nehemiah*, telling how, after the city walls of Jerusalem had been rebuilt (c. 444 BCE), there was a grand thanksgiving

procession which consisted of two groups – including singers and instrumentalists – walking round the walls in opposite directions.[627] Stephen added: -

> They also offered sacrifices. This could be the antecedent of the double procession in Hagia Sophia (see section 6.16 below). But symmetry had long been a feature of classical architecture as it was seen as symbolising perfection, so symmetry was assimilated into Christian architecture with the same connotation.

Here he introduces the notion of 'perfection' – recognized in the Judaeo-Christian tradition as one of the transcendent qualities of God, revealed for example in God's law and in the beauty of his 'holy city'. [628] It is also expected that believers will strive to emulate God's perfection, as when Jesus says to a rich young man, 'If you want to be perfect, go and sell all that you have and give the money to the poor…'[629] But it is acknowledged (by the very fact that *Kyrie Eleison* is said or sung at every Mass, whether using speech, plainchant or any other musical setting) that divine perfection exceeds by far all human attempts to achieve it.

Developing the theme of processions and pilgrimage, Stephen referred himself back to his experience of listening to Track C, when he wrote as follows: -

> Although processions in Christian practice can be understood in the light of biblical accounts, they don't really appear to derive directly from them. They have been developed and overlaid by other influences. Processions have played a part in the practice of many religions. Equivalents exist in secular society – marches and parades, often organised against or in support of particular individuals, parties, actions or ideas. Pagan triumphal processions were splendid affairs. These various practices have all been taken over and adapted by Christianity to its needs, recognising also a basic human need for ritual communal activity. We are getting close to what I sensed in relation to the

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[627] See *Nehemiah* 12:27-43.
[628] See *Psalm* 19:7 (TEV) – 'the law of the Lord is perfect…' and *Psalm* 50:2 (KJV) – 'out of Zion, the perfection of beauty' God hath shined'
[629] See *Matthew* 19:21 (TEV).

music of Track C. The unison chanting and the 'ensemble' increase this sense of togetherness and heighten what the singers communicate by way of shared beliefs and experiences (and this despite the fact that they are singing in what many might feel is a not very expressive style).

Stephen has already reminded us of the close link between processions and pilgrimage. His comments about the power of 'unison chanting' to enhance a sense of community are reminiscent of Victor Turner's approach to pilgrimage, in which he uses the concept of 'liminality', suggesting that in certain circumstances (pilgrimage providing one example) it is as if people cross a threshold, so that social norms tend to give way to a much more egalitarian way of relating to one another; he called this *communitas,* in contrast with the *societas* of everyday life which is dominated by social codes and conditioning. While Turner's approach to pilgrimage has been superseded in more recent critical discourse, Stephen's proposal appears to be that involvement in plainchant is one situation where people from different backgrounds are enabled to feel much more 'at one' with one another than they do in 'ordinary' day-to-day circumstances.[630]

Fiona Bowie also seems to support Stephen's comments when she writes about the phenomenon of pilgrimage as follows: -

It has the power to move vast numbers of people across the world, to transform the economies of countries and regions, and to disseminate political and religious messages. … [631]

Bowie points out that Christian churches and shrines in Europe are frequently built over, or incorporate, earlier [pilgrimage] sites. She refers to 'some writers' (including Lyal Watson) who have sought to explain the attraction of certain places in terms of the earth's magnetism or other topographical features.[632] She mentions James Preston who has adopted the term 'spiritual magnetism' to describe the accumulative

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[630] See, for example, J. Eade and M. J. Sallnow (eds), *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage,* London: Routledge, 1991.
[631] See F. Bowie, *The Anthropology of Religion,* Blackwell, 2006, p. 238.
[632] See L. Watson, *Gifts of Unknown Things,* Hodder and Stoughton, 1976.

sanctity of many shrines;[633] and she quotes Alan Morinis as saying that celebrated pilgrimage places often enshrine relics of the most revered saints or most authenticated apparitions of the divine.[634]

This mention of 'apparitions of the divine' links us to (for example) I.T. Ramsey's notion of disclosure situations (see section 6.12 below). But whereas such a 'disclosure' could come to anyone sitting in comfort at home, in the case of pilgrimage, it is discomfort and danger which, far from discouraging pilgrims, can add to a site's reputation and increase the merit attached to visiting a shrine.

Referring again to the Bible, Stephen mentioned a very significant procession described in the Synoptic Gospels, that of '… the entry of Christ into Jerusalem'. He suggested the significance of this procession by writing as follows: -

> It is triumphal / royal, fitting for a conqueror / king; people demonstrate their shared convictions / they witness to them; it marks Christ's progress – towards the Holy City and the Temple which He purifies; it marks a significant transition – here, the end of one phase of Christ's ministry and the beginning of His Passion.[635]

A key phrase here is 'significant transition'. It is clear that Stephen sees the Christian life as a journey, entailing a process of transcending the normal and mundane realities of life, and giving greater priority to the more spiritual aspects. He sees in the life of Jesus a perfect example of the way in which this transition was achieved, through the way of self-giving and inevitable suffering. So, without subscribing to the view of the Christian life as earning merit, we can see that 'to be a pilgrim' (in John Bunyan's famous phrase) can often entail difficulties and hardships, and is thus a fitting way of

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[633] See J. Preston, 'Spiritual Magnetism; An Organizing Principle for the Study of Pilgrimage', in A. H. Morinis (ed), *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage,* Westport, Connecticut, USA: Greenwood Press, 1992, pp 31-46.

[634] See A. H. Morinis (ed) *Sacred Journeys:* (as above), quoted in F. Bowie, *The Anthropology of Religion* (as above), p. 243f.

[635] The 'triumphal entry' (of Jesus into Jerusalem) is narrated in all four Gospels, but with different emphases; see *Matthew* 21:1-11; *Mark* 11: 1-11; *Luke* 19: 28-40; *John* 12:12-19.

symbolising the concept of life as a journey.[636]   Some further (post-modern) expositions of this Gospel narrative are summarized by Max Harris.[637]

A supreme example of pilgrimage, as related in the Hebrew scriptures, tells of the escape of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, their 'wanderings' in the desert and their eventual arrival in their Promised Land. This story has been described as the 'founding myth' of the Israelite nation.[638] In the narrative, the escape is triggered off when an 'angel of death' kills all the first-born of the Egyptian families but 'passes over' the Israelite homes: this gives a supposed origin of the Feast of Passover (or Pesach) which is celebrated by Jews today, even though many accept the mythical nature of the story. The 'wanderings' of the people are often mentioned in the *Book of Psalms*, including in Psalm 114 (*In exitu Israel)* which became associated with the plainchant tone known as *Tonus Peregrinus.* This is a psalm-tone which also 'wanders', in the sense that the reciting note for the second half-verse is a tone lower than that for the first half (see below). Usually in plainchant 'tones' the two half-verses have the same reciting note. In modern notation this still appears in Anglican chant books, as shown below.

Ex.6.3 *Tonus peregrinus* (in modern notation)

A recent scholarly study by Mattias Lundberg suggests the possibility of a Hebrew origination of this melody, and that it pre- dates the regular tones 1 to 8, even though it was only added to the Gregorian tonal repertoire at a date well after the eight tones had become established as normal.[639] A further reference to this *tone* appears at section 7.12.G below.

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[636] This phrase is the conclusion of each verse of the poem 'To be a pilgrim', (which begins, 'Who would true valour see'); it first appeared in Part 2 of John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, written in 1684. The poem alludes to the words of *Hebrews* 11:13: (KJV)"...and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

[637] See M. Harris, *Christ on a Donkey – Palm Sunday, Triumphal Entries, and Blasphemous Pageants*, Arc Humanities Press, 2019.

[638] See K.L. Sparks, "Genre Criticism", in T.B. Dozeman, (ed), *Methods for Exodus*, Cambridge, UK & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

[639] See M. Lundberg, *Tonus Peregrinus* (as above – see section 1.5.3).

Still on the subject of pilgrimage, it has become something of a custom in recent years for bishops to encourage their flock to do more walking, and some have set a good example by doing it themselves. One of my informants, Michael Ipgrave, the Bishop of Lichfield, has reflected on three aspects of pilgrimage, writing in the following vein: -

> Pilgrimage has been used as a metaphor throughout Christian history. We go on physical pilgrimages to remind ourselves that our whole life is a spiritual pilgrimage back to the God who created us, to our heavenly home. And pilgrimage is at its deepest a form of devotion. This holds true whether we are able to go on the traditional long walks together to do it, or not. 'Pilgrimage of the mind', it turns out, is not an invention of modern technology, much as many people are enjoying exploring sacred sites online at present. Medieval people who were unable to go on physical pilgrimages, often because they were members of enclosed religious orders, pored over manuscripts which gave them vivid descriptions of the sacred sites of Jerusalem and other holy cities. Some of these contained exact directions and measurements so that a reader could 'walk round' such sites in their own mind and cloister.[640]

The subject of walking leads on nicely to our next section heading.

6.11   Boots on the Ground

In this and the following section I explore some issues related to 'presence' and 'absence' which are important for understanding 'the mystery of God', using first the comments of one participant (Dawn) to guide the analysis. Dawn alludes to the transcendent aspects of plainchant when she refers to her preference for Track B, saying: -

> It is the mystery of God; it is the place of intimacy but also the unknown, where humanness and God join in a presence which is not easy to understand. It is

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[640] This paragraph is a summary of the Bishop's remarks, found at
https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/travelling-together-metaphor-and-devotion.php

> spiritual, prayerful, humble and yet offers the hope of faith and reflects the light of Christ.

The notion of 'the mystery of God', raised here by Dawn, together with her juxtaposition of 'intimacy' and 'the unknown' reinforces the belief that God is unknowable and yet reveals himself to the human heart. This belief has been sustained over many centuries: it is a core tenet of the medieval Christian understanding of divine reality. Amy Hollywood traces this world-view back to Augustine of Hippo (354-430) 'because his work sets the agenda for the mysticism of the high and late Middle Ages'. In the *Confessions* and elsewhere, Augustine (as Hollywood interprets him) describes 'the transcendence, transience, ineffability and communal nature' of mystical experiences, thus providing 'the parameters within which medieval Christians understood experiences of God and of union with God'. [641] Medieval Christian mysticism can be understood (according to Hollywood) as a series of ongoing experiential, communal, and textual commentaries on and debates about the possibilities and limitations which Augustine sets for the earthly encounter between God and humanity.

A millennium after Augustine, the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* (late 14th century) writes of how a man [*sic*] should prepare himself for encountering God. He may be 'the wretchedest sinner of this life' and yet he should not feel it presumptuous to 'profer [*sic*] a meek stirring of love to his God, privily pressing upon the cloud of unknowing betwixt him and his God'.[642]

Another participant, Holly, as well as Dawn, used references to Martha and Mary to characterize themselves in relation to their responses to plainchant. Holly mentioned, in the context of her experience of convent life, 'the continuum of Martha and Mary'; (see section 4.4.2) and, in conversation, Dawn said that she loves singing (hymns, etc) but she also regards herself primarily as a 'reflector': she said: -

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[641] See A. Hollywood 'Mysticism and Transcendence' Chapter 19, in M. Rubin and W. Simons (eds)., *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp 297-308, esp. p. 299.
[642] See A. Spearing (ed), *The Cloud of Unknowing, and other Works*, London: Penguin Classics, revised edition, 2001, chapter 16.

> I love quietness and stillness, and this is partly why I find plainchant appealing. I heard chanting on a pilgrimage to Walsingham many years ago, and only an hour or two ago [prior to our conversation] I decided to listen to a recording of plainchant. This enabled me to quieten my mind after the busy-ness of the family breakfast time.

Dawn described herself as a 'Mary' rather than a 'Martha'; whilst recognising that her personality includes elements of both types, the contemplative and the activist, she is more at home in the former mode which she described as 'listening to Jesus' and 'getting back to what really is important'.

The *Cloud* writer makes much of the contrast between Mary and Martha in the Gospels – the former who 'sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying', and the latter who was 'distracted by her many tasks'. According to the Gospel it was Mary who was commended by Jesus because she had 'chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her'.[643] The *Cloud* author assures his readers that 'God giveth [his] grace freely' and that 'there is no soul without this grace … whether it be a sinner's soul or an innocent soul. For neither is [grace] given for innocence, nor with-holden for sin'.[644] He warns of the danger of being too confident in one's knowledge of God, for '… the nearer men touch the truth, more wary men behoveth to be of error'.[645] Or, as one modern preacher once said, 'if you think you've got it (i.e., the truth about God), then you've almost certainly got it wrong'.[646]

The belief that God is 'unknowable', therefore, goes back to medieval times, or even earlier, and the analogies with Martha and Mary have a long history of use in order to explain or qualify an individual's 'relationship' (meaning their experience of, or sense of interaction) with God. In modern theology (based on the thought of Heidegger) this sense of relationship with God has sometimes been expressed by describing God as 'the Ground of [our] Being'.[647]

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[643] See *Luke* 10: 38-42.

[644] See *The Cloud of Unknowing,* chapter 34.

[645] See *The Cloud* (as above), same chapter.

[646] I remember hearing the phrase, but I have forgotten who the preacher was!

[647] See J.A.T. Robinson, *Honest to God,* London: SCM Press, 1963. See also Paul Tillich, in R.M. Price (ed), *The Ground of Being: Neglected Essays of Paul Tillich,* Mississippi: Mindvendor, 2015.

When Dawn identifies her understanding of the experiences of listening to plainchant through her impression of the monastic life, and her mental picture evoked by the music, she uses the term 'serenity'.[648] She associates this with the experience of 'Christ at the root of my being". This reference to 'the root' echoes directly the approach of Heidegger, who wrote that …

> …since the beginning of philosophy and with that beginning, the Being of beings has showed itself as the ground ($\alpha\rho\chi\eta$ *archee*). The ground is from where beings as such are what they are in their becoming, perishing and persisting as something that can be known, handled and worked upon. As the ground, Being brings beings to their actual presencing [*sic*]. The ground shows itself as presence. The present of presence consists in the fact that it brings what is present each in its own way to presence. In accordance with the actual kind of presence, the ground has the character of grounding as the ontic causation of the real, as the transcendental making possible of the objectivity of objects, as the dialectical mediation of the movement of the absolute Spirit, of the historical process of production, as the will to power-positing values.[649]

Commenting on the work of Heidegger, Cornelius W. du Toit has observed that we live in a 'post-transcendent age' and a 'post-metaphysical era', and yet there is 'renewed interest' in metaphysical issues. He believes this is because humans are 'self-transcending and wired for transcendence'; we tend to 'keep shifting the frontiers of transcendence, but … cannot exist without them.[650] Du Toit states that God is unknowable, and can therefore only be known and understood by way of 'filters' such as metaphors and analogies (when we are trying to speak intellectually about God); or, experientially, through filters such as sacraments and rituals. This means that 'the way God is seen, known and encountered [comes down to] seeing ourselves and our existence in a new light'. Through the eyes of faith, we are enabled to see the world in a new way; the physical matter of the world gives us insight into realities beyond the physical dimension. Du Toit acknowledges a debt to Heidegger who made a distinction

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[648] See Chapter 5 above, passim.

[649] See M. Heidegger (tr. J. Stamburgh), *On Time and Being,* Harper and Row, 1972, p. 56. See also Chapter 2 (above), section 2.4.1.

[650] See C.W. DuToit, 'Shifting Frontiers of Transcendence in Theology, Philosophy and Science', in *HTS Teologiese Studies,* vol. 67, 2011, final section, 'Transcendence in Theology', para 3.

between *die Erde* (Earth) and *der Welt* (World). Heidegger explained that when a painter creates a picture, his work with the physical materials of the canvas, brushes, paints etc., enables us to see something 'real' which goes beyond this mere physicality.

Furthermore, looking at Van Gogh's painting of a pair of rather dilapidated shoes (see Ex.6.4 below) Heidegger saw these as belonging to a peasant farmer, whose 'world' is revealed to him as he becomes aware of the 'damp and saturated soil, … the solitude of the dirt road, … the secretive cry of the earth, … its silent production of the ripening grain…'[651]

Ex. 6.4 – 'A Pair of Shoes' by Vincent van Gogh [652]

Whilst the picture simply shows a pair of old boots, the 'meaning' plumbs greater depths, just as the simple notes of a plainchant melody can evoke deep emotions, and an awareness of transcendent truths. Further exploring the notion of divine

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[651] From a lecture given by Heidegger in Freiburg c. 1935/6 in a series entitled *Hochspringen,* (Wood Paths). This particular lecture was entitled *Der Ursprung des Kuntswerkes,* (The Origin of the Work of Art).
[652] See https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/arts/features/view/27977/interpretations-of-vincent-van-goghs-a-pair-of-shoes

transcendence, Michael Durrant considers the thought of Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) in what is described as 'an exploratory study'. He raises two main questions:

> First, how is it possible that that which is of its nature transcendent should become immanent or incarnate? In the context of Christian Theology: how is it possible for God to become man?
>
> Second, how is it possible for one and the same individual, Jesus of Nazareth, to be both fully God and fully man? [653]

These are old questions which will never be answered satisfactorily in the terms in which they are put. What is needed, as Ricoeur has said, is that the traditional terms should be de-mythologized. This process was begun by Rudolph Bultmann in the 1940s; and in 1968 Paul Ricoeur wrote that it entails …

> …. becoming conscious of the mythic clothing around the proclamation of [the Gospel]. In this way we become attentive to the fact that [God's] 'coming' is expressed in a mythological representation of the universe, with a top and a bottom, a heaven and an earth and celestial beings. ... To abandon this mythical wrapping is quite simply to discover the distance that separates our culture and its conceptual apparatus from the culture in which the good news is [originally] expressed.[654]

Peter (see section 6.1) is clearly in no doubt that his Christian belief in a transcendent God is entirely independent of the 'mythical clothing' to which Ricoeur refers. Peter recounted to me how, when he was the chief executive of a hospice, he had a discussion with a work colleague who said she did not believe in God. This colleague evidently had a somewhat crude idea of 'God' – a notion which she could easily treat as an Aunt Sally, and knock down. Peter said to her 'You know that God that you don't believe in? Well, I don't believe in that God either'. This would be what another informant referred to as 'the God of the philosophers' as opposed to 'the God of faith' – the former referring to 'a being' whose 'existence' some philosophers have sought

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[653] See M. Durrant, 'Transcendence, Instantiation and Incarnation – an Exploration', in *Religious Studies,* vol. 29, no 3, 1993, pp 337-352, esp. p 337.

[654] See P. Ricoeur, *Essays on Biblical Interpretation* (1968), Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980, p.57.

to 'prove' or 'disprove'. [655] For Peter, an adequate definition of God is found in one of the New Testament Epistles, where the writer declares that 'God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them'.[656] Peter refers to this as 'a powerful text in glimpsing the ineffable'.[657] He referred to an example of what I.T. Ramsey would call a 'disclosure' (see section 6.12 below). Peter was present at the funeral of 'a dear friend' and he said that, when the coffin was sprinkled with water, 'I felt I was sensing heaven come down to earth, which is what we might describe as an experience of transcendence, or of being with God.'

Peter concluded our conversation as follows: -

> I think, then, that there are times in worship, and perhaps especially when worshipping within a religious community, usually through plainsong, when there can be an experience of transcendence, of being with God. And perhaps that in turn is glimpsing the perfect love which I am happy to accept as a definition of the ineffable, being in a state in which all worldly concerns are absent and one is in a momentary unity with the true meaning of all that is.

Here we see clear links between plainchant and belief in the transcendent and ineffable reality which Peter and many others call 'God'. And furthermore, this concept of God is freed from the 'mythical wrapping' of much biblical and traditional language.

Some of the of 'demythologizing' (begun by Bultmann) was done in the 1970s by a group of Christian scholars based in Birmingham, England; their work was published under the title, *The Myth of God Incarnate.* Understandably, these essays caused something of a furore in conservative Christian circles at the time, but no more so than did *Honest to God* in the early 1960s, or the famous *Essays and Reviews* of 1860.[658] For most Christians today, the 'revolutionary' aspects of the latter collection (for example, a non-literal understanding of Noah's Flood) have become accepted as respectable orthodoxy, as has a view of the four Gospels which places as much

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[655] My informant in this case was The Very Revd Adrian Dorber, Dean of Lichfield.

[656] See *1 John* 4: 16b.

[657] By email, 9th November 2021.

[658] See J. Hick (ed), *The Myth of God Incarnate,* London: SCM Press 1977. See also J.A.T. Robinson, *Honest to God,* London: SCM Press, 1963. See also J.W. Parker (ed), *Essays and Reviews* (1860), Madrid: Hard Press, 2020.

emphasis on the creative writing of the 'evangelist' as it does on the 'factual' aspects of his narrative.[659] A similar approach was adopted by Stephen Verney (an Anglican bishop) in a book on the Fourth Gospel which was commended to the clergy of the diocese of Birmingham by the diocesan bishop in the early 1980s. In the following quotation, Verney uses the term 'I AM' (a version of the Hebrew name for God)[660] when he writes: -

> In Jesus the timeless truth entered time, and I AM clothed itself in an ego. The two orders became one in a dialogue of Love, and as ... the disciples looked at Jesus they saw the glory of the Father. As they looked at the Son of Man letting go his human ego and receiving it back transformed, they saw the truth of I AM – the ruling principle of the new age – and at the same time the grace of I AM which makes the new age possible.[661]

6.12 The absence and presence of God – the central paradox of Christianity

In spite of all that has been said (and will continue to be said) about the absolute 'otherness' of God, the fundamental Christian picture is of a God who lays aside all glory and majesty to become flesh in the man Jesus of Nazareth. The sense of God's 'presence' with humanity is there in the Hebrew scriptures, but it is spasmodic and conditional. God converses with Abraham, Moses, Solomon and others, but always seems to return to a place of mystery symbolised by the 'holy of holies' in the Temple – an area veiled off by a curtain, and which only the High Priest was allowed to enter, once a year. But as Peter remarked, …

> … one of the most striking images in the New Testament is expressed in the statement that, at the moment of the death of Jesus, 'the curtain hanging in the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom'. [662]

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[659] A classic example of this approach is found in D.E. Nineham, *The Gospel of St Mark,* London: Penguin, 1963. Nineham was Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge in the 1960s; he was an ordained Anglican priest who always wore a clerical collar when he lectured or visited the University Library; he was one of the contributors to *The Myth of God Incarnate.*

[660] See *Exodus* 3:14.

[661] See S. Verney, *Water into Wine* (1985), London: Darton, Longman & Todd,1995, p.217. Such notions are further developed by D. Merkur (see section 7.5 below); see also footnote 666.

[662] Peter, in conversation (May 2018). See *Mark* 15:38, *Matthew* 27:51 and *Luke* 23:45. The Matthean version repeats the Markan words exactly, but adds some even more dramatic details (rocks splitting, graves breaking

When one reflects on this statement, one might even ask, 'Why do two of the evangelists bother to say, "from top to bottom"?' The answer could be that, since the curtain hung from the ceiling to the floor, a human action (vandals perhaps? though they did not enter the Roman world until the time of Constantine!) would have torn it from the bottom to the top; but this ('from top to bottom') was clearly a divine action; and thus the separation of the divine realm from the human is forever ended by God's action. In the Fourth Gospel the same notion is expressed in much more abstract theological language in the phrase, 'the Word [the divine pre-existent principle] became a human being'.[663] This Gospel has been seen by some as 'dualistic' with its emphasis on the contrast between the one who 'comes from above' and the one 'who is from the earth'.[664] But time and again the two realms are brought together in phrases put into the mouth of Jesus, such as 'God loved the world so much'; 'the bread that God gives is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world'; 'I have come into the world as light, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in darkness'.[665]

Perhaps it is not surprising that sometimes God seems 'absent'. This is shown (for example) in the writings of Thies Münchow and Gérard Granel.[666] But equally, as has been shown above, there are times when God seems particularly 'present' to people; there are times when the 'gap' between the sacred and secular realms seems to be bridged. As Craig wrote (of Track B) 'it allows you to be in touch with higher forces and your inner self'. This notion of 'bridging the gap' had already been taken up by Ian Ramsey (1915-1972) who used the concept of 'disclosure situations'.[667] Like Otto, he stressed the non-rational nature of religious belief, describing it as a matter of 'permanent mystery', i.e., not the kind of mystery that can be 'solved' by the acquisition

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open, etc) sometimes attributed to a marginal gloss by a later scribe. The Lukan version is more concise, omitting the phrase 'from top to bottom'.

[663] See *John* 1:14 (TEV).

[664] See *John* 3:31. See also D. Estes, 'Dualism or Paradox? A New "Light" on the Gospel of John', in *The Journal of Theological Studies, NS,* vol. 71, no 1, 2020, pp 90-118.

[665] See *John* 3:16; 6:33; 12:46 (TEV).

[666] See T. Münchow, '"God is the Beyond in the Midst of our Lives" (Dietrich Bonhoeffer). Considering Absentheism', in *Disputatio philosophica : International journal on philosophy and religion*, University of Flensburg, p. 43ff. See also G. Granel, "Far from Substance, Whither and to What Point?" in J-L. Nancy, *Dis-Enclosure: Deconstruction of Christianity*, tr. B. Bergo et al., New York: Fordham University Press, 2007, p. 164.

[667] Ramsey was Bishop of Durham from 1966 until his early death, having been previously the Nolloth Professor of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion at Oxford.

of further information.[668]   Drawing on the linguistic philosophy of Wittgenstein, who wrote that 'Not how the world is, is the mystery, but that it is',[669] Ramsey drew a distinction between the 'whatness' and the 'thatness' of an event, saying that the mystery of what happens can be solved by sufficient information, but the mystery *that* it happens is permanent. Ramsey describes God-language as 'an attempt to be articulate about the divine mystery'.[670] There are, he says, two kinds of language: (a) 'ordinary' or 'observational' language; and (b) 'religious' language which, in spite of its apparently ordinary structure, denotes realities which are outside the scope of ordinary language. The process by which humans come to make sense of God-language is described as 'disclosure': just as, when people communicate with each other, various degrees of personal disclosure occur, so, by analogy, people come to be aware of religious truths through a similar process of disclosure, when 'the penny drops'.[671]

6.13   TRANSCENDENCE IN MUSIC

Links between music and spirituality have been asserted for many centuries, from the Hebrew psalmist to modern writers such as Bissera Pentcheva.[672] Recently, however, much more attention has been devoted to ways in which 'altered states of consciousness', generated by music, can be 'mapped' by those who study the activity of the human brain. 'Music, Transcendence and Spirituality' was the theme of a symposium in 2014 at Stanford University, one of a series of events devoted to 'music and the brain'. The papers delivered on this occasion covered a wide range, but for my purposes here a few brief references must suffice.

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[668] See Otto, *Das Heilige* (as above).

[669] See L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus,* 6.44, online at www.kfs.org/jonathan/witt/t644en.html

[670] See I.T. Ramsey, *Religious Language: An Empirical Placing of Theological Phrases,* London: SCM Press, 1957, pp 42f,100,104,107,122. See also J.C.A Gaskin, 'Disclosures', in *Religious Studies,* vol. 9, no 2, 1973, p. 131-141. Gaskin writes (p. 131) that "Dr Ian Ramsey has made considerable use of the word 'disclosure' in what he has to say about religion and in his attempts to give an account of the meaning of religious language. … I shall ask: what a disclosure is, to what extent Dr Ramsey's use of the notion leads to confusions, and what questions have to be faced in order to resolve these confusions". Gaskin mainly questions Ramsey's assertion that the things which are 'disclosed' have 'objective reality'. The Reader will be aware that in this thesis I have sought to side-step the 'subjective-objective distinction' (see especially sections 3.C.3 and 7.10e, and thus am not disturbed by Gaskin's questions.

[671] See A. C. Thistleton, *The Hermeneutics of Doctrine,* Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans, 2007, p.381. For further comment see Jeff Astley, 'Ian Ramsey and the Problem of Religious Knowledge', *Journal of Theological Studies,* vol.35, 1984, pp 414ff. Astley has also written a Durham PhD thesis on Ramsey (1978).

[672] See Section 6.16 below.

Robin Sylvan was quoted as referring to 'the unique capacity of music to induce altered states of consciousness that allow access to spiritual dimensions'.[673] Such states, he wrote, are normally perceived as highly subjective and ephemeral, but there is a growing body of research using brain scanning technology to investigate musical experiences and other kinds of spiritual or religious experiences, and the ways in which these are manifested in brain activity.

Norman Adler (a Jewish neuro-scientist) and Harry Ballan (a lawyer and musician) spoke on 'Music, models and the neural mind'.[674] Adler spoke of the way in which certain types of human behaviour which are usually perceived as 'disordered' (such as Parkinson's disease and Huntington's chorea) can be transformed artistically into experiences of great beauty. He cited the actions of the ballet dancer Marie-Claude Pietraglia and the way in which she portrays the fenestrating gait and 'closed-up' postures of Parkinson's sufferers in alternation with the wide-spreading choreic gestures of people with Huntington's disease.[675] He also spoke of the way in which (in certain religious contexts, as well as secular ones) people can experience a sense of synchrony, as their mental processes become similar; and he compared this with the gradual synchronizing of a group of metronomes, which are started out of phase, but eventually begin to move in phase with one another.[676] I suppose this could be compared with the sense of wellbeing and unity with others which many people feel when singing in a choir or playing in an orchestral ensemble: as Paul Hindemith is quoted as saying, 'people who make music together cannot be enemies, at least while the music lasts'.[677] Ballan put forward the theory that slower speeds and longer notes in music are more likely than more animated music to convey spirituality.[678] On a separate occasion he observed that various subcortical nuclei may be entrained at about 60 beats a minute (or a multiple or divisor of 60).[679] There is evidence (he said) that brains in a social context may be entrained to the same auditory stimulus, and

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[673] Sylvan was at the time director of the 'Sacred Center' at El Cerrito, California. See
 http://www.maps.org/news-letters/v16n2/music_spirituality_religion_human_brain.pdf , first paragraph.
[674] See http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/44128063
[675] See for example https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LkTok_aNQ8k This is not the dance to which Adler refers, but may give some idea of the ballerina's style.
[676] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5v5eBf2KwF8
[677] This was quoted by P. Janata, another of the presenters at the symposium.
[678] This notion was taken very literally by H. Skempton in his *Lento* (1990).
[679] See http://neuroscienceartblog.blogspot.co.uk/

that 'coherence effects', of the type observed in single brains, may occur between and among brains. Ballan described an informal experiment he performed during a lecture in which a large group (2,300 people) at Stanford played/sang 'Amazing Grace' at 50, 60 and 70 beats a minute. The self-reported 'spiritual' experiences were systematically different at the three tempi. At 50 bpm, people tended to describe the experience as 'spiritual'. At 60 bpm they described it as 'standing before God'. At 70, they described it as 'intense'. Ballan speculated about why tempo variation should matter so much and in such consistent ways to the 'spiritual' experience of music. But, as Adrian North might say, much depends on the context: as with the speed of hymns in church, the acoustics of the building and the number in the congregation make a considerable difference to what is effective in lifting the mind to God.[680] On transcendence, Ballan declared that …

> … the transcendence that music offers is the transcendence of the in-between: not the lowest hierarchical levels of busyness and frenetic activity nor the stillness of the highest levels; but an in-between state higher than the animals, lower than the angels.[681]

6.14 Music as 'argument' or 'perfume'?

Transcendence in music is also a prominent theme in the writings of Vladimir Jankélévitch (1903-1985). He has been described as 'a rare figure' in modern philosophy for having written perceptively on music and philosophy.[682] His writings must be considered in the context of his time, when there had been a 'generational shift' in French philosophy from the phenomenology and existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty to the post-humanism of Jacques Derrida and Charles de Foucault. This meant that, after a period when aesthetic issues were considered inappropriate in academic debate, there was a renewed interest among philosophers in matters such as beauty and the ineffable. Jankélévitch took as starting points the ontology of Heidegger (see section 6.11 above) and the philosophy of Henri-

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[680] See North and Hargreaves, 'Lifestyle Correlates ….' (as above).

[681] See Abstracts, no 2, at https://ccrma.stanford.edu/events/matb/abstracts.html

[682] See M. Gallope et al., 'Vladimir Jankélévitch's Philosophy of Music', in *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, vol. 65, no 1, Spring 2012, pp 215-256. Jankélévitch was born of Russian Jewish parents but spent most of his academic life in France.

Louis Bergson.[683] Jankélévitch raises such questions as 'How do we speak of music?'; 'How do we address music's ephemerality when performed?'; and 'How do we negotiate the multi-faceted nature of music's affective and cognitive potential?'[684] A hint of his rhetorical style can be seen in the following quotation: -

> There will be things to be said (or sung) about the ineffable until the end of time. Who can possibly say, 'Now, everything is said'? No. No one, ever, will be done with this charm, which interminable words and innumerable musics will not exhaust, where there is so much to do, to contemplate, to say – so much to say, and in short, and again and again, of which there is everything to say. Among the promises made by ineffability is hope of a vast future that has been given to us.[685]

Jankélévitch makes a direct link between music and theology when he writes that …

> … no one truly speaks of God, above all, not theologians … Alas, music in itself is an unknowable something as unable to be grasped as the mystery of artistic creation. [Music is] made to be heard by a heart that is 'chaste and simple' and not to be read. [It is a matter of] returning to the spirit of childhood.[686]

Jankélévitch saw music as an 'immediately spiritual phenomenon'; a 'continuous miracle…a mystery'; a bearer of 'untellable' and 'ineffable' truth; a perfume not an argument.[687] He wrote that 'Music means nothing and yet means everything'. Here we have two different senses of the word 'mean'. The first seems to indicate that music cannot be translated into words; as when Jankélévitch writes that 'Music does not signify anything other than what it is'; whilst the second indicates a value judgement about music, and the need to be committed to it, as when he writes: -

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[683] H.-L. Bergson (1859-1941) was a philosopher who opposed the secular views of the French Republic, and asserted that immediate experience and intuition (for example in relation to music) were more significant than scientific rationalism for an understanding of reality.

[684] See two essays by J. Derrida (1930-2004): a) 'On Forgiveness' and (b) 'To Forgive: the unforgivable and the imprescriptible'. The first of these is (partially) available online at https://w2.uib.no/filearchive/derrida-on-forgiveness-part-1.pdf.

[685] See V. Jankélévitch, tr. C. Abbate, *Music and the Ineffable,* Princeton, NJ: University Press, 2003, esp. p. 72.

[686] See M. Gallope et al. 'V-J's Philosophy' (as above), p.225.

[687] See Gallope et al. 'V-J's Philosophy' (as above), p.225.

> That's it – to be committed, and nothing else. Not to give lectures on commitment, nor to conjugate the verb, nor to commit oneself to commit oneself, as men of letters do, but really to commit oneself by an immediate and primary act, by an effective and drastic act, by a serious act of the whole person….[688]

This language has a strongly attention-directing or 'pointing' character, preparing the reader's ears for precise sonic effects. Such writing can lead to 'the dawning of an aspect' when the words of a music critic can help one to experience details that had escaped attention before.[689] This is like the 'moment' when we suddenly see the duck instead of the rabbit, or vice versa.[690] One might compare this with Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's notion of 'presence', when something is pointed out and one notices it: there can be 'a moment of epiphanic intensity' – a 'sort of sonic palpability' which tends to result in goose pimples.[691]

Jankélévitch is quoted favourably in a recent essay by a Catalonian composer and music professor who is also a Benedictine monk; he is Jordi-Agusti Piqué i Collado, to whom I shall refer as Collado.[692] He suggests that music (of itself) cannot be effective in leading us to God; but that music needs to be seen as a 'meta-language, … an idea, … a source of thought and not just as an aesthetic phenomenon'. In this way, the experience of music 'can lead to an experience of God, and thus to the attainability of a certain grace, namely to an experience which itself is sacramental'. After referring to the philosophical statements of Langer, Meyer and Adorno, (who, he suggests, seem uneasy about describing music as a language)[693] and to the music of Olivier Messiaen,

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[688] See Gallope et al. 'V-J's Philosophy' (as above), p.224.
[689] See Gallope et al. 'V-J's Philosophy' (as above), p.220.
[690] See Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (as above), pp 165-194.
[691] Gumbrecht (b.1948) is an emeritus professor of literature at Stanford University, and is widely recognized for the originality of his literary criticism.
[692] See D. J-A. P. i Collado, 'The Fleeting Moment: The Sacramental Universe of Music, from the Aesthetic Form to the Empathetic Event', in *Review of Ecumenical Studies*, vol. 7, no 3, 2015, pp 301-312. The author is a Benedictine monk of the Montserrat Abbey, Catalonia, Spain, and also Dean of the Pontificio Instituto Liturgico, Roma, Italy, Invited Professor in the Facultat de Teologia de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain.
[693] See S. K. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key:* (as above); see also L. B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, (as above), p. 35; see also T. W. Adorno, *Philosophie der neuen Musik*, Tübingen 1949.

Arvo Pärt and Krzysztof Penderecki,[694] Collado sums up his position in the words of Jankélévitch, saying that 'music can create the state of grace that one cannot obtain through pages full of poetic metaphors […and …] this hearing makes us feel, revealing unexpectedly, the ineffable, the invisible, the imperceptible'.[695]

I discussed Collado's essay with Stephen who opined that the 'thoughts here clearly have relevance to a consideration of what plainchant communicates'. Stephen added the assertion that 'surely music can sometimes communicate experiences (if not information) that can be difficult to put into words'. He went on to mention inspiration, using rhetorical questions as follows: -

> And what about inspiration? Christians believe Holy Scripture to be the inspired word of God, accepting that it has been written down by human hands. Is music simply a craft, or might we think that there are some examples of sacred music that are divinely inspired?

Stephen's answer to his own questions, when I pressed him further, was as follows: -

> I can't think of a Council that has pronounced on this matter, though I can think of a hymn composer who was declared a saint.[696] But I think that music that inspires us and gives us insight, comfort, hope etc. must be to some degree inspired by God, and music that speaks in that way to many people and endures over the centuries especially so.

This remark of Stephen's seems to validate the whole purpose of a thesis on 'The Reception of Plainchant'.

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[694] See O. Messiaen: *Messe de la Pentecôte; Livre du Saint-Sacrement*; A. Pärt, *Missa Syllabica; De Profundis; Te Deum;* and K. Penderecki, *Missa Brevis; Passio secundum Lucam*.

[695] See V. Jankélévitch, *Music and the Ineffable* (as above).

[696] Stephen said that he was referring to the Byzantine hymnographer Romanos the Melodist (late 5th c), but that equally Thomas Aquinas would be significant in this connection. He might also have mentioned Notker Balbulus (c. 840-912) of St Gallen, to whom is attributed a *Liber hymnorum,* as mentioned by David Hiley in his article 'Notker' in *Grove Music Online.*

6.15   Music: gnostic or drastic?

Carolyn Abbate has suggested that more attention should again be paid, forty years on, to the writings of Jankélévitch, particularly because of his concern with the 'ineffable' aspects of music. In an essay entitled 'Music – drastic or gnostic?' Abbate refers to Jankélévitch's insistence on the importance of 'doing' music, rather than just 'knowing' it.[697] She says that music's effects upon performers and listeners can be 'devastating, physically brutal, mysterious, erotic, moving, boring, pleasing, enervating, or uncomfortable, generally embarrassing, subjective, and resistant to the gnostic'.[698] She explains that Jankélévitch defined music's ineffability as its 'indeterminacy, its mutability when submitted for contemplation, its range of effects, which include seeming to be strange or beautiful as well as firing up social or poetic or visual or other associations.[699] For Abbate there is a 'paradox at work in the system' in the sense that music is '…at once ineffable and sticky'. By 'sticky' she means that words and images 'stick to it': music is 'not a discursive language', but often 'cultural or poetic associations are released in listeners'. And by 'ineffable' she means that music allows 'multiple potential meanings, … demanding none in particular': it transcends any hermeneutical attempts to limit its range of meanings, with the result that listeners may at times experience an 'upending [of] their sense of self'. [700] Such a challenge to the 'sense of self' is familiar to readers of the Bible (and particularly the New Testament) as, for example, when Jesus is quoted as saying, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me'.[701]

One of the things that music 'does' is to create and release tension; and the physical processes involved can lead people in some circumstances to an experience of God

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[697] See C. Abbate, 'Music – Drastic or Gnostic?' in *Critical Enquiry,* vol. 30, no 3, 2004, pp 505-536. The English word 'drastic' is derived from a Greek verb meaning 'to do'; similarly, 'gnostic' is derived from 'to know', or 'to investigate'. See T.F. Hoad (ed), *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, London: Oxford University Press, 1993.

[698] See Abbate, 'Drastic or Gnostic?' (as above), p.513/4.

[699] See Abbate, 'Drastic or Gnostic?' (as above), p.516/7.

[700] See Abbate, 'Drastic or Gnostic?' (as above), p. 521. In her own footnote Abbate comments that 'Allergies to the word *mystery* are endemic to musical hermeneutics', adding this quotation from Christopher Norris: "Formalist thinking . . . offers a comforting sense of mystery to those (mere amateurs or non-initiates) who know very well how music can influence their deepest feelings and convictions, but who don't want to think that such effects can be obtained through any kind of conscious or social-manipulative grasp. . . . Putting music firmly back into its socio-political context [means] resisting any form of that mystified appeal to its supposedly metaphysical, transcendent or timeless character". See also C. Norris (ed), *Music and the Politics of Culture,* London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1989, p. 8f.

[701] See *Matthew* 16:24 (NKJV).

when (as it were) 'divine and human meet'. For some people the path to this kind of experience is through deep and regular breathing. When she took part in the 'listening exercise' for this research, Joanna wrote that she detected in her favourite track (Track C) 'a devotional involvement which … can be achieved by actual participation'. As already quoted (see section 5.4a), she explained her feelings in these words: -

> Although I was only listening, I could hear and appreciate the participation of the soloist. The way that phrasing encourages regular breathing is an aid to contemplation and prayer.

In a subsequent conversation Joanna amplified this comment along the following lines, saying that: -

> The act of inhaling fully and then exhaling in order to produce a vocal sound in a regular, repeated way is a very physical activity. If continued for a period of time it has the effect of both invigorating the body and calming the mind which leads on to a sense of removal from the here and now. It is a state which is helpful to use for the purpose of contemplation and prayer, because after a while the repetitive nature of the chant allows the mind to explore more spiritual thoughts. Distractions are kept at bay and the words and the music are a channel towards a spiritual journey.

Further developing the theme of regular breathing, it is worth considering again the thoughts of David Keane (previously mentioned in Chapter 5, section 5.2). Keane makes a fascinating link between music and spirituality.[702] He goes back to what is heard in the womb, and to a yoga exercise which he describes as 'a method of controlling breathing to make it entirely rhythmical and at the same time deep and physiologically efficient'. He reports that a 'Westerner who tried some of these exercises in a Japanese monastery reported that the experience could be compared "to music, especially when one plays it oneself"'. Keane adds that, in Taoism, *t'ai-chi* ('embryonic respiration') and the Islamic mystical practice of *dkihr* are quite similar.[703]

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[702] See D. Keane, 'A Composer's Approach' (as above), p. 325f.
[703] See T. McLaughlin, *Music and Communication,* London: Faber & Faber, 1971, pp 81-2.

There is also a phenomenon in some Christian traditions, for example, the 'Jesus Prayer', which Keane does not mention.[704] This can be used as follows: -

Whilst inhaling (think, or say aloud):	Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,
Whilst exhaling …………………………	Have mercy on me, a sinner.

There are also patterns of prayer, derived from ancient Hebrew poetry such as *The Book of Psalms*, where the individual is advised to follow these steps: -

Inhale *whilst saying (or thinking):*   The Lord is my shepherd:
Hold breath for a short time of reflection at the mid-point, marked
grammatically by the caesura (:) then
Exhale *(whilst saying or thinking):*   I shall not want.[705]

Leonard Meyer refers to the way this pattern is often found in music, when a second phrase will release the tension created by the first. Meyer calls this pattern 'continuation' and Keane describes our recognition of the pattern(s) as 'counting and assessing'; but the counting is not usually deliberate, and Keane states that it 'must be going on somewhere in us'. As to where, Ehrenzweig speaks of 'unconscious scanning' – a process carried out by the subconscious mind, absorbing every detail of our experience, whilst the conscious mind 'selects, represents, examines, and even re-arranges experience symbolically'; in music this might mean consciously following a single melody, while 'the unconscious mind encompasses all the polyphonic voices'.[706] This phenomenon might perhaps be illustrated by reference to one of the three tracks which I used for my 'listening exercise'; this is the Christmas Introit *Puer natus est* – no 'polyphonic voices' of course, but just a single line of melody, where each phrase initially rises quite dramatically and then later comes to rest. Here it is (at Ex. 6.5) seen in the version from Solesmes:

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[704] See www.orthodoxprayer.org; cf also www.crosswalk.com a Christian site which speaks of prayer as 'like inhaling and exhaling in equal parts'.

[705] See, for example, www.soulshepherding.org .

[706] See Anton Ehrenzweig, *The Hidden Order of Art: A Study in the Psychology of Artistic Perception,* Berkeley, CA: California University Press, 1971. See also P. G. Kuntz, Review of *The Hidden Order,* in *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism,* vol.27, no 3, 1969, p. 358.

Ex.6.5 – Christmas Day Introit 'Puer natus' [707]

A boy is born for us, and a son is given to us: supreme authority [will be] on his shoulder, and his name will be called Messenger of great counsel. Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done wonderful things. Glory to the Father…..

The first half-phrase, 'Puer natus est nobis', begins with a rise of a fifth (G to D) and retains the *tension* all the way through to the half-barline; then the second half-phrase, *'et filius datus est nobis',* begins by echoing the opening of the first half-phrase (perhaps in conscious imitation of the parallelism of the text), but then relaxes (down to a G) on the second syllable of the second 'nobis'. The second full-phrase, 'cuius imperium….', begins on the same G but generates tension by rising quickly to a high F, the highest point of the piece, on the second syllable of 'imperium', partly relaxing (down to an A) at the next bar-line. The third full-phrase, 'et vocabitur ….', follows a similar pattern, with somewhat less tension, but with an ending identical to that of its precursor. The fourth full-phrase, 'magni consilii Angelus', begins with the tension of

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[707] See *Liber Usualis*, 1961, p. 408.

the higher notes, but shows a marked relaxation towards its conclusion. The pattern (of all Introits of this type) is A-B-A, since the psalm-verse, which is included at this point, would be followed in performance by a repetition of the opening section (from 'Puer' through to 'Angelus'), before the *Gloria Patri* is sung. The psalm-verse itself has a typically rising *intonation* on 'Cantate', followed by a high *reciting note* as befits the elevated nature of the text and the joyfulness of the occasion; but in the second half of the verse there is again a marked relaxation for the *ending* on 'fecit'. 'Euouae' is an abbreviation (vowels only) of the last two words, *'seculorum. Amen'*. The *Gloria Patri*, if written out in full, and using modern staff-notation, would be as follows: -

Ex.6.6 – 'Gloria Patri' from 'Puer Natus (see above) in modern notation

I have referred to the A-B-A pattern of this and many other chants. It is also noteworthy that a much-used phrase in the *Psalms* was taken by the early Christians and turned into a 3-phased prayer: -

> Lord have mercy   (in Greek *Kyrie eleison*)
>
> Christ have mercy   (in Greek *Christe eleison*)
>
> Lord have mercy   (in Greek *Kyrie eleison*)

This prayer was used commonly and frequently by early Christians; it was subsequently included (in its Greek form) into the Latin Mass; and was also set to music – that is to say, mainly to plainchant – during the first millennium CE. Its ternary (A-B-A) structure then found common acceptance as a musical form, which has become the foundation of a very great deal of Western classical music.[708] For Keane,

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[708] And even of pop songs e.g. The Beatles' song *Yesterday*.

even if we do not consciously develop ritual breathing, 'we are conditioned by the regular pulsation and the antecedent-consequent relationship of inhalation followed by exhalation' throughout our lives. According to one writer, a child of 14 to 24 months old 'uses long collections of sounds arranged in sentence-like form, with inflections and emphasis, but with no recognisable word meaning'.[709] The writer says he has no notion as to the significance of these sounds but Keane argues that 'this behaviour signals the end of a proto-musical exploration … which has been overwhelmed by language development'. Keane submits that this type of infantile activity 'does not differ in any important way from the basic process in which the composer writes music'.

6.16 'Inbetweenity' – where divine and human meet

The notion of 'inbetweenity' is reminiscent of the 'liminality' notion developed by Victor Turner (see section 6.10 above).[710] At the Stanford symposium, the 'in-between' theme was also taken up by Bissera Pentcheva, who subsequently became one of my informants. For Pentcheva, who described herself as an art historian with a keen interest in music, God is definitely to be perceived in certain types of sound, as well as in visual effects. Her presentation to the Stanford symposium featured chant (albeit Byzantine not Gregorian). She referred to the theological concept of the 'in-between' (in Greek μεταξυ *metaxu*) as the point at which divine and human meet. Adopting a phenomenological approach, Pentcheva sought to emphasize the importance of the connection between the architecture of the building (Hagia Sophia), the type of liturgy and music for which the building was designed, and the effect of all this on the worshipper. Pentcheva discusses the ways that recent studies have revealed the performative nature of Byzantine art, such that meaning is created by the interaction of the beholder's sensory experience and the 'polymorphy' of the building's surfaces.[711]

Pentcheva uses the word 'performative' thus echoing the idea of the 'drastic' nature of some art-forms. She identifies something which she describes as a 'performative

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[709] See B. L. White, *The First Three Years of Life,* New York: Prentice-Hall, 1986, p. 173.

[710] 'Inbetweenity' is (I am assured by one of my informants) a genuine English word, which has now fallen into disuse.

[711] See B.V. Pentcheva, 'Hagia Sophia and Multisensory Aesthetics', in *Gesta,* vol. 50, no 2, 2011, pp 93-111, esp. p. 101.

paradigm' in Hagia Sophia, where the material stuff of the architecture conjures images in the spectator's memory and imagination which also have an aural aspect due to the reverberation created by the building's acoustic properties. Having established the apparently 'moving' or 'animated' aspects of the interior surfaces of the building, Pentcheva then links these with the nature of the sounds that can be produced as a result of the reverberation. In parenthesis we must note that, in the ancient world, marble (*marmaron*) was believed to have been formed by the action of water on stone, thus representing a particular aspect of God's creative activity. The related word *marmarygma* refers to the shimmering effect when sunlight shines on the marble surfaces. Pentcheva writes: -

> The spatial imprint on sound indicates an important psychological dimension of aural architecture … that a piece of music can have varying effects on the listener depending on the space in which it is performed. This is the case with Hagia Sophia and Byzantine chant. The huge marble-revetted interior is reverberant and quickly mixes the reflected sound energy, especially at the wavelengths in the range of the human voice; it stays full and well mixed for the long reverberation time of about ten seconds. The chanting, which triggers this aural experience, uses the human body as an instrument, thus further implicating the corporeal experience of architecture and the synergy and interaction between the faithful and the mass of reflective *marmaron*.

In the context of Byzantine chant (very different from Gregorian, but addressed to the same God!), Bissera Pentcheva refers to the *Cheroubikon*: this was designed as an Introit, during which two processions would meet: the clergy from the west and the emperor's party from the east. The performance of the hymn might well have involved the entire congregation (the building could hold some 2,000 people) at least in the refrains. The text of the hymn bids the worshippers see themselves as 'representing' (*eikonizontes*) the angels who worship God in heaven. We may note here that the Greek term *eikon* does not only refer to a picture used in worship, but that it can also be applied to people. And so, the text of the *Cherouibikon* includes the words: -

> May we who mystically represent the cherubim, and sing the 'Holy, holy, holy' to the life-giving Trinity, lay aside all worldly care to receive the King of All, escorted unseen by the angelic host.

Pentcheva adds that …

> … just as the [abstract] figuration of the marble produced images in the imaginations of the spectators, or the phenomenal *marmarygma* [shimmering] of marble and gold was seen as a marker of animation, so, too, the reverberant sound produced by singing the *Cheroubikon* compelled its performers to perceive the totality of their bodies in space as icons, [just like the marble and gold] reflecting divine figuration.[712]

Pentcheva's article concludes with a further theological point, referring to the use of the Greek word $\Pi\nu\varepsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ (*Pneuma*) used for the third person of the Trinity. The word signifies the Holy Spirit, which is sensorially manifested in the scent and smoke of burning incense. *Pneuma* also denotes human breath and, concomitantly, human chant.[713] Thus, the experience of [the] indwelling spirit could be manifested optically, aurally, and olfactorily: *pneuma* as breeze, incense, smoke, and breath. Its multisensorial energy is activated in the Eucharistic liturgy through the burning of incense, the oblation procession, chanting, and, finally, 'the consumption of the bread and wine transformed into the body and blood of Christ'.

6.17   CONCLUSION

This chapter (approaching its subject matter from a number of different angles) has sought to reveal how for some people, music in general, including plainchant in particular, acts as a kind of window into 'higher' realities; to conclude I return for a moment to the thoughts of Jankélévitch, linking these to the comments of two informants, namely Peter Allan and Bissera Pentcheva. I am struck by the way that Jankélévitch's comments on music are more like sermons than straight-forward musical analysis: they are intended to reach the heart rather than (or in addition to)

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[712] See Pentcheva, 'Hagia Sophia…' (as above), p. 105.
[713] It is also used for 'wind' as in *John* 3:8, where Jesus says to Nicodemus 'The wind blows where it wills…..'

the head; and perhaps this notion of 'appealing to the heart' is a vital aspect of transcendence in music. Words can be useful in helping to convey this notion; but neither music nor God can be *captured* in words - this is the Bergsonian view. Does this mean, then, that we must keep silent? Jankélévitch, as an admirer of Fauré, opined that 'truly important things make less noise than loud and insolent existences with all their fanfares', adding that 'God, according to scripture, does not come with the voice of wrathfulness, but as imperceptibly as a breeze'.[714] This is a reference to the famous narrative about Elijah, where God is not perceived in a storm, earthquake or fire, but in the 'still small voice' (otherwise translated as 'a sound of sheer silence') which follows.[715] And there is another brief text on this point from one of the minor Hebrew prophets, stressing the notion of being 'silent' before God, and reading simply as follows: -

> Be silent, all people, before the Lord; for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.[716]

But to concentrate solely on this notion indicates a very selective reading of the Hebrew scriptures, for God is also portrayed as the God of storm and thunder, who is meet to be worshipped with loud music.[717] And some present-day religious believers might say that God can be experienced as much in relationships as in silence. However, these two apparent antitheses are not in fact contradictory as Peter Allan made clear when I discussed this topic with him. He pointed out that a good relationship requires silence for listening, as well as speech or other sounds. Speaking from his extensive and deep experience of plainchant, and echoing a view expressed by Sally (see Chapter 5, section 5.5 above) he opined that successful corporate singing of this type of music requires the singers to listen intently to one another.[718] Peter Allan believes that this kind of singing can be seen as a 'parable' of the way in which believers can 'tune their hearts' to a deep awareness of God. Peter Allan's thoughts are taken up again in Chapter 7 (see section 7.2, and they are relevant again in section 7.7).

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[714] See V. Jankélévitch *Music and the Ineffable* (as above), p.149.
[715] See *1 Kings* 19:11.
[716] See *Zechariah* 2:13.
[717] See *Psalms* 29 and 150.
[718] Sally referred to her experience in bell-ringing, where this kind of listening to each other is equally important.

In this current chapter we have looked at various ways in which 'the divine' has been perceived as making its presence felt in human lives, not least through the medium of plainchant. We have seen how Christian liturgies, the ancestral home of plainchant going back over centuries of tradition, form the foundations for a 'bridge', constructed of both words and music, between the human and the divine worlds. We have seen that 'Absolute Reality' is ineffable – beyond the scope of human description or even human imagination – and therefore conceivable only through the use of metaphor and analogy. We have explored 'the idea of the Holy' in sacred scripture and in the minds of participants in this study; and we have seen that even for those participants with no formal religious allegiance, there is still a sense of the importance of exploring the 'inner self' assisted by plainchant which 'reaches one's depths in a way that is deeper than a lot of music'.[719] We have noted that 'practical issues' related to vocal or recording quality often affect participants' appreciation; and that such issues of what we might call 'embodiment' follow logically from the 'incarnational' emphasis of the Christian faith. Further conclusions, relating to the whole thesis, will follow in Chapter 7.

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[719] Holly again.

7

CONCLUSION

THE RECEPTION OF PLAINCHANT

7.0   INTRODUCTION

The varied experiences and views of participants in this research have led us on a long journey with many twists and turns. The ancient Israelites looked back to their origins – to their escape (as they perceived it) from slavery in Egypt and their eventual arrival in the Promised Land. They were aware that their journey had never been straightforward; this sense of 'peregrination' has often been seen as a paradigm for the 'Christian journey'.[720] But even for some of those (including a few of my participants) who do not share this religious outlook, the metaphor of life as a journey (but not an easy one) has validity. Preparing and writing a PhD thesis can also involve quite a tortuous journey; but in this case, where the subject-matter also entails a journey (or a series of journeys) the metaphor is doubly valid. The notion of 'life as a journey' is sometimes symbolized in religious liturgies by the use of processions, to which allusion has been made at several points above (see especially section 6.10). So, it is appropriate to ask, 'Where have we come from?' and, more importantly, 'Where are we going?'.

One of my informants (in the context of a conversation about singing psalms to plainchant) used the phrase 'the life of the Spirit'. I will explain the context more fully below (see section 7.2), but it suffices to say for the moment that I have found this phrase to be a good basis for the development of a number of themes in this concluding chapter relating to the disciplinary hinterland between music and theology. I shall ask, 'What is this 'spirit' or 'Spirit' of which my informant spoke? What can we meaningfully say today about the way in which the "Holy Spirit" is perceived in Christian theology? What can we do to further an awareness of "the life of the Spirit"

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[720] For some lovers of plainchant, it is the *tonus peregrinus* which best illustrates this notion (see section 1.5.3); this is the chant most commonly associated with Psalm 113 (114 KJV) *In exitu Israel* or 'When Israel came out of Egypt' which brings to mind the 'wanderings' described in the books of *Exodus* and *Numbers*; it is a rare example of a psalm-chant where the reciting note for the second half-verse is different from that for the first half-verse: it has 'wandered' away from its starting point!

in today's world?' I shall seek to show how both music and theology (in our post-modern world) are more effective when they raise questions than when they purport to give definitive answers. I shall explore further the 'common ground' between music and theology; I shall consider the possible 'healing' effects of music and their possible link with faith. Are these effects (I ask) an aspect of the 'life of the Spirit'? Based on the insights of some of my participants, I shall observe the way in which poets and philosophers down the ages (from biblical times onwards) have approached questions about the meaning and purpose of human life, and the possibility of perceiving 'transcendent realities', through the use of metaphor and analogy. In particular I shall refer to two of the sonnets of Gerard Manley Hopkins which seem to raise ultimate questions in a concise but accessible form, through the use of visual imagery.

I hope that this concluding chapter (taken as a whole, and with its broader frame of reference) will serve to clarify what I believe to be the significance of my findings detailed above in chapters 4, 5 and 6. In short, my findings may be said to take the spiritual traveller a little further into those realms where no definitive mapping is possible, into experiences of ineffable realities, where darkness finally gives way to light. At the end of the chapter (see section 7.12 below) I refer to 'the tentacles branching outwards from this project', and give some suggestions for further research which might follow on from my thesis.

7.1 'Where have we come from? Where are we going?

I have used the terms BACK, IN and UP as a shorthand way of expressing the answers to these questions. For my participants there is, firstly, a clear sense in which plainchant takes them 'back' in terms both of their own personal experiences, and of the centuries-long history of the Christian Church and its music. Those whose comments are analyzed in Chapter 4 are valuable witnesses to the main thrust of my argument – that Christian worship (the ancestral home of plainchant) has made, and, in its out-working continues to make, significant contributions to the life of society as a whole. This can be seen, to name just a few examples, in the scholarly achievements of Mary Berry, in the spiritual devotion and determination of Alfred Hope Patten, in the down-to-earth practical service of Holly and her sisters, in the 'antidote to a hectic life' provided by the monks of St Domingo de Silos and others who record plainchant, in the stimulus to philosophical thought when we are urged to contemplate the mystery

of time, in the economic progress prompted centuries ago by the Cistercians, and by the (quite recent) work in environmental preservation by the Benedictines of Buckfast. These are significant achievements; and the link to plainchant is real, as my participants have demonstrated, in the way they tell their stories and relate their memories, providing rich data to lead the reader on such a fascinating journey.

Secondly (as shown in Chapter 5) it is clear that music in general, and plainchant in particular, can help listeners and performers to experience a sense of calmness, serenity, and 'quietness away from the normal hustle and bustle of life'. Listening to my three tracks evoked pictures of natural phenomena such as light and darkness, together with feelings of thankfulness and joy. Participants also felt encouraged to express their views on the importance of regular breathing and having a sense of involvement. On the theoretical side it is far from clear how music leads to such perceptions in the minds of listeners and performers, but there can be no doubt that it does. The insights of Wittgenstein – that a lot depends on the mind of the 'subject' as well as on the intrinsic nature of the 'object' – may be some help in solving this conundrum.

Thirdly, in many cases these emotions (particularly those related to 'thankfulness' and 'joy') had significantly 'spiritual' implications. It is clear from their comments (as shown particularly in Chapter 6) that nearly all my participants see plainchant as an aspect of Christian worship, even though they do not all participate in formal worship on a regular basis. But it could be argued that all are (in one way or another) on the same journey – a journey of which the end-point is in the realm of the 'numinous', the 'ineffable', something which cannot be expressed clearly in the words associated with our limited experiences. So, it is not surprising that the questions I have already raised, now, in themselves, tend to raise further questions. This is a clear characteristic of post-modern theology. Cameron Harder expresses this notion succinctly when he writes as follows: -

> In the twenty-first century, faith faces a paradox. On one hand, life in our globalized world is so *complex* that many long for simplicity, a safe bubble where they can live with unquestioning confidence in their religious traditions. On the other hand, it is impossible to avoid the tumult of voices raising hard questions about religion. Those

questions threaten to burst the bubble, disrupt our peace, even cut us off from our faith community. Yet they also bring potential for new insight and spiritual growth.[721]

Harder's mention of 'spiritual growth' leads nicely into my next section.

7.2   'THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT'

In the Bible there are many references to the 'spirit of God': the first is at the beginning of Genesis, where we read that 'the spirit of God was moving over the waters';[722] but it has been suggested by some scholars that the Hebrew word for 'moving' could be translated as 'brooding' – a 'vibrant moving, a protective hovering' like a mother hen over her chicks'.[723] As I have already stated (see section 1.4.3 above) the Hebrew word for 'spirit' (ru'ach) can also be translated as 'wind', as it is in more modern versions of the Bible.[724] The Greek equivalent (*pneuma)* is translated as both 'wind' and 'spirit' at one point in the Fourth Gospel where Jesus is reported as saying to Nicodemus, 'the wind blows where it chooses … so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit'.[725] At the end of the First Gospel, Jesus commissions his disciples, telling them to 'make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'.[726] In the early centuries of Christianity there was much debate about the significance of this formula, and it was not until the end of the fourth century that the doctrine of the 'Trinity' was officially formulated by the 'Cappadocian Fathers'.[727] In this postmodern era, when epistemological absolutes are severely questioned, the theoretical aspects of the doctrine tend to be left to specialists, but for many believers it is the Pauline teaching about the 'fruit' or 'harvest' of the Spirit that comes to the fore. Paul writes that 'the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control'.[728] This kind of

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[721] See C. Harder, *Tough Questions, Honest Answers: Faith and Religion for 21st-Century Explorers,* Minneapolis: 1517 Media (formerly Augsburg Fortress Press), 2020, p. 1 (his italics).

[722] See, for example, Genesis 1:1 (KJV)

[723] See https://jesusplusnothing.com/series/post/brooding-spirit. These words are those of H.C. Leupold (1892-1972) who wrote a number of biblical commentaries. His two volumes on *Genesis* were published in 1942. The idea of the spirit 'brooding' is taken up by Hopkins (in 'God's Grandeur') when he writes that 'the Holy Ghost over the dark world broods'.

[724] See *Genesis* 1:1 (NRSV).

[725] See *John* 3:8.

[726] See *Matthew* 28:19.

[727] See D. Marmion & R. van Nieuwenhove, *An Introduction to the Trinity,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010, chapter 3, pp 69ff.

[728] See *Galatians* 5:22.

'harvest' can be cultivated whether one chooses to favour a pre-modern, modern or post-modern approach to the Bible, and, indeed, whether one professes a religious faith, or not.

I suspect that among my participants there are those who might favour any one of these three approaches, but not one has specifically argued for a literalist view. One of the things that has struck me is how positive my participants are in their responses.[729]. They are clearly people who think intelligently about matters of faith; they are not simply looking for a 'safe bubble'. Peter, for example, embraces recent biblical scholarship enthusiastically, writing that 'the development of our understanding of the nature of scripture in the last 100 years has revealed the Bible to be a much richer source of truth than might previously have been understood'.[730] Peter also mentioned a colleague who seemed to have set up an 'Aunt Sally' notion of God, as a 'supernatural being' whose existence was easy to disprove.[731] Peter himself seemed happy to discard the 'mythical wrapping' of which Ricoeur spoke, and to be content with the biblical definition that 'God is love'.[732] Another participant who exemplified a positive, (combined with a questioning) approach, was Mark, who told me that, although he 'was brought up in a very conservative evangelical family', nevertheless, when he encountered the writing of Brevard Childs, he felt 'liberated…. [and] … pleasantly surprised to find that it was possible to take the text seriously without having to wrestle to somehow make it fit a literalist interpretation'.[733] Such positivity is also expressed in the convictions of Marian and others about the implications of the Eucharist, and the notion of the 'covenant' between God and humanity, which must be expressed not only in ritual but in service. Marian wrote that 'there is a sense of dedication, as people of the Covenant seek to respond to a divine imperative that the good things we have must be shared with all humanity'.[734] Her words are echoed (in the interrogative) by Janet Walton, who writes:

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[729] I use the word 'positive' in its everyday sense, not meaning to imply any reference to the notion of 'positivity' in its non-post-modern sense in historical studies today.

[730] See section 1.4.7 above.

[731] See section 6.11 above.

[732] For the 'mythical wrapping' see See P. Ricoeur, *Essays on Biblical Interpretation* (1968), Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980, p.57. For 'God is love' see *1 John* 4:16b.

[733] See section 1.4.7 above.

[734] See section 3.C.4 above.

> How does covenantal awareness affect our responsibility to care for the earth, to feed the millions of people dying from hunger, to eliminate illiteracy, to narrow the gap between rich and poor?[735]

These are big questions, which seem to justify the broader framework of this chapter. I am aware that qualitative researchers tend to make modest claims; as Jennifer Mason writes, …

> …. what is often referred to as the 'crisis of representation' in ethnography has ensured that qualitative researchers, quite rightly, have to try to substantiate their perspectives and interpretations in a more modest way, rather than just asserting them as universal truths.[736]

Mindful of this dictum, I will nevertheless seek to point the way towards answers to the above remarks of Walton, and similar questions, throughout this chapter.

My informant who used the phrase, 'the life of the Spirit', is Peter Allan of the Community of the Resurrection based at Mirfield, Yorkshire. This is an Anglican religious order which has offshoots in many parts of the world. One of its primary tasks is to run a Theological College training priests for ministry in the Church of England. At the time of our conversation, Peter Allan was just about to retire as Principal of the College, but he was retaining his role as Precentor of the monastic Community. One of his major works had been to lead an editorial team in compiling an *English Kyriale* – a book comprising plainchant settings for the Eucharist adapted for use with modern English texts.[737] I asked Peter specifically about the use of the 'caesura' when singing psalms to plainchant: it is customary at the half-way point in a psalm-verse (where a colon is usually printed) to observe an extended moment of silence, and I asked him why this was done. His reply was as follows: -

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[735] See J. R. Walton, 'Introduction: North American Culture and its Challenges to Sacred Sound', in L. A. Hoffman and J. R. Walton (eds), *Sacred Sound and Social Change* (as above, fn 126) p. 3.

[736] See J. Mason, *Qualitative Researching,* Sage Publications, 2nd edition, 2002, p. 191. See also G. Payne and M. Williams, 'Generalizing in Qualitative Research', in *Sociology,* vol 39, no 2, 2005, pp 295-314, esp. p. 311, where researchers are urged to avoid 'excessive generalizing claims, and [to engage] actively with expressing their more modest claims in clearer terms'.

[737] See P. Allan et al., (eds), *An English Kyriale: Music for the Eucharist,* London: HarperCollins, 1991. This was to update the work of G.M. Palmer who used traditional English texts (see Ex. 4.3 above).

it is all to do with the life of the Spirit; the second half of a psalm-verse is a ***response*** to the first half; traditionally the two half-verses are uttered by alternate sides of the gathered community. The antiphonal tradition (whether side to side, or cantor/schola v. choir) establishes a pattern of sound and silence. When some sing, others listen. The tradition of singing whole verses invites a further introduction of this rhythm of sound/silence in that those who have begun singing stop at the midpoint and re-enter the silence before concluding the verse. In this way, in psalms, we enact our response to God who addresses us; the silent pause is an opportunity to 'take stock', as we 're-connect with the silence'. It is a matter of 'plugging in to the under-girding rhythm of the chant'. There are references in medieval treatises to the question of how long the pause should be; but, in reality, it varies with certain factors such as the size of the worship-space, or the time of the year or day, and the temperature.[738]

Throughout this chapter, I will explore various aspects of 'the life of the Spirit', as I perceive them (through my own eyes and those of my participants and other informants) in past centuries and in our contemporary world.

7.3   MUSIC AND THEOLOGY – some common ground

Throughout this thesis, the evidence of my participants' responses indicates that there is no dichotomy between the two fields of music and theology, especially in relation to the reception of plainchant. In other words, their responses show that both theological and musical considerations are important. Both music and theology are examples of human attempts to reach beyond the normal parameters of human understanding towards that which can best be described as the sphere of 'divine' or 'spiritual' truths. In his study of the *enchiriadis*, tradition, Calvin Bower has drawn out some very fundamental truths of theology, and of the relationship between music and theology, which might be expressed as follows: -

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[738] See 'Appendices' pp 41ff. The last phrase of this quotation indicates that Peter does not lack a sense of humour.

- that God is ineffable;

- that God can only be seen by mortals 'in a mirror, dimly';[739]

- that we can only have 'intimations of immortality';[740]

- that music, which retains many of its 'enigmatic' qualities even in the twenty-first century, has power to point people to truths which cannot readily be expressed in words.[741]

And similarly, Philippe Vendrix has highlighted from the writings of Johannes Tinctoris (15th century) a list of twenty 'effects' of music beginning with: -

1. Musica Deum delectat *Music delights God*
2. Musica laudes Deum decorat *Music enhances the praises of God* [742]

In addition, the twentieth-century music-philosopher Vladimir Jankélévitch (see section 6.14) makes a direct link between music and theology when he writes as follows: -

> No one truly speaks of God, above all, not theologians…Alas music in itself is an unknowable something as unable to be grasped as the mystery of artistic creation. [Music is] made to be heard by a heart that is 'chaste and simple' and not to be read. [It is a matter of] returning to the spirit of childhood.[743]

In this connection it is perhaps significant that Wordsworth, in his famous *Ode,* links 'intimations of immortality' with 'recollections of early childhood'*.*[744]

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[739] See *1 Corinthians* 13:12.

[740] See Wordsworth's famous poem at: - https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45536/ode-intimations-of-immortality-from-recollections-of-early-childhood

[741] See C. M. Bower, 'Musica enchiriadis', in *Medieval France: An Encyclopedia,* Routledge, 1995, p. 646. See also See C.M. Bower, in A. Giger and T.J. Mathiesen (eds), *Music in the Mirror: Reflections on the History of Music Theory and Literature for the 21st Century*, Nebraska University Press, 2002, p.20ff.

[742] See P. Vendrix, 'La Place du plaisir dans la théorie musicale en France de la Renaissance à l'aube de l'Age baroque' in T. Favier and M. Couvreur (eds) *Le plaisir musical en France au XVIIe siècle,* Mardaga, 2006.

[743] See M. Gallope et al. (as above), p.225.

[744] See https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45536/ode-intimations-of-immortality-from-recollections-of-early-childhood

Augustine of Hippo referred to 'God' and 'music' in the same breath, going so far (it seems) as to equate his musical experience with a revelation of truth when he writes, 'The music surged in my ears, truth seeped into my heart, and feelings of devotion overflowed'.[745] Further, when one is unable to speak to God, Augustine instructs people to sing wordlessly, but with jubilation, 'that the heart may rejoice without words'.[746] Augustine knows that music has the potential to draw a person closer to God, and he finds that 'lovely chants' also prompt a vital, spiritual response; but he also wavers 'between the danger that lies in gratifying the senses and the benefits which […] can accrue from singing'.[747] Carol Harrison has made a substantial study of Augustine's thought, commenting on Augustine's suggestion that musical sounds are echoes of the love (*caritas*) that calls creation forth from nothing and holds it together in cosmic harmony.[748] For one reviewer, Harrison 'gets at questions basic to human experience', when she tackles the issue of how humans can relate to an ineffable God.[749]

The music to which Augustine and the 'enchiriadis tradition' were referring would have been very similar to what we know as plainchant, or (alternatively, for some writers) it might have been 'music' in a purely theoretical sense, as understood by Pythagoras.[750] I wonder whether there is any sense in which music can actually *be* theology, and if so, whether plainchant is more likely than other genres of music to achieve this end. There are two points that strike me in this context: firstly that, whereas a good deal of later sacred music has similarities to secular music by the same composer (for example the Masses of Mozart), in contrast, plainchant does not have any such secular connotations, and is therefore (perhaps) more likely to speak to people in a way that relates more purely to 'divine' realities; and, secondly, the fact that some later

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[745] See Augustine, *Confessions, tr.* R.S. Pine-Coffin, New York: Penguin Books, 1961, book 9, chapter 6.

[746] See J. McKinnon (ed), *Music in Early Christian Literature*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989. pp. 156-7.

[747] See Augustine, *Confessions* (as above), book 10, chapter 33.

[748] See C. Harrison, *On Music, Sense, Affect and Voice: Reading Augustine*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019, p. 23.
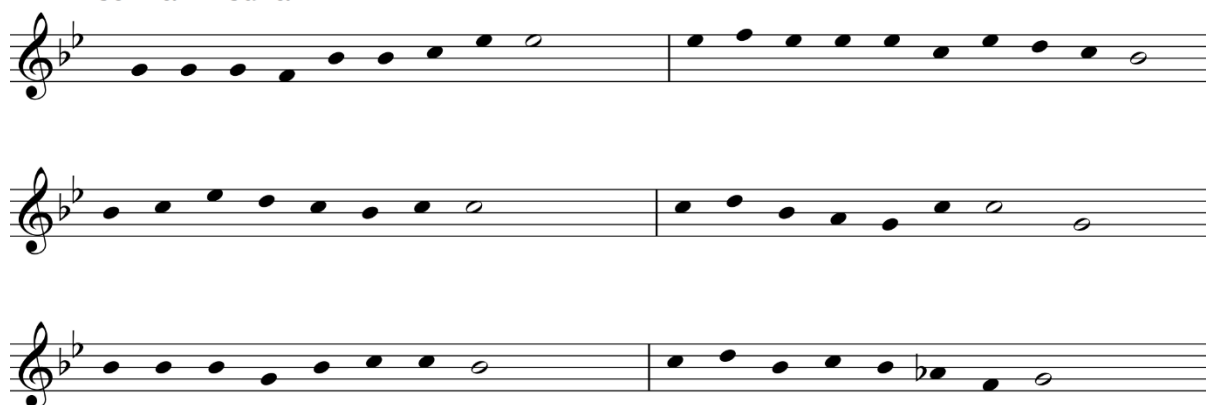
[749] See E. Kenyon, Review of Harrison, *On Music, Sense, Affect and Voice,* in *Theology* vol. 123, no. 3, 2020, p. 225ff.

[750] For example, Gallope describes Augustine's *De Musica* as a 'Pythagorean text': see M. Gallope, *Deep Refrains: Music, Philosophy, and the Ineffable,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017, p. 23. See also J. Fauvel, R. Flood and R. Wilson (eds), *Music and Mathematics: From Pythagoras to Fractals*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2006, for descriptions of physical, theoretical, physiological, acoustic, compositional and analytical relationships between mathematics and music.

composers chose to base their sacred music on plainchant; this suggests that they perceived a clear link between plainchant and 'the divine'. A supreme example is Palestrina, with Masses such as that based on the hymn, *Aeterna Christi munera*.[751] A notable 20th-century example is Gustav Holst, and his 'Hymn of Jesus', which begins with a bold and solemn statement of *Pange lingua gloriosi* by trombones and horns – the ancient melody is shown at Ex.7.2 below. A further example is the beautiful *Requiem* by Maurice Duruflé, almost entirely based on the plainchant melodies of the traditional Requiem Mass (see Ex.7.3 below). Such melodies, despite the composer's 'clothing' of them with impressionist harmonies, can speak to worshippers of transcendent truths. But, we may well ask, can such music speak to those who are not familiar with an ecclesiastical environment?

Ex.7.2 – 'Pange lingua gloriosi[752]

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[751] Palestrina (in common with many of his contemporaries and precursors) based a number of his Masses on plainchant, using it either as a cantus firmus or as a basis for canon or paraphrase. The *Missa 'Aeterna Christi munera'* belongs to the latter category.

[752] From G. Holst, *Hymn of Jesus,* opus 37, London: Stainer & Bell, 1919, opening of the 'Prelude'. This excerpt is scored for Horns and Trombones only. Holst writes into the score this word of advice: 'As the free rhythm of plainsong cannot be expressed in modern notation, the … players are to study the manner in which this melody is sung by experienced singers'. Here I have used stemless notes to convey the effect.

Ex.7.3 – Excerpt from Duruflé, *Requiem* [753]

REQUIEM

1. Introit

Maurice Duruflé Op.9

[753] See M. Duruflé, *Requiem,* opus 9, Paris: Editions Durand, 1948, opening of first movement.

7.4   MONASTICISM 'OUTSIDE THE WALLS'

A good number of my participants have alluded to the original 'monastic' context of plainchant,[754] sometimes simply as pictures of 'monks cowelled in black' or of 'large ancient abbeys, processing monks, mediaeval worshippers' (see section 5.3a); but, in other cases, the tracks have spoken to them of (a) 'participation in liturgical Christian worship' and (b) the sense of 'being part of a community….in direct continuity with the early church' (see section 3.B.3). Holly, as a former Nun, whilst no longer being part of a 'monastic' community, nonetheless seems to find plainchant still a valuable expression for her of 'being with God', and this sense is echoed and amplified by Rowan Williams (see section 6.4). But Jonathan Arnold also makes a convincing case for the appeal of sacred music (including plainchant) to those who are now 'outside the walls' in the sense of no longer adhering to any kind of formal religion. Among his conclusions are the following statements: -

1. One does not need to be a confessional believer to engage with good sacred music, but it must nevertheless *be* [his italics] engaged with, rather than treated as 'wallpaper music'; it is possible for [a choral conductor] to be 'Christian' in the moment of performance [even if he is not] a believer in the catechism otherwise. [755]

and

2. The rise of interest in the 'concert pilgrimage' is an extraordinary phenomenon: in these two words the 'secular' and 'sacred' spheres are juxtaposed. Whether this new phenomenon is filling a gap left by the failure of the Church's outreach, or whether it is part of the cultural *zeitgeist*, it is clear that audiences can find themselves, in such settings, lifted beyond the mundane to discover in music a response to the numinous.[756]

7.5   THE POWER OF MUSIC

The kind of experience described by Arnold comes into a category recognized by some theologians as 'disclosure situations'. This term seems to have been coined by

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[754] On the ethos of monasticism today, see H. P. Santmire, *Behold the Lilies: Jesus and the Contemplation of Nature,* Cascade Books, 2017.

[755] See J. Arnold, *Sacred Music* (as above), p.83.

[756] Ditto.

Ian Ramsey (see sections 6.10 and 6.12) but similar phenomena are described by the psycho-analyst Dan Merkur, who speaks of a 'healthy religiosity', writing as follows: -

> Clinicians firmly believe that some religious subjectivities are more wholesome than others. Although we avoid religious dogmatism and apologetics, we are prepared to discover, through clinical and scientific studies, what specifics make a religiosity healthy. [757]

There are sometimes situations in which people suddenly become aware of 'the numinous'; these are sometimes (but not always) connected with music; and (as Rowan Williams has said) this often seems to be particularly the case with plainchant. As Arnold opines: -

> We may not know much about heaven…. But common to most [descriptions] is the inclusion of music. Sacred music is in the public domain today and is a powerful witness to an alternative reality which is beyond materialism and secularism. It encourages us to consider the numinous and ineffable.[758]

The power of music is, moreover, enhanced by good performance; indeed, when not performed convincingly it may lose its power altogether. This was certainly evident from some of my participants' comments, as when Marian wrote, very concisely: -

> First track very slow, low-pitched, indistinct, tedious; Second track: emphasis on first syllable irritating, overdone; Third track: very clear, especially solo voice, engaging pace.

But again, I am indebted to Arnold, who writes that …

> … music is theologically stronger when performed well…; theologically the biblical idea that we are bidden to praise God with our music and voices is most

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[757] See D. Merkur, 'Interpreting Numinous Experiences', in *The International Journal of Anthropology,* vol. 50, no 2, 2006, p. 204.

[758] See J. Arnold, *Sacred Music* (as above), p.83.

powerfully performed when it is done well: in offering the very best of art, we too as human beings receive the best from creation.[759]

Two of my informants spoke of the 'healing' power of music in the context of music therapy.[760] Angela Fenwick, head of the Birmingham Centre for Arts Therapies (BCAT) opined, with reference to plainchant, that 'it is quite possible that a client hearing this type of music for the first time might be put in a calmer frame of mind'.[761] Her colleague, Gordon Thornett (a published composer) referred to 'guided imagery in music' a technique used by Leslie Bunt, where a client is put into a semi-conscious state, before listening to specially selected pieces of music and guided through the visual images that may arise. [762] Suzanne Hanser, also a music therapist, has examined 'the effect of music on stress, pain, immune and neurological function', concluding that …

> … psycho-neuro-immunology has built a foundation for explaining the impact of music and emotion on health; and positive approaches to psychology have helped describe how music facilitates wellbeing.[763]

Studies with dementia patients have also revealed music's power to relieve anxiety.[764] But as recently as 2021, Binxin Huang stated that the 'brain mechanisms' by which musical interventions can help to moderate anxiety states 'remain unknown'.[765]

Continuing to reflect on 'the power of music' I have already noted that the majority of my participants were familiar with the use of plainchant (as well as other sacred music) in Christian worship, especially the Mass, or Eucharist. In earlier times it was thought that participation in this act of worship, especially the receiving of the bread and wine, believed to be the body and blood of Christ, had a special 'healing' power, perceived

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[759] See J. Arnold, *Sacred Music* (as above), p.82f.

[760] A report of my conversation with these two people is included in Appendix 4.

[761] See section 2.2.1 above.

[762] L. Bunt (b. 1952) was Director of The Music Therapy Charity from 1992-2010. He is currently Professor in Music Therapy at the University of the West of England, the first such position in a British university. He is also a practitioner and Primary Trainer in the specialist use of Guided Imagery in Music (GIM).

[763] See S.B. Hanser, 'Music, health and wellbeing', in Juslin & Sloboda, *Handbook* (as above), chapter 30.

[764] See L. Vaduva and C. Warner, '"Don't Let Me Go": A Case-study on Music Therapy in Early-stage Dementia', in *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai, Musica,* vol. 66, no 2, 2021, pp 29-38.

[765] See B.X. Huang, X.T Hao, (…) & D.Z. Yao, 'The Benefits of Music Listening for Induced State Anxiety: Behavioral and Physiological Evidence', in *Brain Sciences,* vol. 11, no 10, 2021.

in a physical as well as a spiritual sense. This old (one might say 'quasi-magical') view dates back to the second century CE, to a phrase used by Ignatius of Antioch, describing the sacred elements as 'the medicine of immortality'.[766] Such a view continued to be held by many devout Christians up to about the 1950s; but during that decade something of a revolution took place in the thinking of some church leaders, and a new approach to the Eucharist gradually filtered down to congregations. None of my participants said or wrote anything to suggest that they would agree with the 'old' view, but there are other ways in which the same sacramental act can be said to have 'healing power', as the next section indicates.

7.6   THE HOLY IN THE COMMON (individualist and corporate perceptions)

The wise words of my informant Peter Allan about 'the life of the Spirit' have led me to think in broader terms about the significance of my findings. In previous chapters it has become clear that all my participants recognized that plainchant has its 'ancestral home' in the Christian Church, and many are clear that it is the Mass or Eucharist which forms the central aspect of the Church's worship and self-understanding. In this section I seek to show how a contemporary understanding of the Eucharist, can (as demonstrated by the words of Pope Francis quoted below) provide insights into the meaning of 'healing' not purely for the individual but on a global scale. The Liturgy of the Mass (the original home of plainchant) is known to some Christians as 'Holy Communion'. Before and up to the mid-1950s (as I have said), participation in this ritual was largely perceived in an extremely individualist way, and there was much talk (encouraged by clerics) of 'making my communion'. But the true meaning of 'holy communion' was brought out by John Robinson in theory and practice when he was Dean of Clare College, Cambridge.[767] Well before the revising work of the Church of England's Liturgical Commission was published,[768] Robinson emphasized the etymological meaning of 'liturgy' (leit-ourgia – 'work of the people'), and the nature of the Eucharist as fundamentally a shared meal, in which the presence of God could be experienced using 'ordinary' things (the basic foods of bread and wine, plus a table, cup and plate). At Clare, the 'formal' celebration, early on Sunday mornings in the

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[766] See https://www.wordonfire.org/articles/st-ignatius-of-antioch-and-the-medicine-of-immortality/
[767] See J.A.T. Robinson, *Liturgy Coming to Life*, A. R. Mowbray, 1960.
[768] I refer here to the publication of the *Alternative Service Book*, 1980, although during the 1960s and 1970s there were various preliminary revisions, particularly to the Communion Service, known as Series 1, Series 2 and Series 3. The latter was the first one to use 'modern' language, e. g. 'you' instead of 'thou'.

college chapel, was followed by a communal breakfast, a custom which was also a feature of the early 'Parish Communion' movement. A fundamental principle of this movement was that the 'drama' of the shared meal should be 'worked out' in the daily lives of the participants. I have already alluded to the 'drastic or gnostic' debate (see section 6.15); this refers to the importance of 'doing' music (i. e. composing, playing/singing or listening) rather than 'just knowing it', and also of what music itself can 'do' for those who participate in it. The same debate can be applied to liturgy; and further relevant remarks are made by Francis Steele, a professional vocalist who also trains choirs of amateur singers. He writes that…

> … Liturgy is sometimes referred to as a form of drama, a word whose Greek root *drao* means 'to do', and so if it attempts to involve those present, it is as players not groundlings. Since the *dramatis personae* include God, this drama is cast not at a mundane, inter-personal, but at a transcendent level; and because the field of action is extended beyond mortal life to take in the eternal life of the soul, much of this drama is [to] human reason ineffable…. [but] … music can engage with the numinous in a way that words and reason cannot.[769]

I have noted already Benedict XVI's reference to the 'trans-substantive action', which occurs when participants in the Eucharist are 'sent out' to further God's work in the world.[770] It is also notable that Benedict's successor, Pope Francis has referred to the Church as a 'field hospital'. He is reported to have said: -

> The thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the church as a field hospital after battle. It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars! You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else. Heal the wounds, heal the wounds. ... And you have to start from the ground up.[771]

To make sense of this remark, it is important to note that the whole world is in need of

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[769] Quoted in J. Arnold, *Sacred Music* (as above), p.79f.
[770] See section 3.C.1 (above).
[771] See https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/francis-chronicles/pope-s-quotes-field-hospital-church

healing, and that this applies to all the individuals within it. It is becoming more and more clear that human actions (such as the destruction of forests for agriculture, and continued reliance on fossil fuels) are threatening the diversity, and ultimately the viability, of life on our planet. Pope Francis (among others) has called upon the whole human family together 'to create the future we want: a more inclusive, fraternal, peaceful and sustainable world'.[772] From time immemorial humanity has been aware of its own weaknesses, or of that which is described theologically as 'sin', as portrayed (if not fully explained) by the *Genesis* myth of 'Adam's first disobedience'.[773] And we may well ask, 'How can this situation be, in any sense, healed?' We need more than the 'old' view outlined above, a view which concentrated almost solely on 'healing' for the individual person or 'soul'. The Judaeo-Christian tradition is rich in emphasis on a more corporate and inclusive view of the world and humanity. I imagine that the same is true of Islam (properly understood) which shares with Christianity a respect for the ancient Hebrew scriptures. And in the Hindu and Buddhist traditions, respect for all life is a cardinal virtue.[774] It begins with a sense of awe and wonder (shared by members of all the great world faiths) at the way in which we humans have been enabled to develop our existence and culture in this so-called 'Goldilocks zone' of the universe, where conditions have been 'just right' for life as we know it.[775] When the Hebrew scriptures were edited into their present form (5th to 4th century BCE?) the Book of *Genesis* began with two great stories of the Creation of the world and of life on Earth.[776] God is seen (in the more primitive story) as like a master-craftsman, moulding Adam out of the soil of the ground, then making the animals in an attempt to find a successful mate for him; and (when this fails) taking one of Adam's ribs to make Eve.[777] In the grander 'priestly' version, God's 'word' is his 'deed' – he says 'Let there be light' – and light appears; in the course of six days, the various forms of life follow, and humans (male and female) are made last, as the climax of creation. In typically Hebrew poetic parallelism, it is stated that …

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[772] See Pope Francis, *Laudato si' (Praise be to You: On Care for our Common Home),* Vatican Encyclical, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2015. See also https://www.ncronline.org/earthbeat/justice/pope-francis-launches-program-put-laudato-si-action-throughout-church

[773] See *Genesis* 3:8ff.

[774] See https://www.baps.org/Spiritual-Living/Hindu-Beliefs/Compassion-and-Nonviolence-Ahimsa.aspx#; see also http://www.buddhism.org/respect-all-as-buddha/

[775] See https://www.space.com/goldilocks-zone-habitable-area-life.

[776] *Genesis* 2 contains the older, more primitive, creation myth, and *Genesis* 1 gives us the more poetic and majestic 'priestly' version.

[777] See *Genesis* 2:4b – end.

God created humankind in his image'

in the image of God he created them,

male and female he created them.[778]

And this account, given by the 'priestly' editors, naturally leads into the institution of the Sabbath, when God 'blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because, on it, God rested from all the work that he had done in creation'.[779]

These ancient myths echo the insights of *The Psalms* – some of which date from a time before the creation stories were edited in the written form we now know. The sense of awe and wonder that the ancient Hebrews felt, as they considered the world around them, expressed itself in the desire to bow down and worship.[780] Psalm 29, for example (believed by some scholars to be the most ancient of the collection)[781] speaks (or rather sings) of 'the Lord…enthroned as king for ever'. The first two and last two verses read as follows: -

Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings,

    ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name,

    worship the Lord in holy splendour.

The Lord sits enthroned over the flood;

    the Lord sits enthroned as king for ever.

May the Lord give strength to his people!

    May the Lord bless his people with peace![782]

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[778] See *Genesis* 1:27.

[779] See *Genesis* 2:3.

[780] 'Bow down and worship' – a phrase used in a number of hymns and Gospel songs – is derived from *Psalm* 95:6 'O come let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker'.

[781] See W.S. Prinsloo, 'The Psalms', in in J.D.G. Dunn and J.W. Rogerson (eds), Eerdmans *Commentary* (as above)*,* pp 364ff, especially p. 383.

[782] See *Psalm* 29: 1,2, 10,11. Note on 'the Lord': in the ancient scriptures of this 'J' tradition, the divine name was represented by the 'tetragrammaton' YHWH; but this name was considered so holy that it was not spoken when the scriptures were read (or recited) aloud; instead, the speaker would substitute the name 'Adonai', which is translated in most English version as 'the Lord'. The tetragrammaton is in modern parlance sometimes rendered as 'Yahweh', but also sometimes as 'Jehovah': this latter name results from a strange mixture of the consonants YHWH and the vowels of 'Adonai'; it also explains the use of the letter 'J' as a shorthand for this strand of the literature, the other OT strands being 'E' (in which Elohim, another name for God, is used), 'D' the

So, awe and wonder at the majesty of creation can lead on to worship and also to a sense of gratitude; and, as already mentioned, the meaning of 'Eucharist' is thanksgiving. Thankfulness *should* (one might expect) lead to a desire to share the good things we have been given, but this is where the divine 'plan' seems to be thwarted by human greed.

In the Christian tradition, the 'Eucharistic Prayer' (the principal piece of the liturgy before the sharing of bread and wine) comprises, firstly, an expression of thanksgiving for all the good things of the world around us, secondly an act of remembering the life and work of Jesus, and especially his words at his last supper with his followers, when he referred to the bread and wine as his 'Body and Blood'. The whole act of worship is sometimes described as a 'Eucharistic Feast' and this echoes a prophecy of Isaiah, referring to 'Mount Zion' or the city of Jerusalem, and reading as follows: -

> On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples
> > a feast of rich food,
> > a feast of well-matured wines,
> > of rich food filled with marrow,
> > of well-matured wines strained clear.
> And he will destroy on this mountain
> > the shroud that is cast over all people,
> > the sheet that is spread over all nations,
> > he will swallow up death for ever.[783]

These sentiments are expressed in a particularly beautiful piece of plainchant, whose text is as follows: -

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'Deuteronomic' strand associated with the editors of *Deutero-nomy* (the 'Second Law') and of the historical books of *Samuel* and *Kings*, and 'P' the work of the 'priestly' editors, associated with the books of *Chronicles, Ezekiel,* and much of the more 'poetic' literature.
[783] See *Isaiah* 25:6f.

> ***O sacrum convivium in quo Christus sumitur, recollitur memoria***
>
> ***passionis eius: mens impletur gratia; et futurae gloriae nobis pignus***
>
> ***datur.***
>
> *O sacred feast in which Christ is consumed and his passion recalled: the mind*
> *is filled with gratitude, and to us a pledge of future glory is given.*

The chant is shown below at Ex. 7.4

Ex. 7.4 – 'O sacrum convivium' [784]

This chant, and its text, have been used over the centuries by various composers to great effect. A particular example is its use by Ralph Vaughan Williams in 'Love bade me welcome', the third of his *Five Mystical Songs.* The poem (by George Herbert) is related to the concept of the Eucharistic feast, ending with the lines: -

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[784] See *Liber Usualis,* Solesmes Abbey, 1961, p. 959. Chant appointed for the second Vespers on the Feast of Corpus Christi, as an Antiphon before and after the Magnificat.

> 'You must sit down' says Love, 'and taste my meat'.
>
> Then I did sit, and eat.[785]

The song begins in E minor (modally, with flattened sevenths), but just before these words are sung it has modulated to a rather distant G minor (see Ex. 7.5 (a) below). After a brief silence the accompaniment comes back on a chord of E major (see Ex. 7.5 (b) below), and the effect is mystical.

Ex 7.5 (a) – First extract from 'Love bade me welcome' [786]

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[785] See https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44367/love-iii
[786] See R. Vaughan-Williams, *Five Mystical Songs,* (vocal score), London: Stainer & Bell, 1911, p. 17.

<u>Ex. 7. 5 (b) – Second extract from 'Love bade me welcome'</u> [787]

7.7   THE MASS, MUSIC AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The healing power of music is indicated by several of my participants and is also acknowledged in a number of scholarly studies; for example, Solomon Bendayan has written that …

> The healing power of music has emerged as a promising new avenue for improving cardiovascular health. With numerous studies pointing towards its efficacy, music has demonstrated its ability to reduce stress, anxiety and even lower blood pressure and heart rate.[788]

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[787] See R. Vaughan-Williams, *Five Mystical Songs,* (vocal score), London: Stainer & Bell, 1911, p. 18.

[788] See S. Bendayan, 'The Healing Power of Music: A Promising New Avenue for Cardiovascular Health', in *Frontiers in Cardiovascular Medicine,* vol, 10, 2023, article 1277055, introduction, para 6. See also the remarks of participant Peter and informants Angela Fenwick and Gordon Thornett, above.

This is clearly significant at the individual level, but I wonder whether such healing power could be harnessed for the healing of what Pope Francis has called 'our common home'? The Pope begins his 2015 Encyclical with a quotation from a canticle composed by his namesake, St Francis of Assisi, in which the saint refers to the Earth as 'our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs'. [789] The Pope continues by saying that: -

> This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life.[790]

Later in the document Pope Francis quotes the Earth Charter: -

> As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning… Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.[791]

I have already mentioned that Josef Ratzinger (formerly Pope Benedict XVI) wrote of 'many religions' but 'one covenant'. Benedict was referring to the biblical notion of a covenantal agreement between God and humanity. In his Christian understanding, this 'agreement' reaches its fulfilment in the declaration of Jesus (at his Last Supper) that he is inaugurating a 'new covenant' and that this is expressed in the sharing of bread and wine, to which he refers as his 'body and blood'. Pope Francis (Benedict's successor) extends this notion to refer to a 'covenant between humanity and the environment'. Since 2015 he has been leading the world in calling for more

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[789] See 'The Canticle of the Sun', in *The Writings of St Francis of Assisi,* tr. P. Robinson, Scotts Valley, California: CreateSpace Independent Publishers, 2015, part 3, chapter 5, [no page numbers].
[790] See Pope Francis *Laudato si'* (as above), para 2.
[791] For the 'Earth Charter', see
https://earthcharter.org/read-the-earth-charter/democracy-nonviolence-and-peace/

'environmental education'.[792] In *Laudato si'* he pleads for greater 'awareness of the gravity of today's cultural and ecological crisis' and urges that this 'must be translated into new habits'. He deplores 'our current progress and the mere amassing of things and pleasures [which] are not enough to give meaning and joy to the human heart', and declares that 'we are faced with an educational challenge'. His writing includes a critique of the 'myths of modernity' – a 'utilitarian mindset… individualism, consumerism, the unregulated market'. Instead of this, Pope Francis urges, we need to ….

> … restore the various levels of ecological equilibrium, establishing harmony within ourselves, with others, with nature and other living creatures, and with God. Environmental education should facilitate making the leap towards the transcendent which gives ecological ethics its deepest meaning. It needs educators capable of developing an ethics of ecology, and helping people, through effective pedagogy, to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care.[793]

This is a call for 'holy communion' on a universal scale, based on care not only for one another, but for our planet and everything on it. The beauty of Earth has been appreciated more and more from the time that humans were able to view our planet from rockets and satellites in space. The famous 'blue marble' picture was taken by the crew of the Apollo 17 (in 1972) from a distance of around 29,400 kilometres (18,300 miles).

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[792] See Pope Francis *Laudato si'* (as above), para 207.
[793] See Pope Francis *Laudato si'* (as above), p. 154.

Ex.7.6 – A View of Earth from Space [794]

I will shortly come back to a consideration of 'earthly' issues, but let us for a moment continue to look at the wider universe, with the aid of Carlo Rovelli.

7.8 TIME AND SPACE

Amongst all the 'hunches' I had about where this research might lead, I was certainly surprised that a remark of one participant would lead into the realms of 'quantum gravity', 'loop theory' and 'thermal time'. Edingale said of the chants I had sent him, 'these are both "past" (from my singing youth) and recent from church attendance'. According to Carlo Rovelli (in a 'popular' but very scholarly book) 'physics shows us how the temporal structure of the world is different from our perception of it'.[795] Time is 'granular' (the word 'quanta' refers to elementary grains); it is unpredictable, and only exists in relation to something else: there is a network of such relations; there are 'spacetimes' (in the plural) fluctuating, superimposed (like a collection of canvases) one above the other. The rhythms at which time flows are determined by the universe's 'gravitational field'. Rovelli writes: -

> In the elementary grammar of the world, there is neither space nor time – only processes that transform physical quantities from one to another, from which it is possible to calculate probabilities and relations.[796]

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[794] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Blue_Marble
[795] See Rovelli, *Time* (as above), p.174 – page numbers in the next few footnotes refer to the Kindle edition.
[796] See Rovelli, *Time* (as above), p. 195.

Rovelli declares that the world is not made up of 'entities' or 'things' but of events. Each person is 'a complex process that reflects the world and elaborates the information we receive'. We 'organize' our perceptions of the world by 'breaking it down into pieces which our brains can grasp'.

> 'Things' and 'concepts' are fixed points in the neuronal dynamic, induced by recurring structures of the sensorial input and of … successive elaborations. The difference between the past and the future refers only to *our own* [his italics] blurred vision of the world.[797]

Our notion of 'self' stems from interacting with others like ourselves.

> To understand ourselves means to reflect on time. But to understand time we need to reflect on ourselves. … It is memory that solders together the processes, scattered across time, of which we are made.[798]

Rovelli says this is analogous with 'the diurnal rotation of the skies'; and referring to the Copernican revolution, he says that 'we humans eventually managed to understand that it is *we* [his italics] who turn, not the universe'. And a similar *volte face* is necessitated by modern science.[799]

> Many things that we see in the world can be understood only if we take into account the role played by [our own] point of view… hence causality, memory, traces, the history of the happening of the world itself can only be an effect of

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[797] See Rovelli, *Time* (as above), p. 152.

[798] See Rovelli, *Time* (as above), p. 153.

[799] See also C. Rovelli, *Anaximander: And the Nature of Science,* tr. M. L. Rosenberg, London: Penguin, 2023. Rovelli describes the way in which, over two millennia ago, a Greek philosopher had a number of wondrous insights that paved the way to cosmology, physics, geography, meteorology, and biology, setting in motion a new way of seeing the world. Anaximander's legacy includes the revolutionary idea that the earth floats in a void, that the world can be understood in natural rather than supernatural terms, that animals evolved, and that universal laws govern all phenomena. He introduced a new mode of rational thinking with an openness to uncertainty and to the progress of knowledge. Rovelli brings to light the importance of Anaximander's overlooked legacy to modern science. He examines Anaximander as a scientist interested in shedding light on the deep nature of scientific thinking, which Rovelli locates in his rebellious ability to re-imagine the world again and again. *Anaximander* celebrates the radical lack of certainty that defines the scientific quest for knowledge.

perspective: … inexorably, then, the study of time does nothing but return us to ourselves.[800]

7.9   SCIENCE AND RELIGION

The old conflict between these spheres seemed to rest on the notion that science demonstrated 'facts' whereas religion only promoted hypotheses and beliefs. Once one has read the work of a scientist such as Rovelli, it becomes clear that this distinction is entirely invalid: science seems more and more, every decade, to be a matter of 'the best possible hypothesis to explain what we observe'. And, certainly, a number of scholars seem to be able to hold on to both 'the scientific approach' and 'religious belief'. Among these can be numbered Alister Hardy (1896-1985) – a marine scientist who acted as chief zoologist on the Disc expedition to the Antarctic from 1924 to 1927. He subsequently held professorships in Zoology at Hull, Aberdeen and Oxford. The works that stem from his Gifford Lectures, *The Divine Flame* and *The Living Stream*, reflect his deep interest in natural theology. [801] Scientific though his worldview was, it was deeply integrated with his spiritual and religious impulse. After retiring in 1963 he founded what would become the Alister Hardy Research Centre which aimed to research the phenomenon of religious experience, and which continues to do so today. A recent contribution to this debate is a book by Gillian Straine, of whom the Bishop of Oxford has written as follows: -

> The science and religion debate is one of the most significant conversations going on in contemporary society. Gillian Straine has laid out the grammar of this conversation with remarkable clarity, enabling any of us to understand and engage with the issues at stake. We need interpreters of science and followers of religion who have good minds, a love of the language and an ability to speak fluently. Gillian Straine is all of these. We sit at the feet of a true linguist. [802]

7.10   ANTITHESES AND PARADOXES

When we come to explore some of the most recent essays on the links between music and theology – a theme clearly seen as central by many of my participants – we are

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[800] See Rovelli, *Time* (as above), p. 147.
[801] See https://www.giffordlectures.org/lecturers/alister-hardy
[802] See Gillian Straine, *Science and Religion: a path through polemic,* London: SPCK, 2013.

confronted with a whole series of antitheses and paradoxes. To discuss these fully is beyond the scope of this thesis, but they might be briefly summarised as follows: -

7.10 a   Light and darkness

Because God is ineffable (beyond the scope of human thought and reasoning) human attempts to describe God often result in paradox. For the New Testament 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all';[803] and yet the Spanish mystic, St John of the Cross (1542-1591) could speak of 'the dark night of the soul':[804] this refers to a sense of the absence of God, but the mystical understanding (as portrayed also in Hopkins' vision of the windhover – see section 7.11 below) is that when God seems absent or 'dead' then he is most truly present. The Welsh metaphysical poet Henry Vaughan (1621-1695), when referring to the story of Nicodemus coming to Jesus 'by night' could write that 'There is in God, some say / a deep but dazzling darkness'.[805]

7.10 b   Transcendence and immanence

The notion of the 'depth' of God can help to illuminate the issue of transcendence and immanence. The transcendence of God (as traditionally understood) is conveyed by such words as these (from Second Isaiah): -

> For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
>   nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.
> For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
>   so are my ways higher than your ways
>   and my thoughts than your thoughts.[806]

This may be described as the 'transcendence of height' – God is far 'above' the concerns of the human world. But there is also what might be described as a 'transcendence of depth' (see section 6.3) – the sense that God is immersed in the

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[803] See *1 John* 1:5.

[804] See St John of the Cross, *The Dark Night of the Soul,* (16th century) tr. E A. Peers, New York: Doubleday, 1959.

[805] See *John* 3:2. See also A.B. Grosart (ed), *The Works in Verse and Prose Complete of Henry Vaughan, Silurian* [the latter term means a native of Brecon] printed for private circulation, 1871, pp 256ff. See also Arthur L Clements, *Poetry of Contemplation: John Donne, George Herbert, Henry Vaughan and the Modern Period,* New York: SUNY Press, 1990, pp 129ff.

[806] *Isaiah* 55:8-9.

human world. This is particularly emphasised in the New Testament, but it is there in the Old Testament too. God is, after all (or rather before all) the creator, seen in *Genesis* 2, the more ancient version of the creation story, as the master craftsman who moulds Adam out of the dust of the ground. In the book of Hosea, we find the relationship between God and humanity described in terms of that between a man and his (unfaithful) wife; and there is plenty of erotic imagery in the bible and in medieval religious writings to convey the potential closeness as well as the 'delightfulness' of the relationship, even though in reality it is often (as Hopkins says) 'marred'. The transcendence of depth is also reflected in the writings of Meister Eckhart (1260-1328) and especially in the description of God as the 'ground of being' a description adopted and developed by Paul Tillich (1886-1965).[807]

7.10 c   Sacred and secular

God's immersion in the human world is emphasized particularly in the Christian tradition. The Romanian writer Mircea Eliade (1907-1986) could write of a clear distinction between the 'sacred' and the 'profane'.[808] He used the story of Moses and the Burning Bush: God says to Moses: 'Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground'.[809] The implication is that the rest of the ground is not holy; in the Jewish tradition this distinction was enshrined in the Temple, and in particular in the 'holy of holies' which was separated from the rest of the building by a curtain. At the death of Jesus (as described in the synoptic Gospels) 'the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom'.[810] This clearly symbolizes the ending of the separation between the sanctuary and the rest of the world. The same truth is expressed in the Fourth Gospel when the writer at first sets up an antithesis between 'God' and 'the world', but then declares that 'God loved the world', (ηγαπησεν ο Θεοσ τον κοσμον).[811] In this way the vision of Genesis – of God's relationship with humanity 'before the fall' – is restored, and 'the locus of

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[807] See Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology,* vol. 1, University of Chicago Press, 1951, pp 234-279. Tillich's theology is summarized by Anthony C. Thiselton, at
http://archive.churchsociety.org/churchman/documents/cman_088_2_thiselton.pdf
There is also a reference to God as 'pure being' in the writings of Bonaventura (1217-1274). See http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/bonaventure
[808] See M. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion,* tr. W.R. Trask, Harper, 1961.
[809] *Exodus* 3:5.
[810] See *Mark* 15:38; *Matthew* 27:51; *Luke* 23:45.
[811] *John* 3:16. The first word of this Greek phrase is the verb derived from the noun αγαπη *agape* (love).

God's activity' (as expressed by one of my informants) must be seen as 'out there' as well as 'in here' – in secular society as well as in the world of 'church'.[812]

7.10 d   Faith and Reason

This heading raises questions of how Christians look at the world, and what it is that they see. To the eye of 'reason' alone – the 'natural' way of looking at the world – it is a place full of evil and corruption, and now, in the twenty-first century, heading more than ever towards self-destruction because of pollution resulting from human activity. To the eye of faith, this is still the case, and Christian believers and organisations are in the forefront of drawing attention to the perils; but in the context of faith the world is also seen as 'loved' by God, and therefore redeemable. In the New Testament a strong paean to 'the life of faith' is given in *The Letter to the Hebrews.* It has been conjectured that this powerful theological document was written to a group of Jewish converts to Christianity who were in danger of relapsing into Judaism because they had 'lost confidence in the power of the sacrifice of Christ to deal with their consciousness of sin'.[813] The writer is a theologian who 'more diligently and successfully than any others of the NT writers, has worked at what we now describe as hermeneutics … the interpretative interaction between ourselves and the originating events on which Christian faith depends ... [including] ... the inter-relationship between the Old and New Testaments'.[814] The relevance of the Letter for Christians today is that it was written to 'a community in crisis … [: a group which has] lost its vision of the universal significance of Jesus Christ'.[815] They are in danger of 'drifting', rather than being decisive, of succumbing to 'weariness', rather than displaying 'endurance', of settling for 'stagnation' rather than working for growth and progress.[816] But the writer urges the readers to recall the faith of their ancestors, of Noah, Abraham and Moses, and many other heroes, who endured great hardships but yet 'through faith' achieved great things. Having referred to Jesus as a 'great high priest', whose sacrifice (of himself, in

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[812] This was stated in a sermon preached in Lichfield Cathedral by The Revd Dr Anthony Moore, on Advent Sunday 2013.

[813] See B. Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews,* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 12.

[814] See G. Hughes, *Hebrews and Hermeneutics,* Society for NT Studies, Monograph Series, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 36.

[815] See A.C. Thistleton, 'Hebrews', in J.D.G. Dunn and J.W. Rogerson (eds), *Eerdmans Commentary* (as above), pp 1451-1482.

[816] See W. Barclay, *Epistle to the Hebrews,* London: Lutterworth Press, 1965, pp 94-96; quoted favourably by Thistleton, *Eerdmans Commentary* (as above), p. 1454.

this case), has the power to take away sins, the writer of *Hebrews* urges that no one should fail to accept God's grace, which is available to all. To demonstrate this, he quotes the words of God in the Book of Jeremiah, 'I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more'. [817]

The writer of *Hebrews* then continues: -

> Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who, for the sake of the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.[818]

There are many people in more recent times who have followed this path but, for present purposes, I name just one: Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1905-1945). Bonhoeffer was a German Lutheran theologian and pastor. He helped to found the 'Confessing Church' which was established in opposition to government-sponsored efforts to unify all Protestant churches in Germany into a single pro-Nazi Evangelical Church. In an early piece of writing, he attempts to work out a theology of the person, in society and the church; he writes of the role of the Spirit in the church, and asks what this implies in relation to issues of authority, freedom, ritual and eschatology.[819] Seven years later, in *The Cost Discipleship,* he writes of what it means to follow Christ in a country beset by a dangerous and criminal government which threatens to dominate the whole world. Giving his interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount he expounds the demands that Jesus makes of his followers, and applies these principles to the church through time.[820] In 1943 he was arrested and imprisoned for his opposition to the government, and for his alleged part in a plot to assassinate Hitler; having been imprisoned for 18

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[817] See *Jeremiah* 31:34, quoted in a slight variant, at *Hebrews* 8:12, See also *Hebrews* 1:3 ('purification for sins'); 2:17 ('sacrifice of atonement'); 5:3 ('single sacrifice for sins').

[818] See *Hebrews* 12:1f.

[819] See D. Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, Works, vol. 1 (1930), tr. J. von Soosten & C.J. Green, Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 2009.

[820] See D. Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship,* Works, vol. 4 (1937), tr. J.D. Dodsey & G.B. Kelly, Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003.

months, he was executed in 1945, ironically just as the Nazi cause was collapsing. He wrote various letters from prison, and the published version of these has become a classic of modern Christian literature. He writes a good deal about the political situation, but also there are moving personal touches, as when he writes to his parents, asking them to dispose of all his personal possessions, adding: -

> In the past two years I've learned how little a person needs to get by. Especially here, with the inactivity of a long imprisonment, I feel the urgent need to do everything possible for the general good within the strict limits imposed on me. You will be able to appreciate this. When you think about how many people are now losing everything every day, one really has no claim on any kind of possessions.[821]

Bonhoeffer's life and death are indeed a supreme example of 'the life of the Spirit'. They are an inspiration and a challenge to anyone in the modern world who experiences conflict between their own ethical convictions and the questionable actions of those with political power. Sometimes, of course, there is a degree of ambiguity as to what one is really seeing or experiencing, as illustrated in the next section.

7.10 e   Objective and Subjective

It is clear in many instances recorded above that my participants' views are subjective: this was particular evident when they were asked to evaluate the relative importance of music and words in the plainchant tracks; some would *see* the music *as* of primary importance, whilst for others the music made little sense without the spirituality of the texts. The notion of 'seeing-as' was explored in some depth by Ludwig Wittgenstein (to whom I have referred several times in the chapters above). One of the images used was that of the 'duck-rabbit' which demonstrates that a particular set of marks on a page can be interpreted in more than one way; and it can be argued that this is true of all human perceptions of the external world.[822] Therefore, it is not surprising that

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[821] See D. Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, Works, vol.8 (1939), tr. J.W. De Gruchy et al., Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010, p. 577.
[822] See   http://www.reading.ac.uk/AcaDepts/ld/Philos/sjs/A%20Tale%20of%20Two%20Problems.pdf   for a discussion of Wittgenstein's 'Aspect Perception' by S. Schroeder.

people from different perspectives (of faith, culture or whatever) can perceive the world as a whole in different ways. This raises further questions as to whether any 'objective' realities can be said to exist, independently of human perception. This is a very big philosophical question (tackled by René Descartes, George Berkeley, Immanuel Kant and others) which cannot be fully discussed here.[823] But it could be argued that all perception is 'subjective' and that the burden of proof of 'objectivity' lies with those who claim it. Certainly, it has been pointed out in connection with Tillich's philosophy that he prefers to speak about religious language in terms of symbols which transcend the realm 'that is split into subjectivity and objectivity'.[824] More recently the 'subjective-objective distinction' has been challenged by Richard Rorty (1931-2007)[825] as well as by Carlo Rovelli (see section 7.8 above). Such antitheses are explored further by the contributors to Tom Beaudoin's *Secular Music and Sacred Theology.*[826] The central theme of this book, enunciated in the introduction, is the way in which 'popular music' can help people to 'invest life with meaning'. By 'popular music' the writers seem to mean the kind of music that is heard at 'rock concerts'. However, much of what is said about the value of this kind of music could equally be said of music of a more 'classical' kind. The book raises, and partly answers, seven major questions:

1. In what ways does popular culture help us to 'invest life with meaning'?
2. What sort of language can we appropriately use when speaking of God?
3. How far is it possible to draw a line between 'objective reality' and subjective perceptions?
4. What are the links between 'artistic inspiration' and 'the divine'?
5. What need have we for a theodicy?
6. Where is the Gospel (good news) in all of this?
7. What is the future for 'traditional' worship and sacred music?

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[823] See R. Descartes, *Discourse on Method* (1637), tr. D.A. Cress, 4th edition, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1998; G. Berkeley, *An Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision* (1709), California, USA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014; I. Kant*, Critique of Pure Reason* (1761), tr. M. Weigelt, London: Penguin Classics, 2007.

[824] See Thiselton (as above), p. 96, and also P. Tillich, 'The Religious Symbol' in S. Hook (ed) *Religious Experience and Truth,* New York University Press, 1961, p.303.

[825] See for example, R. Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

[826] See T. Beaudoin, (ed), *Secular Music and Sacred Theology,* Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2013.

In respect of the third question, there is reference in the book to the paintings of Yves Klein (1928-1962). One of them appears at Ex.7.7. An exhibition of Klein's paintings in 1958 was entitled 'The Void'. He came to be regarded as a crucial figure in the evolution of contemporary art. He decided to paint exclusively in blue, and spoke of this colour in religiously transcendent language. He shifted the focus of art from objects to immaterial sensibility, which might be described as leaping into the void. It is said that Klein refused to answer questions about the 'meaning' of his paintings, saying that they were 'just blue'. So, if any meaning is to be gleaned, this must be derived from the viewer's own subjective interpretation.

Ex.7. 7 'Le Buffle' by Yves Klein[827]

It is noticeable that a number of the contributors to Beaudoin's book refer to the subjective element in their work. One of them is Maeve Louise Heaney who insists that she cannot stand neutrally outside her process of thought, because 'it is coloured by my own experiences of composing and making music, as well as the theological insights gained over the last few years from seeking to understand what happens there'. She adds that …

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[827] This painting was offered as part of Christie's "Post-War and Contemporary Art" sale, London, 4th March 2010. It was estimated to be worth $10 million. See https://www.invaluable.com/blog/yves-klein-blue/

> … Jesus assumed humanity in all that it is, and therefore God can be found in all things, in the depths of our human living and loving, trusting, doubting, celebrating and mourning.[828]

Heaney reminds us that for the Jesuit theologian, Bernard Lonergan (1904-1984): -

> Meaning lies within the consciousness of the artist, but at first it is only implicit, folded up, veiled, unrevealed, unobjectified. Aware of it, the artist has to get a hold of it, he is impelled to behold, inspect, dissect, enjoy, repeat it, and this means objectifying, unfolding, making explicit, unveiling, revealing.[829]

Subjectivity cannot be avoided. In Beaudoin's book, chapters 1 and 2 begin with the pronoun 'I'; chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 open with strongly autobiographical statements. The moving reference to Bonhoeffer's musical analogy has a strongly subjective element, when he writes from prison to his friend Eberhard Bethge: -

> God wants us to love him eternally with our whole hearts – not in such a way as to injure or weaken our earthly love, but to provide a kind of *cantus firmus* to which the other melodies of life provide the counterpoint . . . Where the *cantus firmus* is clear and plain, the counterpoint can be developed to its limits. The two are 'undivided and yet distinct,' in the words of the Chalcedonian definition, like Christ in his divine and human natures. May not the attraction and importance of polyphony in music consist in its being a musical reflection of this Christological fact and therefore of our *vita christiana*? . . . Only a polyphony of this kind can give life a wholeness and at the same time assure us that nothing calamitous can happen as long as the *cantus firmus* is kept going. Please, Eberhard, do not fear and hate the separation if it should come again with all its dangers, but rely on the *cantus firmus*—I don't know whether I have made myself clear now, but one so seldom speaks of such things.[830]

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[828] See Beaudoin, *Secular Music* (as above), p. 26.
[829] See B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology,* Toronto University Press, 1972, reprinted 1990, p. 63f.
[830] See D. Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (1953), London: SCM Press, 2017, pp 162-163, quoted in Beaudoin (as above)*,* p. 152.

Nick Cave (quoted in the same book) further indicates the importance of subjectivity, when he is quoted as saying of St Mark's Gospel: -

> The Christ that emerges from Mark, tramping through the haphazard events of his life, had a ringing intensity about him that I could not resist. Christ spoke to me through his isolation, through the burden of his death, through his rage at the mundane, through his sorrow. Christ, it seemed to me was the victim of humanity's lack of imagination, was hammered to the cross with the nails of creative vapidity. … Christ understood that we as humans were forever held to the ground by the pull of gravity—our ordinariness, our mediocrity—and it was through his example that he gave our imaginations the freedom to fly.[831]

7.10 f A final antithesis – Failure or Fulfilment

As already stated at the start of this chapter, I have been impressed by the *positivity* of my participants; and this stands in sharp contrast with the negativity of some philosophers today, such as Eugene Thacker.[832] In the face of all the problems associated with life on Earth in our 21st century, it is easy to understand why many people adopt a nihilistic frame of mind, ignoring the issues addressed by Pope Francis, and concentrating on personal fulfilment, which tends to involve amassing more and more material possessions and caring less and less for those suffering in the world. A number of elements in the Judaeo-Christian tradition can help us to steer a better path. We may participate regularly in worship, but we find it hard to produce 'the fruits of the Spirit' by living out in our daily lives the principles on which such worship is based. One of the biggest challenges is when we see suffering being experienced by those to whom we are close, or even when we ourselves experience it directly. In such circumstances it can sometimes seem that God is 'absent' rather than present with us. The Judaeo-Christian tradition deals with this issue in a number of different ways. In the biblical book of *Job,* we find a legendary story of a man who at first is successful and prosperous, but who then suffers the most unimaginable series of misfortunes: first his animals are destroyed, then his sons and daughters are killed; then he is beset

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[831] N. Cave, Introduction to *The Gospel according to Mark*, Edinburgh: Canongate, 2010, quoted in Beaudoin (as above), p.163.

[832] See, for example, T. Dekeyser, 'Pessimism, Futility and Extinction: An Interview with Eugene Thacker', in *Theory, Culture and Society,* vol. 37, no 7-8, 2020, pp 367-381.

by boils and sores, so he takes hold of a bit of broken pot, spends his miserable life scratching himself in the vain hope of relieving his discomfort. He is approached by three 'friends' who purport to offer him comfort by explaining the reason(s) for his suffering. But their reasonings are spurious; Job needs (as we all do) to see the 'bigger picture'; and the climax of the book is a magnificent poem about the glories of the created world through which the reality of God can be perceived.

7.11   PLAINCHANT AND POETRY

As I mentioned earlier (see section 3.C.2), no research on the reception of plainchant would be complete without reference to Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-89), priest, poet, and theologian *par excellence,* among whose many lines we find, 'The world is charged with the grandeur of God'.[833] Hopkins' poetry and his theological thought were ahead of his time. He pursued music (as an amateur pianist and composer) and towards the end of his short life he wrote in a letter to his fellow-poet and friend Robert Bridges, 'Every impulse and spring of art seems to have died in me, except for music'.[834] Hopkins was also devoted to plainchant, writing …

> The only good and truly beautiful recitative is that of plain chant… It is a natural development of the speaking, reading, or declaiming voice, and has the richness of nature.[835]

It could be argued that Hopkins (in his very concise way of writing) takes up the theme of the concluding chapters of *Job* (the majestic glory of God) in the twelve lines of a sonnet entitled 'The Windhover' (as well as in some of his other poems). But, in order to grasp his meaning, some 'unpacking' is necessary. The background story of 'The Windhover' (as I imagine it) is as follows: -

The poet is sitting by the fire on a winter evening, reflecting on his experiences earlier in the day. He had gone out for a walk: there was ice on a pond and he had seen,

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[833] See https://poemanalysis.com/gerard-manley-hopkins/gods-grandeur/#:~:text=Stanza%20One,with%20God's%20glory%20and%20splendour

[834] See L. Hamer, '"Every impulse and spring of art seems to have died in me, except for music": Gerard Manley Hopkins as Composer', in *The Musical Times,* Winter 2018 p. 27ff, letter of 3rd April, 1881.

[835] See C.C. Abbot (ed) *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2nd edition, 1963, p. 280, letter of 18th August, 1888.

among other things, a skater, and, in a nearby field, a ploughman working with his oxen. He had also 'caught' (caught sight of) a falconer with his falcon (hawk or 'windhover') and now in the poem he describes in some detail the beauty and perceived character of the bird, 'riding' the air, just as the skater had seemed to ride the ice. Hopkins portrays the falcon as the 'dauphin' of the morning – the heir to the throne, in the kingdom of daylight, and yet a 'minion' (an apparently insignificant entity, like an underling); but we note that the subtitle of the poem is 'To Christ Our Lord'. The poem is powerful because the poet explores and illuminates the age-old Christian paradox of the presence or absence of God in the world, and the reason (as he sees it) for the suffering and death of Jesus. The work of Christ is symbolised by the 'sheer plod' of the oxen (two stressed syllables juxtaposed) as the soil, when turned over (the 'sillion'), gives off a shiny glow. For the falcon, his *raison d'être* is the moment when he drops like a stone to catch his prey; 'AND' (the poet's own emphasis) for the embers in the grate, it is at the moment when they fall and die that they seem to give off the greatest light, as they 'gash gold-vermilion'. So, it is at the point of his death that the significance of the life of Jesus becomes most comprehensible.[836] The whole poem appears below: -

THE WINDHOVER

TO CHRIST OUR LORD

I caught this morning morning's minion, king-
     dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding
     of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
high there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing
in his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
     as a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding
     rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
stirred for a bird - the achieve of, the mastery of the thing !

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here
     buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion
times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier !

     No wonder of it: shéer plód makes plough down sillion
shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
     fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion.[837]

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[836] For a detailed analysis of this beautiful poem, see D. L. Frost, 'The Windhover – A Commentary', in *Theology,* vol. 72, issue 583, 1979, pp 10-13. Frost presented the substance of this article in a sermon preached in St John's College Chapel, Cambridge, in the summer of 1968.

[837] See https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44402/the-windhover

7.12 POSSIBILITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

All that I have written in this concluding chapter is derived (one way or another) from the comments of my participants and informants. As mentioned in Chapter 3, we are dealing with a 'double hermeneutic' where I have been trying to make sense of, and to build into a coherent framework, the many and varied comments and insights of those whose views I have sought, and to connect those views to the various elements of authoritative literature related to my topic. As indicated in Chapter 3, it was to be expected that the results would tend to 'persuade rather than convince, to argue rather than demonstrate, and be credible rather than certain'.[838] There is much scope for the themes and issues raised by my participants, and documented in this thesis, to be taken up by other researchers, doing a similar kind of empirical study, but, of course, with different participants, different questions, etc. The tentacles branching outwards from this project are extensive, and so I give here some suggestions for future research.

7.12. A   Replication with different (larger?) samples

I have noted that my sample of 30 participants was small. One obvious suggestion is that this kind of study should be replicated many times with additional groups of people. Different researchers would undoubtedly be able to approach the topic of 'the reception of plainchant' from different angles, using perhaps a wider range of plainchant recordings, asking different questions from mine, perhaps exploring the effects of plainchant on people from a less 'churchy' background.

7.12. B   Use of brain imaging

When I spoke recently about my research with a famous published author of fiction, she immediately said, 'What about brain-response analysis?'.[839] I told her I was not equipped to approach plainchant at that level, but that similar studies had been done with music more generally, using brain imaging techniques such as functional magnetic response imaging (fMRI) and positron emission tomography (PET).[840] So far

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[838] See N. Emmel, *Sampling and Choosing Cases is Qualitative Research: A Realistic Approach,* London: Sage, 2013, p. 34.

[839] This author was Joanne Harris, the author of *Chocolat* and many other novels. As well as writing, she is also a musician, a flautist, who plays regularly in a small ensemble.

[840] See, for example, (1) S. Vieillard et al., 'Happy, Sad, Scary and Peaceful Musical Excerpts for Research on Emotions', in *Cognitive Emotion,* vol. 22, 2008, pp 720-752; (2) R.J. Zattore, and S.R. Baum, 'Musical Melody and

as I know, such studies have not been done more specifically with reference to plainchant, or even to sacred music as a wider category. Such research would be valuable.

7.12 C   The reception of 'sacred music' more widely

Jonathan Arnold's study referred to 'sacred music in secular society'; his approach was to consult a range of 'experts' to find out how they felt about this issue. Rowan Williams (a former Archbishop of Canterbury) stated that 'people sometimes burst into tears when they hear plainchant'. But (I ask) 'Who are these people?' More empirical research is undoubtedly needed to provide a warrant for this kind of statement. Having mentioned my early life as a cathedral choir boy, I would also like to see some empirical research on the reception of sacred music amongst those who sing in choirs, either as children or adults, asking questions such as 'Does the experience of this repertoire tend to make you more (or less) committed to the Christian faith (or to any kind of faith) throughout your life?' and 'In what other way(s) does it affect your life as a whole?'

7.12. D   Further exploration of 'healing' effects

I have mentioned that IPA is often used in a medical or nursing context, and that I had a conversation with two music therapists at the Birmingham Centre for Arts Therapies (BCAT). More research could be done into the 'healing' effects of plainchant, and perhaps of other sacred music such as Allegri's *Miserere,* a superb blend of chant and polyphony. A very recent article by Lavinia Rebecchini has shown that music can help to enhance not only mental but also physical wellbeing.[841] Her study refers to 'a wide range of musical styles' but makes no reference specifically to sacred or religious music. Perhaps the possibilities of this kind of research could be introduced to theological students, especially anyone desiring to work in hospital chaplaincy.

Speech Intonation: Singing a Different Tune', in *PLOS Biology,* vol. 10, 2012, Article 1001372; (3) J.C. Whitehead and J.L. Armony, 'Singing in the Brain: Neural Representation of Music and Voice as Revealed by fMRI', in *Human Brain Mapping,* vol. 39, no 12, 2018, pp 4913-4924; (4) A. Angulo-Perkins et al., 'Music Listening Engages Specific Cortical Regions within the Temporal Lobes: Differences between Musicians and Nonmusicians', in *Cortex*, vol. 59, 2014, pp 126-137.

[841] See L. Rebecchini, 'Music, Mental Health, and Immunity', in *Brain, Behaviour, and Immunity – Health*, vol. 18, 2021, e100374.

7.12. E   Awareness and understanding of 'the life of the Spirit'

Pursuing further the 'interdisciplinary' aspects of my study, it would be good to see further research (particularly in relation to health and wellbeing) into how sacred music (or even secular music) can enable people to become more aware of what Peter Allan called 'the life of the Spirit'. Following the New Testament principle that divine assistance is available to all, there is no reason to suppose that such benefits are limited to those with a particular religious affiliation. The common ground between music and theology has tended to be studied mainly at a theoretical level; and the theology has tended to be rather 'patristic'. More empirical research would be valuable: I would like to see this done on the basis of a truly post-modern and thoroughly demythologized approach to scriptural texts (as Ricoeur envisaged), unlike the approach of the early Christian 'fathers' who often wrestled needlessly with literal interpretations of the New Testament.[842]

7.12. F   Empirical work on 'music, poetry and the visual arts'

I have also indicated that whereas 'theological' issues may often seem remote to people today, poetry can sometimes help to make a bridge between the secular world and spiritual issues. In his poem, 'God's Grandeur', Hopkins describes a natural world through which God's presence runs like an electrical current, becoming momentarily visible in flame-like flashes that resemble the sparkling of metal foil when moved in the light. Using a different metaphor, the poet describes God's presence as 'the ooze of oil crushed' – the value of the oil is only revealed when the olives are crushed. But humanity has constantly resisted the rule of God ('Why do men now not reck his rod' – recognize his rule?). Industry and commerce have corrupted the landscape. Wearing shoes ('being shod') we no longer have that close connection which people used to have with the ground we walk on. And yet, Hopkins asserts, nature never loses its power: the setting of the sun at night is always followed by its rising in the morning. God guards the broken world as a parent bird uses its body to protect its eggs and hatchlings.[843] There are many examples (to be explored by others) where music, poetry, and indeed the visual arts, can be seen to work together in facilitating our

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[842] A classic example entailed two sayings of Jesus as they occur in the Fourth Gospel: 'I and the Father are one' and 'the Father is greater than I'. See P. Widdicombe, 'The Fathers on the Father in the Gospel of John', in *Semeia*, 1999, pp 105ff.

[843] See https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44395/gods-grandeur

human perception of transcendent realities; this suggests a very fruitful area for empirical research.

7.12. G   *Tonus peregrinus* and its practical implications

On a penultimate note, I return to 'tonus peregrinus'.[844] Further research could approach this topic in both theoretical and practical ways. From a theoretical perspective, there may be some who are far more inclined than I am to pursue a purely historical study of chants, who might want to examine further Lundberg's claim that this 'strange' or 'wandering' tone has a Hebrew origin. For decades, if not centuries, there have been many people desiring that Christians and Jews should be more friendly towards each other, recognizing their common ancestry; and if the belief of Peter Wagner (see section 1.5.3 above) could be justified, this would certainly be good for ecumenical relations. And on the practical and empirical level, I wonder how the average C of E congregation (or those of other main-stream denominations) might respond to the notion of a 'pilgrim' church – a church that has freed itself from the constraints of maintaining a building. I remember that when I was a theological student in the 1960s there was much talk of 'biblical' models: it seemed that in ancient Israel all was well when they were a nomadic people, but that things seemed to go wrong when they 'settled' into an agrarian way of life; so, the Exodus (not the Temple) was seen as an appropriate model for the modern church. When the British Council of Churches changed its identity to 'churches together', it embraced a 'pilgrim prayer': -

> Lord God, we thank you for calling us into the company
> of those who trust in Christ and seek to obey his will.
> May your Spirit guide and strengthen us in mission and service to your world;
> for we are strangers no longer but pilgrims together
> on the way to your Kingdom. Amen.[845]

Bernard Cooke has written of three characteristics of the pilgrim church in the modern world:[846] 1) that is passing through a constantly changing situation; 2) that it must 'keep

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[844] See sections 1.5.3 and 6.10 above.

[845] This prayer is part of the 'Swanwick Declaration' of 1987, which marked the transition from a Council of Churches model of working to the Churches Together model.

[846] See B. Cooke in 'The Way': https://www.theway.org.uk/back/064Cooke.pdf

moving' – a pilgrim only has brief rests; and 3) that such movement is not aimless, but 'pressing on' towards a goal, as when St Paul writes: -

> Not that I have already … reached the goal, but I press on to make it my own … [and] … this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind, and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.[847]

I wonder if there is any evidence of a Christian community which has boldly and willingly allowed its ageing church building to be razed to the ground; and whether this then led to a springing up of 'new life'. I wonder what form this new life might take, and what might be achieved (or lost) without the building.

7.12. H   'For H is a Spirit, and therefore He is God'[848]

Finally, having mentioned that Peter (one of my participants) was chief executive of a hospice, and has a particular interest in 'end-of-life care', I would observe that it has always been a primary tenet of Christianity that, beyond death, humans are able to worship God 'on another shore and in a greater light'.[849] Treated in a post-modern sense, perhaps this means that at the moment of death we may receive some kind of vision of the 'eternal purposes of God' (or 'Desseins éternels', to use Messiaen's phrase). In the nature of the case this cannot be verified empirically. As I understand the Hebrew scriptures, there is no concept of any meaningful kind of life after death; there is only 'Sheol', the permanent place of the dead, 'under the earth' – a sort of shady existence sometimes described as 'going down to the Pit'.[850] In the New Testament it is hard to find any notion of 'the immortality of the soul'; rather, the belief

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[847] See *Philippians* 3:12-14. See also 1 Corinthians 9:24, where he similarly uses an athletic metaphor of running in a race.

[848] See K. Williamson and M. Walsh (eds), *Christopher Smart, 1722-1771, Selected Poems,* London: Penguin Books, 1990, p. 109 (line 298).

[849] These are the words of Eric Milner-White (1884-1963) who was Dean of Kings College Cambridge from 1918 to 1941, and who first compiled the famous service of Nine Lessons and Carols, including the introductory 'bidding prayer' in which these words appear.

[850] See *Isaiah* 14:15, 24:22, and *Ezekiel* 26:20. See also Psalms 88:3. There is, however, a famous quotation from *The Wisdom of Solomon* (in the OT Apocrypha) 3:1 stating that 'the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God'. This book is generally dated to 'late first century BC to early first century AD' – see P. Hayman, 'The Wisdom of Solomon' in *Eerdmans Commentary of the Bible* (as above) p. 763. Thus, it can be said that the text is more representative of Greek rather than Hebrew thought.

of the early Christians is couched more in terms of death and resurrection; and the latter is described, not as following immediately after death, but as 'on the last day' after a 'sleep', when 'the trumpet shall sound……'.[851] Personally I am agnostic on this point.[852] When I used to conduct funerals regularly, in a former, and now distant, phase of my life, I sometimes used to think of the earthworm: a creature that has no knowledge of the music of Bach, or of anything very much above ground, and yet we, a higher form of life, know so much more. Would it not be presumptuous of us, humans, to assume that there are no forms of life 'higher' than ours, of which we can know only as much as the earthworm knows of us?

To link this to music, I would like to see some empirical research in which participants are asked, 'What music would you like to hear on your death-bed?' For me it would be BWV 106 (if I could survive for the duration – less than 20 minutes) followed possibly by something of Messiaen – 'Transports de Joie' perhaps!

POSTSCRIPT

Following on from the last point, I wrote a setting some years ago of the famous prayer, 'God be in my head'.[853] This musical setting (see below at Ex. 7.8) has no particular merit, except that, for the final line, where other settings that I know end quietly, my own version soars, to proclaim the concept of resurrection. I now dedicate this to all my thirty participants and many other informants, as well as to my supervisors, reviewers, and several 'advisors' who have all in their various roles accompanied me on my peregrinations.

THE END

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[851] See *1 Corinthians* 15: 50ff.

[852] 'Agnostic' – not a totally negative state, but a belief that the truth about such matters 'cannot be known' – it is 'ineffable'.

[853] The words are said to be 'possibly of French origin' according to the attribution in *Hymns Ancient & Modern,* 2013, and found in *Horae beatae Mariae Virginis,* London, 1514.

Ex. 7.8

God be in my head

Bernard Salter

Feast of Candlemas, 2008

Salter, B. 'The Reception of Plainchant'

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MUSIC DEPARTMENT

PLAINCHANT RESEARCH PROJECT

by

BERNARD SALTER

APPENDICES

APPENDICES

CONTENTS

APPENDIX 1 : Ethics Documents

APPENDED DOCUMENT 1 – DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT (2 sides of A4)

PROVISIONAL TITLE: THE RECEPTION AND USE OF PLAINCHANT TODAY

RESEARCHER: BERNARD SALTER

The primary intention of the project (to be undertaken on a part-time basis) is to analyse the ways in which individuals, within a selected group of informants, respond to plainchant, either as listeners or performers. My research will concentrate mainly on the affective qualities of plainchant, particularly, in the first instance, when it is heard by listeners to recorded examples. I will attempt to describe and analyse the responses of participants in terms such as 'emotional' and/or 'spiritual'.[1] Part of the rationale for this is that in recent years there have been considerable increases in the sales and popularity of plainchant recordings; but I will make no attempt to generalise from the particular responses found in the course of the study.

Methodology: I envisage a bricolage approach of qualitative methods but making particular use of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). The main features of this approach have been described as follows: -[2]

'seeing afresh': the researcher approaches the topic, and the participants, having 'set aside' as far as possible any previous views or theories;[3]

'dwelling': the researcher expresses willingness to spend time with participants and to listen to their 'stories' in detail;

'explicating': the views of participants are described and analysed; the researcher should place primary emphasis on the latter not the former;

'languaging': the researcher attempts to create a persuasive narrative, so that readers feel that they are being directly addressed; this entails an attempt to 'restore a poetic heart to academic writing' by using rigorous, rich descriptions, as a 'focussed act of discovering, out of silence, sediments of meaning, nuance and texture'.[4]

The research will involve two principal phases: -

PHASE 1 will centre on a questionnaire (copy attached – see Document 5) to be circulated to between 30 and 50 participants. In this phase I will ask participants to listen to several short plainchant tracks, which I will supply by email, and then to answer questions about the way in which they respond to the music (a) on first hearing and (b) after repeated listening.[5] The time taken by each participant over this process will inevitably vary, but need not last more than one hour for any one participant. The time-scale will probably be from Spring 2017 to Summer 2018.

[1.] The definition of such terms as 'emotional' and 'spiritual' will be an issue, but I will interpret their meaning as intended by the participants themselves.

[2] See L. Finlay, 'Engaging Phenomenological Analysis' in *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, vol. 11 (2014) pp. 121ff.

[3] The term used by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) – the 'father' of phenomenology – was *epoché*, or 'bracketing'.

[4] See L. Finlay, as above.

[5] The tracks will be chosen from those which are already in the public domain.

DESCRTIPTION OF PROJECT—continued

PHASE 2: After Phase 1 has been completed I will invite a relatively small number of participants to take part in a one-to-one conversation with me, to analyse their reactions to the music in more detail.[6] The interview schedule (see below) will be derived from two sources: (1) the findings of Phase 1, providing an opportunity to probe emerging themes in more detail; and (2) questions informed by the literature on the psychology of music which suggests that affective responses are both emotional and spiritual, and may link to associated memories.[7] Each conversation will probably last about an hour, and will take place at a mutually agreed venue, or possibly by telephone or skype.[8] As the results of this phase are analysed and synthesized, I will also seek to develop the reflexive aspects of the project for me as the researcher, exploring and developing my own responses to music in general and to plainchant in particular.

For both phases each participant will be asked to sign a Consent Form; but there will be no pressure to take part at any stage. Participants will be free to withdraw from the project at any stage, without being asked to give reasons. All the information gathered at each stage of the project will be totally confidential and will be stored anonymously. Participants will be encouraged to use pseudonymns. Towards the end of the project a 'lay summary' of research findings will be sent to all participants.

Bernard Salter

February 2017

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[6] The number will probably be between 6 and 12, and these will be people who have already participated in Phase 1.

[7] See for example (1) Gillian M. Sandstrom and Frank A. Russo, 'Absorption in music: development of a scale to identify individuals with strong emotional responses to music', in *Psychology of Music,* vol. 41, (March 2013) pp. 216-228. (2) David J. Hargreaves, 'Musical imagination: Perception and production, beauty and creativity' in *Psychology of Music,* vol. 40 (Sep. 2012), pp. 539-557.

[8] There is also an 'iterative' aspect sometimes employed in this kind of research, where further conversations occur with the same participant(s) so that views and feelings can be explored more deeply as time elapses. A research project undertaken on a part-time basis lends itself to this kind of approach, as the time-scale for the whole project is likely to be five or six years.

APPENDED DOCUMENT 2—INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

RESEARCH PROJECT: THE RECEPTION AND USE OF PLAINCHANT TODAY

RESEARCHER: BERNARD SALTER

You are warmly invited to be a participant in this project. It will involve two principal phases which are explained in more detail on the INFORMATION SHEET below.

At this stage, you are invited only to take part in Phase 1.

I am working as a part-time post-graduate research student with Durham University. My research will concentrate mainly on the emotive qualities of plainchant, particularly when it is heard by listeners to recorded examples. In recent years there have been considerable increases in the sales and popularity of plainchant recordings, and my aim is to explore the reasons for this.

All the information gathered will be totally confidential and will be stored anonymously. Participants will be asked to use pseudonymns. Towards the end of the project there may be some sharing of the anony-mised data so that all participants have the opportunity (a) to re-consider their own views and (b) to comment on the views of other participants. The project will in due course be written up as a thesis for a PhD degree.

I am really grateful for your interest in this project.

Bernard Salter

APPENDED DOCUMENT 3—INFORMATION SHEET

Bernard Salter's research project on The Reception and Use of Plainchant Today.

The primary intention of the project is to analyse the ways in which individuals respond to plainchant (either as listeners or performers). I have completed my first four terms as a research student at Durham concentrating on the theoretical background to this study. My supervisors are Professors Bennett Zon and Peter Ward, to whom reference can be made if participants wish to do so at any stage. Their contact details appear at the end of this document.

My research questions are as follows: -

How do different participants *respond* to plainchant?
What is the music's *emotional impact* on the individual performer or listener?
To what extent is enjoyment/appreciation of this music enhanced by
(a) repeated listening or (b) reading 'programme notes' about the music?

The research will involve two principal phases: -

PHASE 1: I will ask participants to listen to several short plainchant tracks, which I will supply by email, and then to answer a few questions about the way in which they respond to the music (a) on first hearing and (b) after repeated listening. The time taken by each participant over this process will inevitably vary, but need not last more than one hour for any one participant. The number of participants at this stage will probably between 30 and 50. The time-scale for Phase 1 will probably be from Spring 2017 to early 2018.

PHASE 2: After Phase 1 has been completed I will invite a relatively small number of participants to take part in a one-to-one conversation with me, to explore their reactions to the music in more detail. Each conversation will probably last about an hour, and will take place at a mutually agreed venue, or possibly by telephone or skype.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign a Consent Form (required by university regulations); but there will be no pressure to take part at any stage. There will be separate Consent Forms for Phase 1 and Phase 2. Participants will be free to withdraw from the project at any stage up to the 30th September 2022 (the 'writing-up' stage) without being asked to give reasons.

I am happy to answer any questions that may arise at any time.
My contact details are
bernardsalter123@gmail.com **Phone 0121 522 3315 OR 07890739294**
My supervisors' emails are bennett.zon@durham.ac.uk and peter.ward@durham.ac.uk

APPENDED DOCUMENT 4—CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: The reception and use of plainchant today (Phase 1)

Name of Researcher: Bernard Salter

Please initial each box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated Spring 2017 for the above project
2. I have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask any questions
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time _up to 30th_ _September 2022_ without giving any reason
4. I agree to take part in Phase 1 of the above project
5. I have been informed about how the data will be used and stored

Participant

Name   **Signature ***   **Date**

……………………………………….   …………………………………….   ………………………

Researcher

Name   **Signature**   **Date**

Bernard Salter   **B. Salter**   **31/3/2017**

……………………………………..   …………………………………….   ………………………

*An 'electronic' signature is sufficient – just type it in as I have done. Thank you

APPENDED DOCUMENT 5—PHASE 1 QUESTIONNAIRE

NOTE: The use of the term 'questionnaire' is not meant to imply that this is in any sense a piece of quantitative research. It is essentially qualitative; the term 'questionnaire' in this context simply means a list of questions to accompany the 'listening exercise' when participants are asked to listen to the three tracks.

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for agreeing to take part in Phase 1 of my project, which will involve you in listening to three short recorded tracks of plainchant, and answering some questions as set out below. Throughout this document the word 'plainchant' could be replaced by the term 'plainsong'. For the purposes of this exercise both words refer to the same thing.

Please try to follow the 'instructions' (in *italics*) as far as possible.

If you have also downloaded the file called COMMENTARY *please do not read this until given the option to do so in the course of the questionnaire (after Question 8).*

QUESTIONS

1.

Before you listen to the tracks which I have sent you, will you please tell me something of your experience of plainchant? *Please choose from the following options, noting that (b) and (c) are not mutually exclusive.*

   (a)I have very limited experience of plainchant (or none at all)
   (b)I am familiar with plainchant as a performer (i.e. singer/accompanist)
   (c)I enjoy listening to plainchant (live or recorded)

Use this box to amplify your answer if you wish to. All the text boxes in this document will expand (up to a

point!) as you type in them.

Every time you see this arrow, please scroll down

QUESTIONNAIRE (continued)

2.

What do you understand plainchant to be? *In as few words as possible please give a 'working definition' of what you think plainchant is. If you find this question too tricky at this stage, please feel free to come back to it later, or to skip it altogether.*

A BRIEF NOTE ABOUT THE TRACKS All three tracks are of unaccompanied plainchant with Latin texts, sung in a monastic or liturgical context.

TRACK A   *Ad te levavi* **–** An Introit for Advent Sunday

TRACK B .. *Puer natus est* – An Introit for Christmas Day

TRACK C   *Exultet* – The 'Easter Proclamation'

3.

Please listen at least once to each of the three tracks. At this stage please listen **without** *reference to the* Commentary. *In the next question you will be asked to choose one track as a 'favourite', so feel free to listen again to any of them if you wish to. Please note how many times you have listened to each track*:

TRACK A

TRACK B

TRACK C

QUESTIONNAIRE (continued)

4.

4A *After hearing all three tracks, choose one to be your 'favourite' – the one which appeals to you most. Please make a note of how many times you listen to it. Note: there is nothing to stop you changing your mind about your 'favourite' track before you answer the questions below.*

My 'favourite' track is   /   A   /   B   /   C   /

I have now listened to this track …………….. times

4B. On A scale of 0 to 10 (where 0 = impossible and 10 = easy) **how hard was it to choose a 'favourite' from the three tracks?**

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4C. An *optional* extra question: **Could you please give any reasons for your choice of a 'favourite' track?** *Please note there are no 'correct' answers to this question; your 'favourite' is simply the one you prefer, and any reasons are valid. If you prefer to leave this box blank, that is fine.*

QUESTIONNAIRE (continued)

5.

With reference to your 'favourite' track please answer the following questions (using as few or as many words as you like):

5 [a] What 'pictures' came into your mind as you listened to this music?

5 [b] Were you aware of any 'feelings' generated by the music? *If so, please try to describe them.*

5 [c] Did the music remind you of any past experiences, either recently or longer ago?

5 [d] Would you describe this music as having any 'spiritual' significance (however you might understand the word 'spiritual')? *If your answer is 'Yes' please give a bit more detail*

5 [e] Did the music bring to mind any other sensory associations (e.g. touch / taste / smell)?

QUESTIONNAIRE (continued)

6.

What can you tell me about your experience of music in general? *You can delete the lines which do not apply*

[a] I am a professional musician – my particular interests are….

[b] I am an amateur instrumentalist / singer *Delete as appropriate*

[c] I am / have been a member of a choir or choral society

[d] I listen to recorded music regularly / sometimes / rarely

[e] My favourite types of music are …….

In the box, please mention any other factors which may be relevant.

7.

How would you describe your religious allegiance? *This question is significant, because I am hoping to get a cross-section of responses, ranging from those who are 'not religious at all' to those who are 'regular church-goers'; but you are free not to answer this question if that is your choice. Please highlight the relevant statements below, or delete those which do not apply.*

[a] I prefer not to answer this question.

[b] I have no religious allegiance at all.

[c] I was once a regular church-goer but my commitments have changed and my attendance has now lapsed.

[d] I attend an act of worship regularly, i.e.
  daily /weekly / twice a month / once a month / a few times a year

Use the box below, if you wish, to clarify your position.

QUESTIONNAIRE (continued)

8.

What else would you be happy to tell me about yourself and your interests in life?
Please complete or delete as appropriate.

[a] I work as a ……………………..

[b] I am in the following age group: 18-24; 25-44; 45-64; 65 and over

[c] I am male/female

[d] I used to work as a ……………………….. but am now in retirement

[e] In addition to music, my other interests include ………………….

A NOTE ABOUT THE *COMMENTARY*

At this stage you may like to look for more information in the *Commentary.* But please note that reference to it is an ***entirely optional*** aspect of this exercise. It contains some general information about plainchant, and also some specific details of the three tracks, including full Latin texts and English translations. To some readers, much of the information given may seem obvious; to some it may seem a bit 'hard-going', but perhaps others will find it helpful. Please do not spend more time on this than you feel able to spare.

9.

9a. Did repeated listening make any difference to your appreciation or enjoyment of the track(s)?

YES /NO

9b. Did reading any part of the 'Commentary' make any difference?

YES / NO

Please make any relevant comments here.

QUESTIONNAIRE (continued)

10.

Is there any other aspect of your experience of plainchant (or of music in general, or life in general!) which you would like to contribute? *Any further comments in this box would be most welcome.*

Thank you for your time and effort so far. Please note that everything that arises from your answers will be treated in strictest confidence, and any data that is incorporated into my thesis will be anonymized.

To assist confidentiality, you will need to be given a pseudonym. If you would like to choose your own, please enter it here: -

(I would like to be referred to as) …………………………………

FINAL QUESTION

Would you be willing to take part in Phase 2 of my project?

This will entail a one-to-one conversation (perhaps lasting about an hour) between yourself and me based particularly on your listening and some of the comments you have made above. The conversation may take place in your own home, if you are willing, or at any other convenient location. If there is an issue of geographical distance, then it may need to be a conversation by telephone or skype. Any such conversation will be recorded and transcribed, and you will then be given the opportunity to edit the transcription, to ensure that it conveys your views accurately.

YES/NO

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR ANSWERS AND COMMENTS

Please return the completed questionnaire by email to
bernardsalter123@gmail.com

Please include also your signed copy of the CONSENT FORM

If you can do this before the end of June, that would be much appreciated. Or you may like to do it straight away, and that would be even more helpful to me. During July and August I plan to be away, and will not be receiving or responding to emails. But in the early Autumn, if I have not received a reply from you, I may send you a gentle reminder. Please remember that you are free to withdraw from the project at any time up to 30th September 2022, without needing to give a reason. Thank you again.
Bernard.

# APPENDIX 2 : COMMENTARY FOR PARTICIPANTS

This Appendix shows the contents of a Commentary which was sent electronically to participants along with the three sound tracks to which they were asked to listen. This 14-page document had its own table of contents as shown here (but with pages renumbered to fit this current document).

COMMENTARY CONTENTS

COMMENTARY—INTRODUCTION

The origins of plainchant are obscure, but there is some evidence that it may have evolved out of the Jewish synagogue chants that were used at the time of Jesus. Originally these would have been little more than 'heightened speech' or a monotone with perhaps little inflexions from time to time, but gradually the variations from the principal note became more elaborate, leading to the kind of chants that are represented in the tracks we are looking at here. These developed over several centuries with the various monastic orders; and they developed in different ways in different geographical locations. Thus it is easy to find nowadays several versions of what is basically the same melody, in spite of efforts that were made towards the end of the eighth century to unify the chanting across the whole of Christendom. A papal decree of 789 makes it clear that teachers were sent from Rome to ensure that the same chants were used throughout the Empire. Their instructions were to 'be sure to emend carefully… the psalms, notes, chants… for often enough there are those who want to call upon God well, but because of poor texts they do it poorly' [*Admonitio generalis*, 23rd March 789]. The problem was that at this time music could not be written down, as we learn from Bishop Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636) who wrote that

'unless sounds are held in the memory by man, they perish, because they cannot be written down'. And so an early form of notation was developed, as an aide-memoire for the Roman teachers and their provincial pupils. This consisted of what I can only call 'squiggles' written above the Latin texts, although they are properly known as 'neumes' [This word is possibly derived from the Greek word **νεῦμα** *neuma* (= a sign)]. An example is shown here These symbols might be helpful to those who already had an idea of the melody but they do not indicate precise pitches or rhythms.

Jubilate Deo universa terra *O be joyful in God all ye lands* (Psalm 100), with 'neumes'.
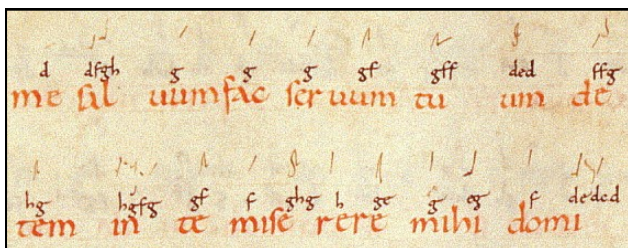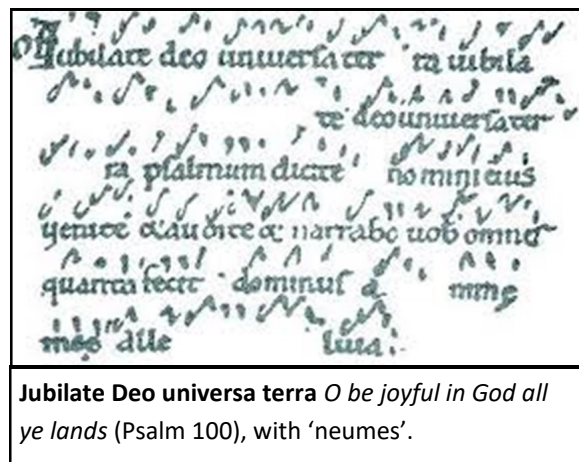
An eleventh-century manuscript from Dijon shows letter-names as well as neumes. But about this same time there were dramatic developments when lines began to be used (anything from one to four lines) to indicate precise pitch-relationships. A notable scholar who developed this technique was the Benedictine monk Guido d'Arezzo (writing c. 1030) who used both lines and letter-names.

By the 13th century, the neumes of Gregorian chant were usually written in square notation on a staff with four lines and three spaces, and a clef marker, as in the 14th-15th century *Graduale Aboense* shown here. In square notation, small groups of ascending notes on a syllable are shown as stacked squares, reading from bottom to top, while descending notes are written with diamonds reading from left to right. Other examples can be found in the Wikipedia article on 'Neume' and in *Grove Music Online* under 'Notation § III, 1'. If you would like to look at the Grove article but do not have subscriber access, please ask me for a copy. The list of paragraph headings alone shows how complex the subject is.

INTRODUCTION (continued)

From the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries, as polyphony began to develop and flourish, the singing of plainchant seems to have been gradually eclipsed, although in the 'new' music its influence was still very strong . In its early forms, polyphony consisted of various layers of embellishment (often improvised) around the elongated notes of a chant: the voice-part which 'held' the notes of the chant became known as the 'cantus firmus' or 'tenor'. This technique of composition is characteristic of the 'Notre-Dame school' (12th and 13th centuries). But in the 14th and 15th centuries there were gradual developments towards the 'paraphrase' technique where a composer's melodies *resembled* those of various chants without quoting them exactly. Palestrina (1525-1594) in some of his Mass settings, uses the older 'cantus firmus' technique but in others he uses the more progressive 'paraphrase' method. Some composers used secular melodies as the basis for Mass settings: the most notable of these is the song 'Westron Wynde' which was used by the English composers Taverner (1490-1545), Tye (c. 1505-1572) and Sheppard (1515-1558). The lyrics of this song read as follows:

> **Westron wynde, when wilt thou blow, the small raine down can raine.**
> **Cryst, if my love were in my armes and I in my bedde again!**

But the original melody is lost and can only be reconstructed hypothetically from the Masses.

Some plainchant melodies were adapted by Luther for his famous chorale melodies, many of which were subsequently used by Bach. Following the Council of Trent (1545-63) various attempts were made to simplify medieval chants to make the words more intelligible and the music more 'uplifting for the faithful'. In 1577 Palestrina and a colleague were commissioned by Pope Gregory XIII 'to purge, correct and reform' the repertoire. Their work was never completed but a book of revised chants (the *Directorium chori*) was published in 1582 and continued to be re-issued until 1750. During this period many other books of 'reformed' chants were published including the Medicean edition of 1614, which was revised and re-issued as the Mechlin edition in 1848. In this version some of the melodies were converted to a jaunty triple time. In France it became the custom for trained singers to improvise descants (as the Notre-Dame singers had done centuries earlier) using the simplified chants as a cantus firmus. In 1871 the German priest and musicologist Franz Haberl, and his publisher Pustet of Ratisbon, brought out an edition which was claimed to be the work of Palestrina rediscovered; this continued to be officially sanctioned by the Vatican until 1904. But meanwhile very significant developments were taking place at Solesmes (near Le Mans in northern France). At the time of the French revolution all monasticism had been suppressed, and many buildings were left to fall into ruins; but the Benedictine Abbey of St Peter was lovingly restored and re-inhabited by a group of people led by an enthusiastic young priest named Prosper Guéranger. Over the next few decades various scholars there made detailed examinations of many ancient manuscripts (including those at St Gallen *) and developed the notation which we tend to associate with plainchant today. More recently the monks of Solesmes have issued numerous recordings of plainchant, and their scholarly work has influenced many practitioners in England notably at Westminster Cathedral, Brompton Oratory and St John's College Cambridge. However, an English authority on plainchant has written to me as follows: -

The Abbey of St Pierre, Solesmes

> **...the general experience of (and approach to) the chant today is based on the performance traditions influenced by the Solesmes revival, which (as many Benedictines will agree) was quite a romanticised recreation of an ideal monastic life and in many ways quite far removed from the early medieval realities in which chant originally sprang. Even the Solesmes-devised notation is part and parcel of that. The 9th-10th century semiology seems to indicate a performance practice of considerable subtlety of local detail, volatility and energy.**

* The monastery of St Gallen (or St Gaul) in Switzerland, near Lake Constance, is one of many Swiss locations where ancient manuscripts have been lovingly preserved. See http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en

TRACKS A, B and C (see below) : The three sound tracks which I am circulating have been chosen more-or-less at random, and they are all in the public domain. The following pages contain musical and textual details with various comments which may be helpful to the listener.

TRACK A—Ad te levavi : An Introit for Advent Sunday

NOTES

At the start **Intr. 8.** refers to the fact that this is an Introit (actually for Advent Sunday) and tells us that is in 'Mode 8'. For more details of the modes, see the box on page 10. Both Mode 7 (see Track B) and Mode 8 contain the notes G to g on the white notes of a keyboard. This chant begins and ends on G but the range of the notes is actually from D to d.

The chant is sung in the customary A-B-A form: the B section begins at the end of the fourth line with the words **Vias tuas**. In this case the A section is also taken from the same psalm (see next page), although this is not always the case.

In our recording the final line (*Gloria Patri*) is not included, but (just for information) the letters **E u o u a e** refer to the vowels in the final words [*et in secula*] seculorum. Amen.

Track A (continued) —**Ad te levavi** : as sung by cantors from a seminary at Tiltenberg*

To thee have I lifted up my soul: my God I trust in you. O let me not be confounded neither let my enemies triumph over me: let none that wait on thee be ashamed. Show me thy ways O Lord, and teach me thy paths. Psalm 25:1-4

* **details on next page**

Track A (continued)

This chant can be found on youtube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvfjgSvq6KA

Other recordings of the same chant can also be found, for example https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VC4Bg3HlMys This illustrates the fact that interpretations (and quality) can vary.

A version of this chant can be found in one of the St Gallen manuscripts;
see http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/doubleview/csg/0359/25/
A page of the manuscript is shown below

Here is a manuscript page (from St Gallen) showing the text and neumes. The panel on the right is an 'interpretation' showing where words have been abbreviated, etc.

Here the chant is described as a 'Responsive Gradual'. If you look at the St Gallen website mentioned above, you can see the page which follows this one in the manuscript.
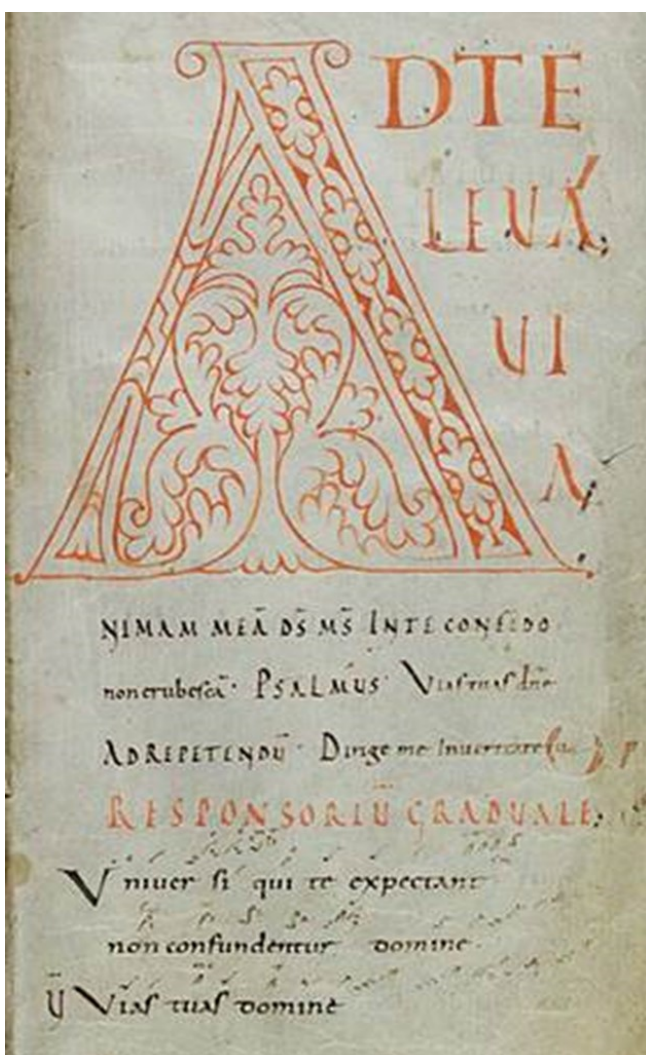
PSALMUS

RESPONSORIU(S) GRADUALE

Ad te levavi animam mea(m)

D(eu)s m(eu)s in te confido

Non erubescam (neque irrideant me) inimici mei

Et enim universi qui te expectant non confundentur Domine

Vias tuas Domine….. (demonstra mihi et semitas tuas edoce me)

Unto thee, O Lord, will I lift up my soul; my God I have put my trust in thee:

O let me not be confounded, neither let mine enemies triumph over me

Psalm 25: 1,2. BCP translation

TRACK B—Puer natus est : An Introit for Christmas Day

NOTES

As with Track A (see p. 5ff) this chant is again an Introit, this time for Christmas Day, and it is again sung in the A-B-A pattern. Here the A section is taken from the well-known Christmas reading from Isaiah 9:6. The psalm-verse is the first half of Psalm 98:1. The singers here are the famous Benedictine monks of St Domingo de Silos in northern Spain. This recording was made in 1973, re-released in 1994 and sold approximately 6 million copies. Some information about the Abbey can be found on page 10 below and at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abbey_of_Santo_Domingo_de_Silos

In this example (unlike Track A) the *Gloria Patri is* included. The full text and notation of the whole chant, including the *Gloria,* are shown on the next page.

<u>Track B (continued)</u>—**Puer natus est** : as sung by the Benedictine monks of St Domingo de Silos

A boy has been born for us and a son given to us: the government [will be] upon his shoulder, and his name will be called 'the messenger of good counsel' (Wonderful Counsellor). Isaiah 9:6.
Sing to the Lord a new song: for he has done marvellous works. Ps 98:1. *Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

Pu - er na - tus est___ no - bis, et__ fi - li - us da - tus est no - bis:___

cu - ius imperi - um super hu - me - rum___ e - - ius:___

et__ vo - ca - bi - tur_____ no - men e - - ius,_____

Fine

ma - gni con - si - li - i An - ge - lus.

Psalm 98:1

Can - ta - te Do - mi - no can - ti - cum no - vum:_____

qui - a_____ mi - ra - bi - li - a fe - cit._____

Glo - ri - a Pa-tri et Fi-li-o: et Spi - ri - tu - i Sanc - to._____

Si - cut___ e - rat in prin - ci - pi - o, et nunc__ et sem - per,_____

DC al Fine

et_____ in_____ sae - cu - la sae - cu - - - lo - rum. A - men._____

Track B (continued) - A remarkable story of popular success

The Abbey of St Domingo de Silos is a Benedictine monastery in northern Spain, said to date back to 929. In the early days, Mozarabic (Spanish) chant melodies were used but in the eleventh century the monks began singing Gregorian chant. In the late nineteenth century they were influenced by the scholarly work at Solesmes (see page 4) and adopted that method of chanting. The tracks on this disk were first recorded in the 1970s, but in 1994 they were re-released after an invitation from the seminary at Lograño to submit recordings for circulation among the local churches to try to improve the knowledge of plainchant. Amazingly over 5 million copies were sold by the end of 1995 including 3 million in the USA, qualifying for a 'triple platinum' certificate. The total has now topped 6 million. It is clear that this music 'touched a nerve' amongst listeners. Audiences ranged from Christian traditionalists who sought music with a deep spiritual feeling to casual listeners who were attracted to any sort of soothing background music for reflection or meditation. Follow-up disks have included Chant 2, Chant 3, Chant Noel, and (in 2004) 'Chant—the anniversary edition'. Reviewers have referred to the atmosphere of spiritual calm which has been described as 'transporting—a potent antidote to the jagged noise and hectic pace that are part of modern living'.

THE MYSTERY OF THE MODES

Here is a chart showing the eight medieval modes. In the type of plainchant to which this document refers, the Modes are known by the numbers 1 to 8. The names given here are of later origin, and in the mid-sixteenth century the 'Aeolian' and 'Ionian' modes were added to the list: they are the equivalent of our modern minor and major scales.

1. Dorian 3. Phrygian 5. Lydian 7. Mixolydian
2. Hypodorian 4. Hypophrygian 6. Hypolydian 8. Hypomixolydian

* Under certain conditions, the B is flatted in modes 1, 2, 5, and 6.

It will be seen that each mode exists in two forms: the upper line above shows the 'authentic' form; the lower line shows the 'plagal' form indicated by the prefix 'hypo-'. The letter 'f' indicates the 'fundamental' note of each mode, which in modern terms would be called the 'tonic' or key-note. The 'plagal' form begins four notes lower than the 'authentic', and this may explain the use of the term 'plagal cadence' in later music. It has been observed that 'connecting the Greek names of these modes to ancient Greek theory or any other tangible existence in Greece is dubious at best; the origin of the names is a sort of historical homage'. Admittedly this is all rather confusing for many people, but it need not affect the enjoyment of listening to (or singing) the chants themselves.

TRACK C—Exultet: The 'Easter Proclamation' sung by an anonymous cantor and choir

This item forms part of the traditional Easter Eve celebrations, when sometimes a 'new fire' is lit to symbolize the resurrection of Christ, and a new paschal candle is blessed. The symbolism of the candle is two-fold: (1) it represents the pillar of fire that went before the Israelites during their flight from Egypt; and (2) it represents Christ, as 'the light of the world'. When the candle is carried in procession, the symbolism is again twofold representing (1) the journey of the Israelites out of Egypt, and (2) the arrival of Christ as 'the Saviour of the world'. In the early church, because of the emphasis on 'new life', Easter was the time for the baptism of new Christian converts.

The music of the Exultet is simple and fairly repetitive. Below is a snapshot of a modern version using traditional notation. If you would like to *see* (rather than just hear) other versions, try one or more of the following: -

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZFaZWi2uSI

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZH6ZI9zxHg

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nP_5YxIAV2E

Note: these may work as direct 'links' from this document, but if not they can easily be copied and pasted into you browser.

The full text of the Exultet, with an English translation, is shown on the following pages

<u>Track C (continued)</u> **Exultet**: text and translation

Exultet iam angelica turba caelorum, exultant divina mysteria, et pro tanti Regis Victoria, tuba insonet salutaris.	*Let the heavenly hosts of angels rejoice now; let the living mysteries be joyfully celebrated, and let the trumpet proclaim the victory of so great a King.*
Gaudeat et tellus tantis irradiate fulgoribus, et aeterni Regis splendore illustrate, totius orbis se sentiat, amisisse caliginem.	*Let the earth also be filled with joy, illuminated with such resplendent rays; and let all people know that the darkness which overshadowed the whole world is chased away by the splendour of our eternal King.*
Laetetur et mater Ecclesia tanti luminis adornata fulgoribus: et magnis populorum vocibus, haec aula resultet.	*Let our mother the Church also be glad, adorned with the rays of so great a light: and let this temple resound with the joyful acclamations of the people.*
Qua propter adstantes vos fratres carissimi, ad tam miram huius sancti luminis claritatem, una mecum quaeso Dei omnipotentis, misericordiam invocate.	*Therefore, beloved brothers, now present at the marvellous brightness of this holy light, I pray you to call with me on the mercy of almighty God.*
Ut qui me non meris meritis intra Levitarum numerum dignatus est aggregare, luminis sui claritatem infundens, cerei huius laudem implore perficiat.	*So that he, who admitted me into the number of his Levites (not on my own merits) will enable me, by pouring his light upon me, to celebrate the praises of this light.*
Per Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum Filium suum, qui cum eo vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus per omnia saecula saeculorum. R. Amen.	*Through our Lord Jesus Christ his Son, who with him and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, God for ever and ever.* R. *Amen.*
V. Dominus vobiscum. R. Et cum spiritu tuo.	V. *The Lord be with you.* R. *And with your spirit.*
V. Sursum corda. R. Habemus ad Dominum.	V. *Lift up your hearts.* R. *We lift them to the Lord.*
V. Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro. R. Dignum et iustum est.	V. *Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.* R. *It is proper and right.*

Track C (continued) **Exultet**: text and translation

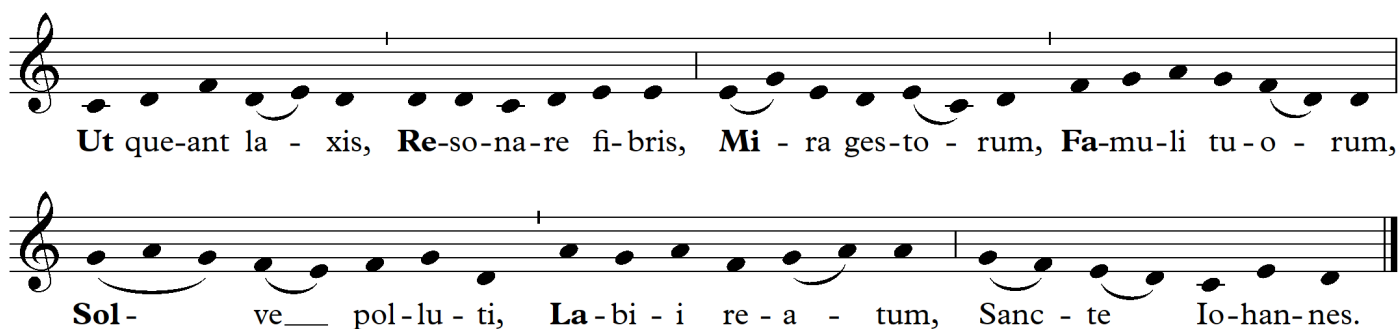|	
Vere dignum et iustum est, invisibilem Deum Patrem omnipotentem, Filiumque eius unigenitum Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum, toto cordis ac mentis affect, et vocis ministerio personare.	*It is truly proper and right to proclaim with all the affection of our heart and soul, and with the sound of our voices, the invisible God, the Father almighty, and his only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.*
Qui pro nobis aeterno Patri Adae debitum solvit, et veteris piaculi cautionem, pio cruore detersit.	*Who paid the debt of Adam for us to his eternal Father, and by his sacred blood cancelled the guilt of original sin.*
Haec sunt enim Paschalia, in quibus vere ille Agnus occiditur, cuius sanguine postes fidelium consecrantur.	*For this is the Paschal feast, in which the true Lamb was slain, by whose blood the doors of the faithful are consecrated.*
Haec nox est, in qua primum patres nostros, filios Israel eductos de Aegypto, Mare Rubrum, sicco vestigio transire fecisti. Haec igitur nox est, quae peccatorum tenebras columnae illuminatione purgavit.	*This is the night in which, of old, you brought our forefathers, the children of Israel, out of Egypt, leading them with dry feet through the Red Sea. This then is the night when the darkness of sin was dissipated by the light of a column of fire.*
Haec nox est, quae hodie per universum mundum in Christo credentes a vitiis saeculi et caligine peccatorum segregatos, reddit gratiae, sociat sanctitati.	*This is the night which now, all over the world, delivers those who believe in Christ from the evils of the world and the darkness of sin, restoring them to grace, and clothing them with sanctity.*
Haec nox est, in qua, destructis vinculis mortis, Christus ab inferis victor ascendit. Nihil enim nobis nasci profuit, nisi redimi profuisset.	*This is the night in which Christ broke the chains of death, and rose from the grave as conqueror. For there was no benefit in being born if we could not be redeemed.*
O mira circa nos tuae pietatis dignatio! O inaestimabilis dilectio caritatis, ut servum redimeres, Filium tradidisti!	*O how wonderful is your goodness towards us! O how unmeasurable is your love! You handed over your Son to redeem a slave.*
O certe necessarium Adae peccatum, quod Christi morte deletum! O felix culpa, quae talem ac tantum meruit habere Redemptorem !	*O truly necessary sin of Adam, which the death of Christ has blotted out! O happy fault that merited so great a Redeemer!*

The track concludes at this point, but fuller versions of the chant are available, as indicated on page 12.

The full text with translation is also available online. See, for example,

http://www.associationofcatholicpriests.ie/2011/03/the-exultet-old-new-and-latin/

POSTSCRIPT—*Ut queant laxis* and 'doh, ray, mee'

This is the first verse of a hymn referring to St John the Baptist. The words and the melody have sometimes been attributed to Guido of Arezzo (c. 991-1033) and it is possible that he used this verse as a teaching exercise to help those learning to read music and to understand pitch relations. You will see that, having started on C, each successive phrase of the melody begins on a note one higher than the previous phrase; and the initial syllables of the phrases are Ut, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol and La. These are the notes of the hexaxchord, considered in this sort of music to the most important in the scale. The seventh note was subsequently given the name Si (using the initial letters of Sancte Iohannes). But later 'Ut' was renamed 'Doh' (giving a more open sound) and 'Si' became 'Tee' (or 'Tea, a drink with jam and bread') as in the film 'The Sound of Music'. Thus now all the notes of the scale can be identified using a different letter of the alphabet. Modern 'tonic sol-fa' can be used to notate relatively simple music in any of the different keys quite clearly, because 'Doh' is always the keynote, but this system becomes more complicated if the music modulates through several different keys.

A fairly literal translation of these words reads: -

So that your servants may, with loosened voices, resound the wonders of your deeds, cleanse the guilt from our stained lips, O Saint John.

But a paraphrase by Cecile Gertken, a Benedictine nun (1902–2001) preserves the crucial syllables and loosely evokes the original meter:

> **Do** *let our voices*
> **re***sonate most purely,*
> **mi***racles telling,*
> **fa***r greater than many;*
> **so** *let our tongues be*
> **la***vish in your praises,*
> **S***aint* **John** *the Baptist.*

APPENDIX 3 : Interview Schedule (for Phase 2)

It is important for me to state at this stage that I see these 'interviews' as 'InterViews' or informal conversations where (a) the atmosphere will be as relaxed as possible for the participant and (b) there may be some exchange of views between the participant and the researcher.[1] There will be a 'reflexive' element to the whole project which may enable me as the researcher to develop and refine my own responses to plainchant as I describe and analyse the responses of participants. For the purposes of this provisional 'schedule' I have divided the interview into three sections: beginning, middle and end.

1. THE BEGINNING: I would thank the participant for her/his willingness to take part in this stage of the project, and would re-iterate the issues relating to consent, anonymity, confidentiality and withdrawal from the project. As some weeks may have elapsed from the questionnaire stage to the interview stage, it would be good for both the participant and myself to listen again to the track which was designated by the participant as her/his 'favourite' track, allowing for the fact that the participant may prefer at this stage to listen to a different track of her/his own choosing. The purpose of this would simply to be recreate aspects of the 'atmosphere' of plainchant. This and other preliminaries might take 5 to 10 minutes.

2. THE MIDDLE: The substance of the conversation would focus on the responses previously indicated by the participant when answering the questionnaire. I would ascertain first whether the participant's views had changed or developed in the intervening time, and would then seek to delve more deeply into the participant's responses. I would seek to follow up, as sensitively as possible, any comments made by the participant regarding 'emotional' responses, and would tentatively raise the issue of whether any of her/his responses touched on the area of 'spirituality' – aware that this term may be understood differently by different participants. I would encourage participants to interpret this term as broadly as possible without necessary reference to any overt allegiance to any particular religious tradition(s). But I would also be aware that for some participants the 'religious' element would feature very strongly in their convictions and lifestyle. This section of the interview might take 40 to 50 minutes, but could be extended or shortened as it seemed appropriate to both the participant and the researcher.

3. THE END: I would want to raise (if this had not already occurred) the question as to whether there were any aspects of the overall subject-matter which had not yet been considered in my research. I would want to emphasize the co-constructive nature of the exercise; I would undertake to allow the participant to read a transcript of the conversation, and to edit it if necessary to ensure that it was a true reflection of her/his views. I would also seek her/his permission to include such views in a general summary of all the findings to be circulated to all participants.

[1.] See Steiner Kvale, *InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*, Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA, 1996.

APPENDIX 4 : Reports of Interviews

As already stated, I regard these 'interviews' more as 'conversations.
On the following pages I present reports of my conversations with the following people: -

NOTE: In the reports, the abbreviation pc is sometimes used for plainchant.

APPENDIX 4 A—Conversation with participant Dawn (DA) on 12th September 2018

DA gave an account of her life, referring particularly to the following factors

1. Her grandfather had been a verger (and a committed church-goer) at a church in Birmingham (St Mark's Ladywood). The church was bombed during World War II and was subsequently closed.

2. Her parents were not church-goers, but DA started attending as a child, influenced by her grandfather. Her Vicar at that time was Terry Thake, and then Michael Wooderson (famous for 'Good News Down the Street'). David Butterfield then arrived in the early 1980s and later in his career became Archdeacon of York. DA was impressed by the emphasis of these clergy on growing the church's role in serving the local community.

3. DA was widowed at the age of 29 and remained at St. Thomas' Church with her daughter.

4. She undertook a course in Clinical Theology and in 1994 became a pastoral assistant to St. Thomas' Church, with a particular ministry to other bereaved people. She obtained a degree in Counselling at Coventry University and wrote an M.A. dissertation at Leicester University on 'How Counselling is Understood in the Church of England'. She now works as a counsellor, in a Christian context and is part of the Association of Pastoral Supervisors and Educators. Her referred clients include clergy as well as lay people. She also has referrals coming from CMCS (the Church Ministerial Counselling Service). Besides this she supervises in two organisations which could be described as of a more 'secular' nature: Walsall Psychological Help, which underpins all doctors' surgeries in Walsall, and Walsall Bereavement Support Service. Her clients also include those working in the public and private sector, who are allowed six sessions of counselling through their workplace. These are referrals known as Employment Assisted Programs.

5. When she met her second husband, he was not a Christian but undertook the Alpha Course and became a member of a noted evangelical church (St John's Harborne). They married and 'tried various churches' and experienced a variety of levels of churchmanship. They both felt that they needed a fresh start and eventually settled at Lichfield Cathedral.

6. Their son attended Lichfield Cathedral School and this was influential in their decision to worship regularly at the Cathedral, attending the Sunday Eucharist at 8 a.m.

DA said that she loves singing (hymns, etc) but she also regards herself primarily as a 'reflector': she loves quietness and stillness, and this is partly why she finds plainchant appealing. She heard chanting on a pilgrimage to Walsingham many years ago, and related that only an hour or two before our conversation she had decided to listen to a recording of plainchant. This enabled her to quieten her mind after the busy-ness of the family breakfast time. She describes herself as a 'Mary' rather than a 'Martha'. [See Luke 10:38-42] Whilst recognising that her personality includes elements of both types, the contemplative and the activist, she is more at home in the former mode which she described as 'listening to Jesus' and 'getting back to what really is important'. Her impression of the monastic life (a picture evoked by listening to pc) is one of serenity. She referred to the experience of 'Christ at the root of my being'.

CONVERSATION WITH DAWN (continued)

This led on to a discussion of The Community of St Chad and the 'Five Rhythms of Grace'. The 'community' draws inspiration from the life of Chad, the 7th-century missionary bishop of Lichfield; it is

> an expression of modern-day monasticism. It has a geographically dispersed membership united by a common commitment to a spiritual lifestyle shaped by five *Rhythms of Grace,* and by participation in a *Spiritual Growth Group.* [It] welcomes any Christian who longs to grow in depth of discipleship and who is prepared to journey with others in a quest for a life-changing faith. [There are] members from all Christian traditions. Members are encouraged to attend [a] service of celebration and commitment, held annually at Lichfield Cathedral on the Saturday nearest to St Chad's Day (2nd March).

The five 'rhythms of grace' are described collectively as 'a series of aspirational statements that, when embraced, will nurture spiritual growth and foster Christian discipleship'. They are described separately as follows:
> Rhythm One: By God's grace, I will seek to be transformed into the likeness of Christ
> Rhythm Two: By God's grace, I will be open to the presence, guidance and power of the Holy Spirit
> Rhythm Three: By God's grace, I will set aside time for prayer, worship and spiritual reading
> Rhythm Four: By God's grace, I will endeavour to be a gracious presence in the world, serving others and working for justice in human relationships and social structures
> Rhythm Five: By God's grace, I will sensitively share my faith with others and support God's mission both locally and globally.

The booklet further explains that these 'are not rules that dictate how people should behave, but rather a starting pint for a process of self-examination that can help us to see what we need to do to grow as disciples of Christ'.

Referring to her counselling experience, DA opined that 'for everyone life is difficult' but she appreciates the concept of worship as 'a foretaste of heaven' when one experiences 'the flowing of the spirit' and 'life on a different plane'. This led on to a discussion of transcendence, which she described as 'a bit like an out-of-body experience'. She might perhaps have been thinking of St Paul's description of a particular experience, about which (perhaps referring obliquely to himself) he writes:

> I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into Paradise - whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows – and he heard things which cannot be told, which man may not utter.

DA referred to 'being aware of something higher, deeper, wider and spirit-filled'. She referred to the fact that she had experienced 'a lot of suffering' in her life, when God seemed to be very distant'; but she expressed the belief that this has helped her to achieve 'a deeper faith'. BS mentioned the medieval concept of 'the dark night of the soul', and *The Cloud of Unknowing*. DA responded that sometimes when God is felt to be absent, God's presence is in a sense even more real. She referred also to a particular psalm-verse:

> Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil:
> For thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. [Psalm 23:4]

DA stated that listening to plainchant can 'help me in coping with the difficulties of human life', because the chants can help to foster a sense of 'just being, waiting, patiently enduring'. She summed up by saying that 'when dealing with the raw side of humanity it is only the calmness of chant that works for me', and added that

> Plainchant offers me a way to look at the omnipotence of God which transcends this world's affairs whilst waiting for his ultimate arrival. It's a place where all the keys of life are held together, majestic, all encompassing, the very place where the spiritual and the human are everlastingly held. It is the foretaste of heaven and it feels magnificent, bright, still, calm, there is no more strife or suffering. It reminds me of an awesome place, one where our very beings will be united with God for ever.

END OF CONVERSATION

APPENDIX 4 B—Phone Conversation with Ben Saunders (Ben) on 15th January 2018

Ben is Director of Music for the Diocese of Leeds

In the course of this brief phone conversation, the following points emerged: -

The conversation arose because BS had written a letter to all the Catholic bishops of England and Wales asking for information about the reception of plainchant (pc). The Bishop of Leeds had referred the matter to Ben, who said that he sees himself effectively as 'the bishop for music' in the Leeds diocese. His official post is designated as Director of Music for the Diocese of Leeds.

Ben affirmed that he sees pc as 'music for children' The diocesan singing programme, which he runs, involves approx. 65 choirs and 3,500 children. PC is used as a vehicle for teaching children to read music.

There are Festivals every year for Girls' choirs, and Boys' choirs. Recently the Girls sang *Missa Orbis Factor*, and the Boys sang *Missa cum jubilo*.

On 5th November 2017 the BBC broadcast 'Sunday Worship' from Bradford with a large choir of children singing plainchant. Responses from listeners were very favourable, and included the following comments:

> *The youth choir were wonderfully together, and wonderfully balanced between the four parts. Their singing of Latin plainchant was exceptional, bearing in mind that Latin is not as common in school and church as it was in my youth. They must have worked very hard over a long period to produce plainchant of this standard. It was a joy and privilege to hear music of this quality. The Diocese can be very proud of its programme for choirs.*

> *Many thanks, music was spiritual and the singing stirred my soul, so beautiful to hear plainsong sung so reverently.*

END OF CONVERSATION

APPENDIX 4 C—Phone Conversation with participant Sally (HH) on 22nd September 2018

In the course of general conversation (prior to the part that was recorded) the notion of 'cohesiveness' cropped up. This was seen as an aspect of the comparison between bell-ringing and the singing (in a group) of plainchant. For HH pc is sometimes 'boring to listen to' but (just like bellringing) it is 'very engaging to actually do'. Another aspect of the comparison is that both bellringing and pc 'use very few notes'.

Bellringing is 'very rhythmic' – pc perhaps less so. HH commented 'I do love bellringing' and noted that when doing this she experiences 'what the occupational therapists call "flow"'

BS said that he had already encountered this term in another context.

For HH it's the experience that 'you get carried away' by the experience when you are doing it, and can 'think about nothing else'.

HH 'The thing for me about bellringing is that, whilst it involves a supreme effort to remember what you are supposed to be doing, it is also extremely communicative but in a very subtle way. You are leaning just a little bit towards people, or just glancing… and they know what you mean. I love that [feeling] when your eyes meet across the room and you think "Yes, I know – I'm working around you" and it feels very harmonious. It doesn't really matter what the sound is – I never really listen to the bells [but what's important is] the pacing: what we're after is ………[this bit got lost in the background noise]

HH My experience of listening to plainsong is possibly rather negative

BS But you found it quite meaningful when you listened to that tape in Brazil.

HH Yes but that was mainly connected with the fact that the tape had been given to me by a Canadian who was just passing through; it was a very generous gift; and, when I played it, it was very calming, partly because of its limitations – no "tune", no "rhythm" particularly. It formed a good background when I was doing other things. I don't really ever sit listening to anything; I like stuff going on in the background (including words) to which I can "tune in" and "tune out"

BS I have to acknowledge the fact that people 'use' music in different ways. For myself, if I'm listening, I need to know what I'm listening to, and be able to follow its structure or understand something of the idiom. That's why I [rarely] listen to opera (except perhaps in the car); it doesn't really mean anything to me.

HH But then for me it doesn't have to mean anything; it's like architecture, just a safe environment [some ref to Mozart?]

HH I prefer music live – we're going to Glyndebourne next month to hear *La Traviata* I think. That's such a beautiful place and you're watching people acting on stage – that's why opera is such a lovely medium for me; there's so much going on, whereas with pc everything's all stripped away, it's just …..

<u>**CONVERSATION WITH SALLY (continued)**</u>

BS [What you think of as being stripped away] was never there in the first place, because pc wasn't intended for people to listen to was it?

HH No, but on listening again to the music you sent through, I was aware of a sense of irritation – men doing their thing.

BS You mentioned the way in which I'm relating to my informants – the fact that it is valid to view myself as one of them too – to analyse my own reactions at some point. But I've said that I want to delay doing that.

HH [What's important is] the understanding that this is an engagement. I come with my constructs and [regarding Phase 1] for me there were some anxieties attached to it, because I recognized that pc wasn't big in my life and I didn't want to offend you by expressing my more negative feelings about it. So I needed to do some probing to find out how far I could be open about what I think and who I am.

BS I hope I convinced you that I wasn't going to be offended by anything you said.

HH Yes you did; you seem to me to be coming at this from a very open-minded perspective, appreciating that people may or may not find meaning in pc. I now appreciate that some people do experience great satisfaction in this kind of singing.

BS Historically it's obviously a male thing. But have you heard of Hildegard of Bingen – a 12th century nun who is known as a composer of quite elaborate chant ?

AFTER A PAUSE

You mentioned a book ….

HH Yes it's Katherine Boo *Behind the Beautiful Forevers.* It's about truth and artistic representations of truth; even when telling a story, there is truthfulness within the story.

BS You started by quizzing me about Ontology; I hope I've satisfied you that I understood what ontology was ! For me, ontology is the study of what is, and epistemology is the study of how we know what is [or is not] the case.

HH The way I understand [ontology and epistemology] is with ontology, it's relatively straightforward; it's either science or it's not; and you've obviously got a good understanding of the variableness with which people will respond to you.

Your epistemology is that idea of people's individual frameworks of understanding, how these can be understood and interpreted – your stance towards IPA which I think of as being your epistemology….. So yes you did [convince me] … [laughter].

<u>END OF CONVERSATION</u>

APPENDIX 4 D—Conversation with participant Joanna on 10th March 2021

This report only quotes the participants comments. What was aid by the researcher is not recorded!

The research findings about the connection between breath control and emotional brain activity do not come as a surprise to me and are the outcomes that I would have guessed. These notes seem very learned and are from the scientific press.

My personal thoughts -
When in the act of singing there is automatically a certain amount of breath control because of the need to regulate the breath to fit the phrases. In certain types of religious music, notably the Orthodox litanies with responses, Anglican Psalm chant, Catholic responsorial psalms, or Bach chorales, as well as plainchant, the spiritual impact can be heightened by exaggerating the pause at the end of each line/ response/ phrase which is done in a single breath. The pregnant pause while a new slow intake of breath is made is an opportunity to meditate on that line and feel prayerful. I become very conscious of the slow calming rhythm that can develop in this situation.

Taken together with the act of procession (as a choir entering with a processional hymn for evensong, for example) it can be a whole-body act of worship. In most situations where i have processed to music I find myself automatically aligning the rhythm of my breathing and step to the music. I have experienced this in the Pascal Liturgy of the Orthodox church (which incorporates a procession round the outside of the church, to the troparion for Pascha "Christ is risen from the dead...") and at various times at Walsingham as a Catholic doing the Stations of the Cross and the Holy Mile.

In the seventies Stephen and I belonged to a performing group called The Elizabethans and we took part in a mystery play performed in costume in Cathedral naves. This play, "Rex Vivus" which was at that time recently discovered and translated for us, opened with a procession of players from the West door through the length of the nave, not to music, but to the repeated shout of "Hail Ye!". We were all, audience and performers alike, stunned by the emotional impact of it.

Incidentally when I was in the Ordinariate we had a routine of saying compline at the end of an evening house meeting. When it came to Psalm 16 (17) we spoke it by group recitation antiphonally with long pauses between each of the two lines of a verse, and a quick changeover between verses. I don't quite know where that tradition comes from.

END OF CONVERSATION

APPENDIX 4 E— Phone Conversation with participant Marian on 13th Jan, 2021

Marian, as a trained Anglican Reader and preacher is familiar with the notion of Eucharist as covenant, and made the point that this is not a new idea. She had on occasions preached on the idea of 'why we do what we do'. She is also familiar with the notion of history as memory, and remembered the 'Thought for the Day' by Ephraim Mirvis when he had paid tribute to Jonathan Sacks. Marian had heard another sermon [a Good Friday reflection in St Paul's Church, Hamsted, Birmingham] when the preacher had dismantled the word 'remembrance', to mean 're-membering' – or making oneself, again, a member of the Body of Christ. Marian believes strongly that the Eucharist should be 'for everyone' [since Christ died 'for everyone'] and she feels uncomfortable when it sometimes seems to be exclusive. But beyond this, the Eucharistic community should be concerned for the needs of the whole of creation, nurturing it, not dominating it.

On related issues, she mentioned the following points: -

Music (as in a *sung* Eucharist) can often be 'magical': it can reach places in oneself where other media cannot reach. It can 'take you out of yourself' and sometimes give rise to a feeling of 'being in heaven'. Music [as Marian sees it] is integral to worship, and it is NOT true that 'the devil has the best tunes'.

Sometimes when liturgical words are spoken, the speaker does not give the appropriate emphasis; but plainchant, and other singing, tends to restore the correct emphasis.

Marian referred to John Shelby Spong, *Born of a woman,* [HarperCollins, 1992]; this is a book which rejects any docetic or gnostic notions suggesting a dualism between the material and spiritual worlds (views which were common in the early days of Christianity). Spong challenges the doctrine of the Virgin Birth and reveals its legacy in modern attitudes towards women and female sexuality.

Marian also mentioned C.S Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew,* in which a new world is 'sung into being' by Aslan; this again speaks of the importance of the whole of creation, and of music within it.

In a recent Lent Course, the Revd Canon Roger Hindley spoke of the power of story, illustrating this with reference to myths, both ancient and modern. The former include stories such as The Tower of Babel; the latter the idea that England acted alone in the victory over Nazism.

END OF CONVERSATION

APPENDIX 4 F — Conversation with participant Mark (MT) on 24th January 2018

MT reported that he had been brought up as a member of the Plymouth Brethren (the 'open' not the exclusive denomination); he had attended a Methodist school and had become an Anglican in his late 40s. Like many 'converts' he became a very keen Anglican and was ordained into the Anglican ministry in 2003.

He stated that he had had quite a moving experience some years ago on a visit to Buckfast Abbey when he had stood in the Nave and heard the monks singing Vespers. On this occasion he was struck by a sense of the divine (the holy or the Holy). He defined 'holy' as 'ethereal', or 'out of this world' and he defined 'Holy' as conveying something of the Divine, something of God. His sense of an awareness or experience of this phenomenon is awakened when he hears 'that kind of music' (i.e. plainchant). He does not listen to this type of music (or any type of music) regularly; he responds more to visual art-forms, and describes himself as 'not a great music lover'; but when he hears plainchant, spasmodically, or music that seems similar [e.g. early polyphony, music of the 'Notre Dame school, etc] this sense of 'the divine' is awakened.

MT attends Eucharistic worship in his local cathedral [Lichfield Cathedral, which can be seen from his lounge window!]. The Sunday morning Eucharist used to include a psalm sung to plainchant, but this no longer happens: MT says that he misses the psalm. He is aware that the cathedral is sometimes described as a 'holy place' or a 'holy house'. He might also have said, when he was a theological student, that 'everywhere is holy'; but he now feels that (although there is a sense in which this is true) there is also a danger of it coming to mean that nowhere is holy, because holy means 'set apart' and refers to some sense of 'the Other'. So he does have a sense of the cathedral as a holy place. But he also sees a sense in which God's presence can be perceived in a run-down housing estate.

He is unsure of what 'the Other' might mean: he sees theological language primarily as metaphor. The word 'God' is a metaphor for something outside of ourselves; consequently, 'the world doesn't centre on me'. He described himself as 'agnostic' and stated that 'the older I get, the less I know, and the less worried I feel'. 'When I was young, I wanted to know, and I knew, the answers [to all the theological questions]. If anyone asked me I could tell them the answer, because I knew it all; it would really worry me if I didn't know the answer, but now it doesn't worry me at all'. However he still appreciates 'talking about theological concepts, because they have meaning, and relevance'. He appreciates the concept of the God who suffers and dies, and lives in places of pain. This gives meaning to things where we would normally have difficulty in finding meaning.

MT referred to his grand-daughter, just 15, who suffers with depression, and 'gets really worried about matters of faith; really it's a psychological condition which expresses itself in terms of [questions about] faith'. BS stated his own view that 'the God about whom you know all the answers is not actually God, because 'God' is an unknown/unknowable reality'. MT echoed this by stating that 'the only thing you can say about God is what [God] is not'. BS and MT had a brief discussion about Nathanael Grant's research topic in the area of 'apophatic theology' [BS checked this term on Google!].

MT also referred to his son who is Professor of Music at Huddersfield, and specialises in music performance. He has done a 3-year project on one piece of music by John Cage. There will be a book and a website. BS expressed interest in the website. MT referred to the kind of music which is different every time it is performed: BS commented that there are similarities with plainchant in the sense that the latter is 'folk music' which has undergone continual change; this occurred especially in the days before music could be written down. It might be considered a retrograde step to insist on the kind of uniformity which developed in the 19th century to make it easier for congregations (as opposed to trained singers) to participate in chanting.

MT made a link between this concept, and the notion prevalent in some non-conformist churches that 'there is no liturgy'. Often the patterns of worship are more stereotyped in those contexts than they are in Anglican liturgies, which now embody considerable variety, both of structure and linguistic content. The latter can therefore be described as more 'creative'.

Subsequent to this conversation, when Mark was asked if he had any 'further thoughts', he said: -

Just that I have been reflecting on why it is that hearing the Psalms sung rather than spoken, somehow lifts them into an expression of the holy (as defined above).   The Psalms, more than any other book of the Bible (it seems to me) are an expression of human emotions.   Could it be that putting them to music combines this sense of the holy with the very human emotions expressed and therefore brings "the Holy" into human experience.   Or, to put it another way, God meets us even in (or especially in) the depth (and height) of human emotion.

END OF CONVERSATION

APPENDIX 4 G — Conversation with Fr Peter Allan (PA) on 27th September, 2018

At the time of this conversation, Peter Allan was Principal of the College of the Resurrection (a college training candidates for the ordained Anglican ministry) a post from which he was about to retire. But he was also Precentor of the monastic Community of the Resurrection based at Mirfield, Yorkshire, and was intending to continue in this role.

PA began by explaining some of the background to the use of plainchant (pc) at Mirfield. The theological college, of which he is Principal is associated with the monastic Community of the Resurrection (CR) on the same site.

PA entered CR as a novice in 1982. By that time he had also become an Associate of the Royal College of Organists (ARCO). Since 1985 he has been the Precentor of the Community, taking total charge of the music, and has also at times served as Prior (the deputy to the Superior). From 1989 he has taught in the College, mainly Systematic and Moral Theology; but he also teaches an MA course on the relationship between pc and Theology. He became Principal of the College in 2011, having previously been Vice-Principal and having acted as Principal more than once, for a term or more. He still plays the organ regularly for a hymn at Evensong, though only rarely does he have chance to play the organ for his own relaxation or practice.

The modern revival of pc in the Church of England goes back to the time of Thomas Helmore (1811-1890). In 1896 the Plainsong and Mediaeval Music Society issued a collection of chants entitled *The Ordinary of the Mass*. Although published anonymously, this collection was the work of Walter Howard Frere (1863-1938), in collaboration with Henry Bremridge Briggs (d.1901). A revised edition of the collection was published in 1937. Their work on the Psalms and Canticles was first published in 1902. They used texts from *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662). For PA, the sad fact was that at this time the liturgy of the C of E was legally tied to the BCP, and therefore inflexible, so that it was impossible to achieve a good 'marriage' between the chants and the available texts. But gradually over the following decades the situation became more fluid with the authorisation of various 'experimental' rites including 'Series 2' (1966/7) and 'Series 3' (1973-80). The work of the Liturgical Commission culminated in 1980 with the publication of the *Alternative Service Book* (ASB) which afforded ample opportunity for experimentation. In the early 1980s, when PA was at Mirfield as a novice and a musician, liturgical revision in the Community was overdue; the existing service books were falling apart, and at this time there were revisions taking place in the Roman Catholic Church with the re-publication of the *Psalterium Monasticum* in 1981, and then the *Liber Hymnarius* in 1983. (The new edition of the 3-volume *Antiphonale Monasticum* did not appear until 2001). The traditional pc versions of the psalms were of course in Latin, but it seemed more appropriate at Mirfield to use an English version, because fewer and fewer people (including ordinands) were required to have a knowledge of Latin.

CONVERSATION WITH PETER ALLAN (continued)

English texts can therefore be described as more 'authentic' in worship. Occasionally, though, at Mirfield, they sing Introits in Latin; and in other parts of the world there are a number of communities where a preference is expressed for the original Latin texts. One such community is that of Münsterschwarzach Abbey in Bavaria. A new English translation of the Psalms appeared in the ASB but it was felt at Mirfield that this lacked the 'energy' of Coverdale's translation of 1535, and so it was decided that the American Psalter would be used; W.H. Auden was a member of the translation panel. PA found that it was his task to translate the Latin liturgies for the Mass and the Hours, showing respect for both (a) the rhythms of the English language and (b) the 'extraordinary dependability of the rhythm of the chant'. Some of this work was done in collaboration with other recognised authorities on pc, including Mary Berry and David Hiley. Some similar work had already been done for the Anglican Community of St John the Baptist at Windsor, and their representative, Sister Pamela, joined the panel. This project took many hours of work.

PA feels deeply the 'spiritual' nature of pc., with its 'deep, deep undergirding rhythm'. 'One taps into it', he said; 'that's the real power of the chant - it's a vehicle which invites engagement with the deep rhythm of the texts'. If pc is treated 'just as music', he opined, then it has nowhere near the same effect. He sees the Kyries as 'parables of forgiveness'; the exploration of chant can take the singer(s), whatever state they start from, on a journey to a state of forgiveness. He gave as a particular example 'Kyrie 16' which is Kyrie 10 in *An English Kyriale*, noting the simplicity of the opening phrase (repeated 3 times) and then the rise in pitch for the 'Christe' line, which points or even carries the singers upwards. When BS mentioned the popularity of chant recordings in recent years and wondered how to account for this, PA acknowledged that there is 'something in the intrinsic quality of pc which can lead people to a sense of calm'. But he also stated that to see chant purely in this way 'misses the point'. He said, 'it's the doing of it that matters - this requires deep concentration which can be demanding or even exhausting, but it has its rewards'. He mentioned the story of a French monastery where they stopped using chant and singing together; the result was that the monks became listless and argumentative. When they eventually resumed chanting, normal life was restored.

BS wondered why the modes of various chants did not always seem to correspond to the mood of the particular festival or season; he tended to think of Modes 1 to 4 as 'more like the minor scale', and therefore 'sad'; but of Modes 5 to 8 as more like the major scale and therefore 'happy'. PA responded by explaining that it is an anachronism to think of the modes in this way, and that the true situation is more complex. He described the characteristics of the modes thus: Mode 1 is 'open' and Mode 7 is not unlike it; Modes 2, 3 and 4 might be described as meditative, contemplative or mystical, turning as they do on semitones and minor thirds; these modes are introspective, but are not necessarily inappropriate at Christmas (for example) when they are used with texts which explore mysteries such as that of the Incarnation.

CONVERSATION WITH PETER ALLAN (continued)

A classic example is the *Dominus dixit* introit (Mode 2) for the Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. Modes 5 and 7, for PA are 'affirmative', and Mode 8 (like Mode 1) is 'used all the time', but is particularly dominant in the Easter season. In many churches an *Alleluia* in Mode 8 is used all the year round, when it should properly be used only in the Easter season. PA believes that 'the mood of the chants will always signal something significant about the season. We should not be too anxious to 'have everything neat and tidy', and should bear in mind that an individual chant can move from one Mode to another. An example of a perfect match of Mode to season occurs on the Eve of Michaelmas - a Vespers antiphon in Mode 7 which is 'sheer joy'.

BS asked PA about the significance of the pause at the caesura in psalm chants. PA explained it thus: it is all to do with 'the life of the Spirit'; the second half of a psalm-verse is a ***response*** to the first half; traditionally the two half-verses are uttered by alternate sides of the gathered community. To respond, you need first to 'hear' what has just been uttered; in this way, in psalms, we enact our response to God who addresses us; the silent pause is an opportunity to 'take stock', as we 're-connect with the silence'. It is a matter of 'plugging in to the under-girding rhythm of the chant'. There are references in medieval treatises to the question of how long the pause should be; but in reality it varies with certain factors such as the size of the worship-space, or the time of the year or day, and the temperature. On the more general issue of silence, PA quoted St Benedict as writing that 'a good monk talks as little as possible'. It is a matter of 'holding a space of stillness so that people can listen to each other'.

END OF CONVERSATION

APPENDIX 4 H — Conversation with Robin Fletcher (RF) on 1st June 2017

The Revd Robin Fletcher (a retired priest) was present in the refreshments area of the Palace Green Library in Durham, when a conversation was taking place between BS and his main supervisor (Bennett Zon). Robin overheard some of the conversation and said he would like to have a further conversation with BS on the topic of pc.

RF thinks of pc as 'a monotone with variations' and compared it to the 'OM' music (a sort of low drone) used for Buddhist meditation. In the latter case it is just a drone, without variation. RF believes that there is something about this kind of music which can penetrate the human psyche. He used the analogy of 'little flowers which penetrate beneath the scales of a fish, and then burst open'.

RF prefers women's voices to men's for this kind of music. He had an experience years ago in Munster Cathedral where a group of eight nuns were singing in an act of worship. He felt the music on this occasion penetrating his personality and emotions.

Locally, in Durham, he was present when a 'scruffy-looking crowd' entered the cathedral and began to sing the *Miserere* of Allegri. The group turned out to be 'The Sixteen'. RF experienced their singing as 'a healing from the divine'.

Pc (for RF) is 'non-threatening': it has a way of 'insinuating itself' into the mind without 'pushing'. RF believes that people of all denominational traditions can appreciate this music.

He believes that he himself is 'genetically programmed' to respond to it. His parents were both religious: they were originally Congregationalists, but became High Anglicans.

Once at Whitby Abbey RF was making a sacramental confession. In the next room there was 'a girl singing'. RF felt that God's forgiveness was mediated as much by the sound of her voice as by the formalities of the confessional. He opined that 'God is completely unprincipled, and can use various ways to get into people's spirit'. He used the term 'crafty Christianity'. The conversation touched on issues related to possible ways in which spirituality and eroticism relate to each other, and BS related his 'Peterborough Cathedral' experience.

BS promised to send to RF various documents and links, including
    His own Commentary on plainchant tracks
    Synagogue Chant
    The Notre Dame School
    Missa Orbis Factor
    The Institute of Christ the King
    KTO tv

END OF CONVERSATION

APPENDIX 4 J — Conversations with Joanna & Stephen (participants) on 22nd Oct 2018

JS (in her 'Phase 1' reply) had highlighted the importance, for a musical listener, of performance standards and recording quality, when listening to plainchant recordings. She had been 'distracted' by the poor quality of the recording on 'Track A' supplied with the Questionnaire. But she recognized that in a monastic community, where plainchant (pc) is sung daily, a high level of skill can sometimes be achieved; as an example she mentioned the Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary, based at 99 Old Oscott Hill, Kingstanding B44 9SR, where they sing pc 'really well' in a way that is 'beautiful and transporting'.

JS also mentioned her experience of a course led by Prof Mary Berry in the mid 1980s, which had shown her 'what [pc] can do to you if you are actually doing it'. BS commented that this chimed in with comments made by Fr Peter Allan CR at Mirfield. JS referred to pc as 'an extreme form of musical worship': because of its simplicity and narrow range of notes it 'encourages meditation and prayer'.

JS likened the difference between listening to pc and singing it to that between 'a picture and an icon'. A picture is 'an image which elicits a response in the beholder' (and in this way is like any other work of creative art). An icon, however, is 'an act of worship in itself', and similarly the singing of pc is (or should be) an act of worship. Expanding on this comparison, JS said that an icon (usually a head and shoulders image of a saint, or Jesus, or his mother) provides an opportunity for the beholder [the worshipper?] to 'connect with, and relate to, that person's life', to feel that 'we are in their presence' and are therefore inspired by their example.

JS further commented that the experience of pc had helped her to appreciate the pattern of Holy Week and the Stations of the Cross. She commented on the extent to which the Old Testament (as well as the New) is read in the Holy Week liturgies. BS commented on the way in which a number of NT scholars have shown the influence which the OT had on the NT writers, since it was fundamental to the belief of those writers that Jesus was the Messiah, and that therefore he 'must have' said and done those things which were prophesied of him in the OT. One example of this is the remark attributed to the risen Jesus in the 'Emmaus' story, that 'the Messiah must suffer….'

In the course of the conversation JS also gave some biographical details which had led her to comment [in Phase 1] that listening to the pc tracks brought back 'jumbled up memories of hours spent in various churches'. She and her husband had moved from Yorkshire to Devon, then to Lincolnshire and Leicestershire before settling in Sutton Coldfield where they now live. They had also experienced a considerable 'journey' in their religious observance, moving from 'low church to high church' as Anglicans and then into the Ordinariate and finally into the Orthodox Church.

<u>**CONVERSATIONS WITH JOANNA & STEPHEN (continued)**</u>

After an excellent lunch which JS had prepared, the conversation turned to SS who expressed a desire for a greater emphasis in the church on 'catholicity across time' – the perception that we should recognize a continuity with the early Christians who 'have trodden the way before us'. SS said he felt that pc helped to 'build a bridge'. He had questions [which may be unanswerable] about how pc had developed from the music of the Jewish synagogues [klesmer music?] and how the Gregorian and Orthodox traditions had diverged whilst still retaining the nomenclature of eight modes in two groups of four. BS commented that pc had never been 'fixed', and remarked on how 'the same melody' can be found with minor variants in e.g. 'Old Roman' chant, and in the Gallican, Ambrosian and Mozarabic traditions.

SS stated that his father, a 'down-to-earth Methodist' had sometimes listened to the Radio 3 broadcasts of Compline sung to pc, and had said that this could take us 'into a different world – a world of spiritual peace'. Reflecting on this, SS had realized that this process works on two levels: (a) the level of performance, when one realizes that pc reflects a monastic environment 'where people devote themselves totally to God' and (b) in terms of 'the substance of the music itself' which is 'different from what we are used to now'.

Referring specifically to the pc tracks supplied by BS for 'Phase 1' SS commented on the way in which Track A had struck him as 'rich in meaning, spiritually', and how this had become clearer as a result of repeated listening. At first he had preferred Track B (which seemed 'simpler' and more 'rooted') and Track C [the Exultet] which had 'a measuredness, [in its] regularity and pattern'. But he found that he 'came back' to Track A with renewed interest. He remarked on its value for 'contemplation and detachment', referring also to its apparent rootlessness and ambiguity, resulting from the modal idiom which is so different from the tonal music that is ubiquitous in everyday life. It is as if the pc music refuses to 'settle' in a particular tonality.

BS said he would like to take up the issue of 'rootlessness' and examine it from a theological perspective. In the Bible (specifically in the OT) there is a tension between the nomadic existence of the early Israelites and the more 'settled' way of life in the period of the monarchy (from Saul, through David and Solomon, the rift between north and south, to the eventual conquest of Jerusalem and the Babylonian exile). The myth of Cain and Abel suggests very strongly that the nomadic way is better, because it is 'purer' when set against the Ba-al worship and fertility cults of the Canaanites, so derided by a number of the prophets, from Elijah onwards. In more modern Christian thought, and in the context of a decline in 'settled' church attendance, the concept of 'the pilgrim people of God' has been seen as a viable model…

Parallel to this, and in the context of developments in the philosophy of religion [see John Hick !] there has been a renewed interest in the notion of a God who sometimes seems to be 'absent' from his people….. [cf *The Dark Night of the Soul* etc] ….

Is there something we can learn from the apparent 'rootlessness' of pc, and the way in which it 'migrated' in the early centuries as Christianity spread …. ? These are possible points for further reflection !!

<u>**END OF CONVERSATION**</u>

APPENDIX 4 K — Further comments from Stephen (by email) on 12th March 2021

BS informed Stephen of some reading he had done on 'Processions and Pilgrimage' and asked for his views. He replied as follows: -

Thank you for that glimpse into the research that you have been doing. Perhaps the history of processions is a pointer to what they actually mean and in effect you have covered the matter already. But it's a complicated issue isn't it? I've been thinking about it and I hope that something in the thoughts that follow will be of some use to you.

In addition to the important examples of processions in the OT that you mention, there's also Nehemiah 12:27-43, which describes two choirs processing (singers + instruments). This is a thanksgiving procession associated with the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem. They also offered sacrifices. This could be the antecedent of the double procession in Hagia Sophia mentioned in your opening quotation. But symmetry had long been a feature of classical architecture as it was seen as symbolising perfection, so symmetry was assimilated into Christian architecture with the same connotation. Symmetry can be seen in many Western church buildings and very definitely in Orthodox churches and practices (cf the separated choirs, for which Monteverdi and the Gabrielis wrote, at St Mark's, Venice – a Byzantine-influenced building). The Cherubikon is indeed a sort of prelude to the Great Entrance which is in turn another procession – of the clergy carrying the gifts of bread and wine.

The major (only?) procession described in the NT is the entry of Christ into Jerusalem. I would suggest it has the following characteristics, probably others as well:

It is triumphal / royal, fitting for a conqueror / king

People demonstrate their shared convictions / they witness to them

It marks Christ's progress – towards the Holy City and the Temple which He purifies.

It marks a significant transition – here, the end of one phase of Christ's ministry and the beginning of His Passion

But although processions in Christian practice can be understood in the light of biblical accounts, they don't really appear to derive directly from them. They have been developed and overlaid by other influences. Processions have played a part in the practice of many religions. Equivalents exist in secular society – marches and parades, often organised against or in support of particular individuals, parties, actions or ideas. Pagan triumphal processions were splendid affairs. These various practices have all been taken over and adapted by Christianity to its needs, recognising also a basic human need for ritual communal activity.

There is some overlap between the concepts of procession and pilgrimage – a journey to a place of spiritual significance. A procession may or may not return to the starting point. In the case of the procession, there is more emphasis on it as an event or activity and often less emphasis on the destination than there might be with a pilgrimage. A procession may be a part of a pilgrimage. But whereas a pilgrimage may be undertaken by an individual, a procession is always communal. It enables the participants to demonstrate through rhythmical movement, usually combined with prayer/singing, their shared ideas, convictions and experiences and it can engender a sense of solidarity and cohesion.

We are getting close to what I sensed in relation to the music of Track C. The unison chanting and the 'ensemble' increase this sense of togetherness and heighten what the singers communicate by way of shared beliefs and experiences (and this despite the fact that they are singing in what many might feel is a not very expressive style).

In Christian worship, processions occur in the Mass / Divine Liturgy and in special contexts and on special occasions, some of which are related to the cycle of the liturgical year. They generally show at least some of the characteristics listed above.

Mass – several processions – Introit, Gospel, Gifts, Holy Communion, (Recessional?).
The Divine Liturgy of the Orthodox Church has the Little Entrance – preceded only by a blessing, three antiphons and litanies, it dates back to the time when service books were too costly to be left in church and were taken there in procession when needed – and the Great Entrance, when the gifts of bread and wine are carried in procession round the church.

Special occasions – Palm Sunday, Passiontide, Easter etc., also
Processions as penance – Holy Week especially in Spain
(also a manifestation of faith, a witness)
Processions for supplication e.g. when Constantinople was under siege by the Turks, ikons of the Mother of God and the saints were taken in procession round the city walls
Weddings, funerals (significant transitions in life, progress towards our destination)

Architecture has a bearing on how processions are done and how their meaning is perceived and interpreted. The basilica (from the Greek for king) or hall church with its colonnades is well suited to triumphal / royal processions progressing in the direction of the 'triumphal arch' and the place in the apse where a king might be enthroned. Processions in the Byzantine rite often take a more circular route.

END OF CONVERSATION

APPENDIX 4 L — Conversation with Angela Fenwick and Gordon Thornett, 27th Oct 2016

This conversation took place at The Birmingham Centre for Arts Therapies (BCAT), located in the Friends' Meeting House at 220 Moseley Road, Birmingham. Gordon Thornett (GT) is a member of the team of Music Therapists working at 220 Moseley Road Birmingham. Dr Angela Fenwick (AF) is the leader of the team. Throughout this summary/report the initials MT are used for music therapy or music therapist.

GT outlined his entrée into the world of MT. He had been a secondary music teacher in a direct-grant school, particularly enjoying his work with choirs and orchestras, and was then appointed as Head of Music at a Girls Comprehensive School. Here he became disenchanted because 'so many kids just didn't want to know'. He saw a television programme about Nordoff and Robbins, showing their work with severely handicapped children and subsequently obtained a secondment to undergo one of their training courses (one year, full-time). He was then appointed as Head of Baskerville Residential School for autistic children. In the early 1980s GT met AF who was then beginning to practise MT in Birmingham. GT became a member of AF's team of three; but when AF took a year out to complete an MA, Gt became acting Head of the team.

BS and GT discussed the different types of MT (a) active, where clients engage in (mainly improvisational) playing of musical instruments and (b) receptive, where the clients are engaged in listening to, and responding to, music which may be either live or recorded. GT prefers the first category in his own work, but BS expressed (for his research purposes) a particular interest in the second. GT pointed out the importance of listening in any kind of musical activity.

AF referred to the diagram of a triangle representing the therapist, the client and the art-form (in this case music) and explained that the aim of MT was to provide a safe space for the client within that triangle: the client may respond when shown various instruments ('Oh look, there's a drumkit') or they may not respond at all. The situation must be non-judgmental; the therapist needs to 'bring' music (perhaps literally) to the client, and when this 'meeting' takes place, that is when the therapeutic process begins: it is the start of 'a journey' for the client, and perhaps for the therapist as well. The therapist's first aim is to achieve rapport with the client, observing how the client responds (for example when listening to a march or a waltz). The therapist then asks herself how to use that particular response in order to address the client's condition (the reason for which the client has been referred). Sometimes music may bring a sort of 'healing' to the client, but only if it resonates with the client's 'speed of the day' (his/her mood and background).

AF referred to the particular qualities of pc (and of music in general). The attributes of music include pitch, rhythm, intensity etc. Because of its relative lack of obvious rhythmic qualities pc would be unlikely to evoke a notable physical response in most clients (although it has been used in certain circumstances). Pc has a limited frequency range, it is fairly repetitive, it is archaic and may evoke pictorial images of a religious nature. It is quite possible that a client hearing this type of music for the first time might be put 'in a calmer frame of mind'. It could help to slow down the pulse rate. GT referred to 'guided imagery' a technique used by Leslie Bunt, where a client is put into a semi-conscious state, before listening to certain items of music to see visual what images might arise.

CONVERSATION WITH ANGELA FENWICK & GORDON THORNETT (continued)

We briefly discussed the use of music as an anaesthetic. AF recalled a dentist some years ago who played 'white sound' through headphones to his patients in the belief that this had a particular effect on the pain receptors in the brain, in such a way as to 'mask' the pain that might be induced by the drill.

In some circumstances (in the USA and in the UK) music-listening has been used as a therapy for soldiers returning from battle situations. But the 'healing' power of music is greater when such people are involved actively and not just receptively.

AF is also an organist and choir director at her local (rural) parish church. She finds in this context that, whilst choir members have their own personal issues and can at times be negative (for example when confronted by music that is new to them) generally the experience of choir singing is therapeutic: it helps to bring the singers together, and challenges them to attempt to 'do justice to the great heritage of church music'.

When BS mentioned the word 'transcendence' AF responded by saying (1) that music can sometimes 'lift [people] out of their everyday experiences and (2) that there has been an increasing realisation over recent years that the needs of people in nursing homes (as well as others) include 'spiritual' as well as physical and recreational needs. AF mentioned a situation where she had worked with a client who had been a competent pianist but was now (as a result of Alzheimers) conscious of his reduced skills. She was able to share with him in exercises of responsive improvisation.

AF also mentioned that in the library at the Centre there are a number of books relating to MT and 'spirituality'. BS said he would like to make another visit and spend some time perusing them.

END OF CONVERSATION

APPENDIX 4 M — Conversation with Guy Nicholls (GN) by email - see dates below

23rd Feb. 2019 – BS to GN

I was impressed by your comment about the *torculus / episema* in the Communion antiphon on the first syllable of 'petram'. I've been trying to write something for Durham on 'emotion in music'. I know you were talking more of a picture of solidity, but that isn't far from the notion of stability, which could count as an emotion. I wonder if you can think of any other examples (perhaps just a couple) where the notes themselves seem to speak of some kind of emotion - elation, sorrow, or whatever. If so, I'd be very pleased to know.

15th March 2019 – GN to BS

The answer to your question is not straightforward, and that is one reason I have delayed replying. There is much dispute among scholars as to the existence, let alone the frequency, of such forms of 'word-painting' in Gregorian i.e. Roman chant. I believe that it does exist, though it may be largely a matter of subjective interpretation.

One example, however, which surely cannot be ignored, is the Communion for Sunday Post Epiphaniam II, the wonderful short narration of the miracle at Cana. The astonishment of the steward is unmistakable! I would also argue for the 'Christus factus est' gradual, where the abasement of the Cross descends to the lowest note in the piece at 'crucis', and the setting of the melisma on 'exaltavit', which soars above the rest of the piece. There are many similar examples, but those are the best I know. As I say, some may be more subjective than others.

END OF CONVERSATION

APPENDIX 4 N — Emails relating to Conversation with Jonathan Arnold (JA), dates below)

9th Feb 2018 BS to JA

Dear Dr Arnold,

I am a retired priest, now living in the Birmingham area. I have also worked as a parish organist and music director. In an attempt to keep my brain active in retirement I have undertaken research (based at Durham University) into the reception of plainchant. I am looking at ways in which people are affected by listening to recordings of plainchant, and also how they respond to hearing it live, or indeed to performing it.

I am planning to come to Oxford on 1st March for the talk/workshop at the University Church by Fr Peter Allan CR. On that day I would also plan to attend Evensong at Magdalen, and I wondered if we might meet briefly so that you could share with me some of your thoughts, since your combined musical and theological experiences seem similar in some ways to mine.

My undergraduate days were spent at St John's in Cambridge, where I read first Music and then Theology. I got my ARCO at the age of 17, and more recently (in my seventies!) I have completed the exams for a Fellowship of the Guild of Church Musicians.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,
Bernard Salter.

The conversation when we met (on 1st March) was very brief. JA's main comment was, 'It's all in the book' – referring to his own book, Sacred Music in Secular Society*, which I subsequently bought and found extremely useful (as the Thesis demonstrates).*

2nd March 2018 JA to BS (copied also to Wilfrid Jones)

Dear Bernard,

Very good to see you too and sorry we couldn't talk more. Wilfrid Jones is in Cambridge and he is interested in the Catholic theology and practise of music, particularly in response to the Second Vatican Council and the subsequent Liturgical Reform.

I am copying him in. Hope all is well with you Wilf. Bernard is interest in plainchant so I thought of you.

Best wishes,

Jonathan

END OF APPENDIX 4