

Follow up to in-class guided writing on Richard Wagner (week of March 20-24)

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Below is a sampling of student reactions to Wagner's writing (excerpt from *Jewishness in Music* [1860] and Prelude to *Lohengrin*, Act III [1850])—all of these ideas could form the basis of a meaningful analytical paper: interpreting the meaning of musical sounds, showing how your listening experience evolved based on specific information to lead you to an interpretation.

**Wagner is similar to...**

AC/DC	Michael Jackson (multiple	Selena Perez
Adele	votes)	Pablo Picasso
Beyoncé (multiple votes)	Etta James	Prince
David Bowie	Bon Jovi	T.I.
Drake	R. Kelly	Tina Turner
Eminem	Alicia Keys	Lil Wayne
Jimi Hendrix	Nicki Minaj	Kanye West
	Lin-Manuel Miranda	

**Neutral reactions**

[My listening experience] is the same, just the artist behind it I don't like.

The listening experience is still about the same since it's still a form of art which is beautiful.

My listening experience hasn't changed. The song still sounds like a fight scene. After learning so much about Wagner and his twisted mind, I think he was a good composer.

**Better understanding of Wagner's personality**

Now I get the feeling that he's [Wagner] just saying how great and tremendous he is, and when the piece goes to *piano* I feel he is referring to other people. My impression before was just about all that energy that the piece has [*fortissimo*, very energetic, exciting, brave, strong, determined] but now I feel that energy is just him talking about himself.

Listening to this piece I feel like the trumpets signify that of himself being a greater person than anyone else. The trumpets give him a theme of superiority.

First impression: strong opening, battle, fighting towards victory... After: I still get the impression of "victory," but in a difference sense: Wagner's victory above others, how highly he thought of himself.

Listening to this piece again and knowing what I know about Wagner makes me understand the feelings that he used to compose this piece. He wanted this piece to be the "best."

Wagner's ideas made me feel like he's not smart at all for saying all Jews don't know about music.

Wagner's ideas honestly make me question his brain capacity and thought process. Just the fact that he believed talent came based on a religion or culture is sickening. The fact that there were great, well-known Jewish composers should have made Wagner rethink and do a double-take.

### **Discomfort with the music itself**

Wagner's ideas make me feel as if I'm obligated to feel the same way, and I don't feel the same way.

Before the song started again my approval for it had already diminished. The song now feels bland and distasteful.

My first impression of this piece is that it has to be from the Romantic era since it's very loud. It's communicating something bold... It makes me feel disgusted by the way he [Wagner] bashes other people's religion. His music doesn't seem so great to me. It sounds like every other piece I had originally heard already and Beethoven's level of expertise is way better than this. I don't really see the big fuss.

It makes me feel sad that such a good artist has this kind of ideology. I can't separate these two. After reading [Wagner's ideas], I don't want to listen to his music, because in order for me to appreciate the artist, the artist should be a decent person. [After learning about Wagner's ideas] everything changed. I don't appreciate [Wagner's music] as much.

### **Music as representative of [an idea of] German culture**

It sounds like the rise and fall of something victorious. At first it brings me hope and then it calms me down to bring me back to reality. Then it comes back as strong as ever with the hope it gave me at the beginning... Now knowing what Wagner stands for this piece of music must stand for German pride and how if it falls, it will come back better and stronger.

### **Broad application/extrapolating to other situations not specifically included in the music or Wagner's writing**

I feel like he is sick, ethnocentric, and egoistic. I feel like he is a potential murderer. I feel like he shouldn't be allowed to see the sun again because those words can incite racial words or killings. [Listening to the piece at the end of class] I feel like he is forming an army of soldiers to march against and kill the Jews in a disguise (quiet section). That is after preparing, the quietly sneak up on them and then the volume comes on.

Wagner's words make me feel disgusted because I wouldn't want that to be said about me or any black person, even though many black people know what it feels like to be spoken of in that manner.

First impression: bigger, louder, German, formal, big announcement?... End reaction: Now I know where all that pride comes from... I feel that humanity never changes, we just fear the different, we are always looking for a scapegoat, for a reason for all our troubles. Germans had the Jews, Americans had the Blacks and now the Muslims, Jews have the Palestinians, and so on. So, I get the idea that there's not much hope for humankind.