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Historical Research in Music Education and the Historiography of Kant, Spengler and Foucault

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Abstract

This essay examines historical research in music education in connection with historiography and the writing of history, using the works of three exemplary writers recently reviewed in book-length studies. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) representing classic, enlightenment philosophy as it pertains to historiography was primarily a philosopher who wrote tangentially on history. Oswald Spengler (1880-1936), a modernist German historian and philosopher famous for his pessimistic tome, *The Decline of the West* (1924-26), was primarily a historian with an interest in philosophy. Michel Foucault (1926-1984), who stated the case for post-modern historiography from a French perspective, seems to have been interested in history and philosophy more or less equally. Each of these three had important things to say to music education historians about the nature of history itself. All three addressed fundamental questions on the nature and value of history: What is it? What good is it? Twenty-first century commentators have made interesting applications of their ideas to present concerns of historians in general, which music education historians may well extrapolate to their own concerns.

Introduction

Historiography, the writing of history, is an ancient and honorable endeavor. Amateurs and professionals, ancient and modern (and postmodern) have taken up the task of writing about the people, places, organizations, and events in order to satisfy their curiosity, create or correct the record, better understand the present, explain complex ideas, and facilitate healing of pathologies. Historians of music education, beginning in the 1920s, have taken up these tasks and contributed to these ends. As with their colleagues in other fields of history, music education historians confront some fundamental questions, whether they know it or not.^[1]

Fundamental questions for music education historians, indeed for all historians, have to do with the nature of history. Is history teleological or not?^[2] If history is teleological, is it moving in a positive or negative direction? If history is moving toward positive ends, what are they? If history is moving toward negative ends, what are they? If history is not teleological, what is it? All these questions deal with Carl Becker's famous question: "What is the good of history?"^[3] Three American scholars have recently examined what Immanuel Kant, Oswald Spengler, and Michel Foucault had to say about these and other issues in the late eighteenth century and in the early and late twentieth century. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, scholars examined Kant, Spengler, and Foucault to see what they thought history was and what good might come of it, if any. Kant and Foucault, though both interested in history, were primarily philosophers. Spengler, though primarily a historian, was also very interested in philosophy. Because of their interests in philosophy and history, all three offered interesting assessments on the nature and value of historiography. Their twenty-first century commentators have made interesting applications of their ideas to present concerns of historians in general, which music education historians may well extrapolate to their own concerns.

Immanuel Kant and Classic Historiography

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) was a German metaphysician and philosopher whose *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), and *Critique of Judgment* (1790) helped summarize the Classical period in historiography. Though often associated with the Enlightenment (called the *Aufklärung* in Germany), Kant was one of the oldest of the so-called Liberty Generation (b. 1724–1741), the generation that followed the Enlightenment Generation (b. 1701–1723).^[4]

Some of Kant's peers in music were Johann Stamitz (1717–1757), Leopold Mozart (1719–1787), Peter Pelham III (1721–1805), David Zeisberger (1721–1808), and Carl Friedrich Abel (1723–1787) in the Awakening Generation (b. 1701–1723), and Charles Burney (1726–1814), Niccolò Piccinni (1728–1800), Daniel Bayley (1729–1792), Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809), and François-Joseph Gossec (1734–1829) in the Liberty Generation.^[5]

Educators who were Kant's peers included John Phillips (1719–1795) and John Witherspoon (1723–1794) in the Enlightenment Generation, and Henrietta Benigna Justina von Zinzendorf Watteville (1725–1789) and Ezra Stiles (1727–1795) in the Liberty Generation. Other major cultural and intellectual figures of the time were Jean Le Rond d'Alembert (1717–1783), George Whitefield (1714–1770), Johann Winckelmann (1717–1768), and Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792) in the Enlightenment Generation, and Logan (c. 1725–c. 1780), George Mason (1725–1792), Oliver Goldsmith (1728–1774), and Mercy Otis Warren (1728–1814) in the Liberty Generation.

Sharon Anderson-Gould, a professor in philosophy at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, has recently argued that Kant enunciated a philosophical position that history was teleological in nature. From his perspective in Königsberg, Germany, in the middle of the eighteenth century, Kant saw history as a movement toward a goal. He went even further to say that the goal was the moral progress of humanity. Kant argued that reason led to freedom which in turn led to cultural differences. History is progressive by definition, and moral progress is a historical process. History takes place in social and cultural contexts in cosmopolitan cultures, and the plurality of those cultures is a historical fact.^[6]

Kant defined evil as individual selfishness; overcoming it is the duty of what he called “ethical communities.” Left to their own devices, people would act in their own best interests, but Kant saw in this selfishness a propensity toward evil. Communities, on the other hand, naturally look to shared values and goals; virtue is a social good, a doing unto others. In an ethical communities people are concerned with goodness; the highest good is the main purpose of human endeavor, the *telos* toward which all people strive.^[7]

Anderson-Gould showed how enlightenment (*aufklärung*) for Kant was a process of emerging public consciousness and perhaps hope. Hope transcends rationality. Human development is inherently a social task. Historians contribute to moral progress (and help establish hope) by extending the ethical community to past generations. Reflective judgment reveals this moral progress:

The periodic expression of humanity's moral predisposition in the form of moral enthusiasm is not a cause in the ordinary empirical sense But historical "understanding" in its full sense requires reflective judgment, because to grasp the significance of a complex series of events requires the recognition of some sorts of patterns and the determination of some kind of whole.[\[8\]](#)

Reflective judgment for Kant was akin to aesthetic judgment or criticism. The three great questions were: What may people know? What must people do? and What may people hope? Clearly Kant believed history should reveal truth, that it should teach moral lessons and inspire.[\[9\]](#)

Edward Bailey Birge and most music education historians since him have been fairly close to Kant in their approach, whether they knew it or not. Birge, Keene, Tellstrom, Mark and Gary, and others have used primary and secondary sources to tell stories of progress in American music education, mostly from the Pilgrims to the present. Mark and Gary have expanded the story a bit to include a small amount of material on indigenous peoples, Hispanics, and people with disabilities. None have had very much to say about African-Americans or women music educators with special needs and concerns. Only Mark and Gary have discussed the possibility of any serious back-sliding or movement away from ideal circumstances.[\[10\]](#)

Thousands of books, book chapters, articles, dissertations, and theses on music education history tell similar Enlightenment, Kantian stories. Music education exists for a moral purpose: to get children listening, singing, playing instruments, moving, and creating so they may become fuller, richer, more complete human beings. Music education biographical studies show how leading individuals contributed to this moral uplift, and the geographical studies tell how progress toward moral ends occurred in various locations around the country. Organizational histories narrate stories of people working in groups (ethical communities?) for the benefit of music education and music students.[\[11\]](#)

Oswald Spengler (1880–1936), a German historian and philosopher, was born and raised in central Germany, home of many famous German mystics and romantics. He was a private (nonacademic) historian. German historiography was in ascendance in his youth, with people like Herder, Ranke, Hegel, Marx, Weber, and many others writing idealist history in the tradition that followed Kant. Spengler wrote his famous two-volume history, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* in 1918–22 (published in English as *The Decline of the West*, 1924–26), and had a substantial following in the US, especially at Harvard University.[\[12\]](#)

Oswald Spengler and German Intellectual Historiography

Spengler's peers in the Missionary (b. 1860–1882) and Lost (b. 1883–1900) generations included the musicians, Maurice Ravel (1875–1937), Pablo Casals (1876–1973), Manuel de Falla (1876–1948), Bruno Walter (1876–1962), Ottorino Respighi (1879–1936), Ernest Bloch (1880–1959), Béla Bartók (1881–1945), Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967), Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971). Educators of his time were Mary McCleod Bethune (1875–1955), Lewis M. Terman (1877–1956),

Janusz Korczak (1878–1942), Arthur Bestor (1879–1944), Arnold Gesell (1880–1961), Jacques Maritan (1882–1973), A. S. Neill (1883–1973), Clark Hull (1884–1952), and Walter C. Eels (1886–1962).[\[13\]](#)

Music educators who were cohorts of Spengler were Osbourne McConathy (1875–1961), Edgar B. Gordon (1875–1961), N. Clark Smith (1877–1933), Satis N. B. Coleman (1878–1961), Mabel B. Bray (1879–1979), Justine B. C. Ward (1879–1975), Albert A. Harding (1880–1958), W. Otto Miessner (1880–1967), Mabelle Glenn (1881–1969), A. R. McAllister (1881–1944), Olga Samaroff Stokowski (1882–1948), Karl W. Gehrrens (1882–1975), and R. Nathaniel Dett (1882–1943).[\[14\]](#)

Other Missionary and Lost generation luminaries nearest Spengler in age included Isadora Duncan (1878–1927), Martin Buber (1878–1965), Carl Sandburg (1878–1967), Upton Sinclair (1878–1968), Albert Einstein (1879–1955), Margaret Sanger (1879–1966), Douglas MacArthur (1880–1964), John L. Lewis (1880–1969), H. L. Mencken (1880–1956), George C. Marshall (1880–1959), Helen Keller (1880–1968), Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), and Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882–1945). It is difficult to read these names and not think about depression, strife, and conflict which were so pervasive in the first half of the twentieth century.[\[15\]](#)

John Farrenkopf, an independent scholar like Spengler himself, has made the case for Spengler's importance in the field of intellectual history. Viewed from an early twenty-first century perspective it is clear that Spengler made important contributions in helping expand historians' Eurocentric views, counteracting optimism and progressive ideals so pervasive in the nineteenth century, and putting forth a cyclical model for historical narratives. Spengler helped expand historical research from studies of nations to studies of whole civilizations. He focused attention on culture and was something of a harbinger of multiculturalism and postmodernism.[\[16\]](#)

Spengler's view was skeptical, even pessimistic, but his major contribution to historiography was in the way he compared and contrasted histories of Ancient Greece and Rome with Modern Europe and America. Spengler thought of himself as more of a philosopher than a historian; he sought understanding, pattern, and meaning in world history. As postmodern historians would do many years later, he tried to put his work in a context of political activism. Like the postmodernists, though for very different reasons, he opposed a scientific, causal model for explaining history. Historians seek to comprehend the logic of time and to apply intuition to the service of historical understanding.[\[17\]](#)

Spengler's understanding of scientific inquiry also foreshadowed the postmodern approach:

Western scientific inquiry is not a manifestation of a passive, idle curiosity as it was for the savants of Chinese, Indian, Graeco-Roman or Arabian Culture. It is, instead, a highly energetic, goal-oriented intellectual process aiming at the mastery and exploitation of the natural world.[\[18\]](#)

Spengler was the first German to publish a large-scale pessimistic view of world history. In that regard, he was building on the German tradition of cultural pessimism of Schopenhauer, Burckhardt, and Nietzsche. Spengler saw progress as a modern (and therefore false) idea. He felt it was tied to materialism which was an imperialist idea that led to the downfall of Rome and would lead to the down fall of the United States. The materialistic and hedonistic life styles of the large cities would lead to bread and circuses for the masses and make people in the cities too reliant on the provinces to sustain a decadent life style.[\[19\]](#)

Spengler read in the evidence from nineteenth century archaeological discoveries that the world was culturally pluralistic, a product of emphasized cultural distinctiveness and plurality. He thought the course of civilizations was analogous to human life with periods of childhood, youth, manhood, old age or to the birth, growth, maturation, and decay of plant life. Decline is inevitable, because gains did not always transfer from one culture to another, or even from one age to another in the same culture. All civilizations have had their day in the sun and then faded. Nothing says this one will not do the same.[\[20\]](#)

Though Spengler built on Kant's idea that knowledge is in the mind, not the senses, he broke sharply with Kant in arguing that history as a whole is amoral and that the course of history is cyclical rather than progressive. Historians can know the spirit or ethos of cultures by gaining insight into their scientific paradigms, philosophical orientations, and aesthetic forms. This was a result of his extraordinary interests in archaeology, pre-history, and ethnology.[\[21\]](#)

It is unfortunate that more music education historians have not followed Spengler's lead, as he was unique among historians for his strong emphasis on aesthetics and especially music. He saw music as the most important art form; music as cultural expression of boundless energy and something he called a drive to transcendence. Musicology (and theology) were the only academic disciplines that found Spengler's ideas interesting and useful in the 1930s.[\[22\]](#)

Farrenkopf concluded that:

Ironically, Spengler's philosophy of world history and politics represents, in the final analysis, an unintentional but provocative critique of the very tradition of political realism, from Thucydides to Weber, he sought to enrich. Spengler advances a plausible, albeit admittedly ultimately speculative, philosophy of history. His Copernican thesis of the tidal movement of world history toward a catastrophic conclusion is of decisive importance to historical and international relations thought. When the complacency of the West is shaken someday by the sight on the horizon of the rumbling storm clouds of apocalypse, Spengler's philosophy will provide illumination.[\[23\]](#)

While music education historians may find Spengler's pessimism not to their liking, it provides a useful counterbalance to the constant optimism that presently rules the field almost to the exclusion of alternative points of view. While music education in some form or another may well be an eternal fact of the human condition, it is possible to see that certain specific practices may well rise and fall in cyclical fashion, as Spengler argued for specific civilizations. Spengler did not see human existence as futile, he only argued that certain specific instances, such as the

Roman Empire and the European-American complex of the twentieth century, had finite durations and predictable demises.

It may be possible to understand current efforts to hold on to past practices and institutions as anachronistic in the larger scheme of things. Perhaps it is time to call eighteenth and nineteenth century practices, so firmly ingrained into contemporary music education practice, into question. Carrying on with outmoded practices, simply because of tradition, is surely a recipe for disaster.

The French structuralist philosopher Michel Foucault (1926–1984) studied “principles of exclusion” in mental hospitals (1961) and prisons (1975). As one of the leaders of the so-called postmodern movement, Foucault broke not only with the teleological, moralistic, and optimistic tradition of Kant, but also with the cyclical and pessimistic thought of Spengler. His idea of history, and that of his fellow postmodernists, was new, radical, and truly unique.[\[24\]](#)

Michel Foucault and French Post-Modern Historiography

Like Kant, Foucault’s peers came from two generations: the G. I. (b. 1901–1924) and Silent (b. 1925–1942). Musicians of about his same age were Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990), George Rochberg (b. 1918), Judy Garland (1922–1969), Pierre Boulez (b. 1925), Gunther Schuller (b. 1925), Hans Werner Henze (b. 1926), Emma Lou Diemer (b. 1927), Karlheinz Stockhausen (c. 1928), George Crumb (b. 1929), and Gregg Smith (b. 1931). G. I and Silent educators included Paulo Freire (1921–1997), John Holt (1923–1985), Jean François Lyotard (1924–1998), Lawrence A. Cremin (b. 1925), Charles E. Silberman (b. 1925), Ivan Illich (b. 1926), Ernest Boyer (1928–1995), Noam Chomsky (b. 1928), E. D. Hirsch, Jr. (b. 1928), and Jürgen Habermas (b. 1929).[\[25\]](#)

Some leading late G I. and early Silent generation music educators were Alan P. Merriam (1923–1980), H. Wiley Hitchcock (b. 1923), Robert Pace (b. 1924), Abraham Schwadron (1925–1987), Charles Hamm (b. 1925), Allen Forte (b. 1925), Edwin E. Gordon (b. 1927), John Paynter (1928–1996), Gretchen Hieronymus Beall (b. 1928), and William P. Malm (b. 1928).[\[26\]](#)

Other close peers of Foucault were William F. Buckley, Jr. (b. 1925), Margaret Thatcher (b. 1925), Gore Vidal (b. 1925), Marilyn Monroe (1926–1960), Fidel Castro (b. 1926), Andy Warhol (b. 1927), T. Boone Pickens (b. 1928), Walter Mondale (b. 1928), Yasser Arafat (b. 1929), and Martin Luther King (1929–1968). These are clearly disparate personalities in many respects, but their lives and works cover a spectrum that defines the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Difficult as it may be to discern patterns and trends in relatively recent history, Foucault may offer some insights that will be worth pursuing for music education historians.[\[27\]](#)

Joseph Cronin, a professor of philosophy at Thomas More College in Crestview Hills, Kentucky, has showed how Foucault pursued what he called an archaeological approach to history in his work from 1961 until about 1970. In this, Foucault sought to examine evidence in an objective

fashion, much as an archaeologist would approach a civilization long since disappeared. Rather than civilizations, however, he was interested in history itself and especially historical texts. A main theme of all his work has been the ways in which people try to control or confine other people through the use of language. The major works of Foucault's archaeological period were *Madness and Civilization* (1961), *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963), *The Order of Things* (1966), and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969). In these he examined and described discourses and other social practices whose purpose is discipline and control.[\[28\]](#)

After 1970, Foucault shifted from an archaeological to a genealogical approach in more overtly political works such as *Discipline and Punish* (1975), and *The History of Sexuality*, Vol I. (1976). In these and other studies he studied how people apply the social practices he had investigated earlier. Despite claims to the contrary, "In the social sciences," he argued, "rational concepts and imaginative explanatory devices are not easily distinguishable."[\[29\]](#)

Looking at the development of scientific inquiry historically, Foucault found that social sciences began in the early nineteenth century with the advent of economics, linguistics, and biology. He found that social practices produce discourses:

The archaeologist seeks to define the rules common to a dispersion of discursive elements which distribute statements into an existing field. . . . Archaeology can only be applied retrospectively after one examines an existing discourse; thus it is an inherently historical method of inquiry.[\[30\]](#)

Cronin's thesis is that Foucault opposed humanist historiography, a field primarily concerned with the history of the subject (i.e. humans) and history as a subject (i.e., historicism with teleological metaphors). Following Nietzsche, Foucault held that truth is power. Humans try to know by reducing reality to symbols (words, ideas, etc.) which they can then manipulate and thus control. In this he stood in opposition to Kant who helped initiate a humanistic and idealist approach to history. Foucault rejected Kant's humanistic approach with its teleology and idealism.[\[31\]](#)

Cronin has shown how Foucault's work highlights the connections between power, especially the disciplinary power, and the written word, or discourses. From about 1970 on, Foucault became increasingly interested in the political ramifications of his own work, as well as of the documents he was studying. He examined the rise of behavioral sciences in the nineteenth century and saw connections with the rise of institutions whose purpose was to observe, intervene in, and control people's behavior to conform to statistical norms. He saw these practices as shaping Western societies as a whole. "In Western societies, the sustained development of capitalism has been achieved predominantly through the rationality and efficiency of disciplinary regimentation."[\[32\]](#) This led to what he called the disciplinary society. For Foucault, the general accumulation of disciplinary tactics, strategies, and techniques is tantamount to colonization.[\[33\]](#)

This kind of talk strikes awfully close to home for music educators, if not for music education historians. Music teachers are well aware of the disciplinary nature of their work. Music is a discipline, education is a discipline, music education is a discipline. Music teachers spend much

time, effort, and energy on strategies of control, which some call behavior management or classroom management. Music education historians have not paid much attention to these issues, at least in direct ways. The method books and music education textbooks, however, are full of discourses on these topics.

Historians taking philological approaches analyze linguistic practices through time or according to Cronin (and Foucault), they can trace the history of “punitive and habituating techniques humans have applied to one another as a means of creating calculable behavior, individual accountability, internal consistency, a sense of guilt, and a conscience.”^[34] Foucault followed Nietzsche and extended his ideas in implicating education in discipline: “. . . the existence of reason also presupposes the existence of a form of training.”^[35] Foucault argued that disciplinary training and human sciences arose simultaneously in the nineteenth century, about the same time public schooling began, at least in America.^[36]

To some extent, music education historians have been utilizing what Foucault would call an archaeological approach. They have been looking at the artifacts of music education in times past and reporting on what they have found. Few, if any, are involved in Foucault’s genealogical process where they might use the knowledge they have gained to understand the power relationships between music teachers and their students, music teachers and their students and the rest of the school, music teachers, their students, and their schools and the communities in which they live and work, and so forth.

Historians of music education are also players in the Foucauldian drama. Historians have a discipline which is part of the larger research activity in music education. Historians, however, operate in ways that differ markedly from their colleagues in the sciences. Scientists seek to test hypotheses and establish theories, however temporary and transitory they might be. Cronin has shown that Foucault thought this is a culturally influenced practice. It may even be an economic activity, utilizing raw materials (data), assembly (methodology), and packaging or marketing (publication). It is part of the task of the historian to understand this by looking at it in historical context. When, where, and how did these things develop? Who were the instigators, and why? Who were the developers and promulgators?^[37]

In the 1970s, Foucault asserted that his main purpose was not to formulate a theory of power but to study the history of how culture makes human beings into subjects. He found that the disciplinary processes of ideological state apparatuses were involved to a great extent. Foucault’s main work was in the history of prisons and mental hospitals, but he saw parallels to the way they worked and the schools that developed in similar ways at about the same time. Discursive practices, e.g., labelling, contributed heavily to Modern subjectivity. It is the historian’s task not only to unearth these practices (archaeology), but also to reflect on them, criticize them, and intervene in them in radical ways (genealogy).^[38]

Schools, especially nineteenth-century American public schools, train people to assume their roles as economic subjects. They attempt to instill moral codes and nationalist fervor. This is evident to anyone who has looked at song texts and methodologies of Lowell Mason, Luther

Whiting Mason, Hosea E. Holt, John Wheeler Tufts, Thomas Tapper, and a host of others. They and their fellow teachers of other subjects (disciplines) in nineteenth-century schools (and to a large extent still today) were preparing their students to participate in Western capitalist societies.[\[39\]](#)

Like Spengler, Foucault was interested in art works as historical documents. His archaeological approach demanded that he look at nonverbal, archival evidence. When people make things, they create artifacts. Where humanist historians mainly dealt in ideas, Foucault urged historians to look at things. He especially urged people to look at things as unique creations and to avoid over-arching reductionism and causal explanations. Unlike Spengler, however, Foucault was more interested in the visual arts than in music.[\[40\]](#)

This charge, to consider concrete (aesthetic) objects rather than abstract (discursive) ideas as primary sources calls music education historians to study aesthetics as part of their preparation. Understanding what music is and what it may mean is not an easy task, even for people with a great deal of experience in the field. If the value of music education is and has always been inherent in the music itself or in the practice of music in context (i.e. praxis), music education historians must be able to discern what is in the music, its sound and its form(s), as well as its context.

Instead of teleological accounts of scientific change, Foucault used comparative history, thereby avoiding the fallacy of confusing change with progress. “Humanist historians . . . are in the habit of reading history from the present, and explaining scientific investigation as the spontaneous activity of minds groping for a naturally given truth.” [\[41\]](#) Archaeology provides an alternative to humanism by looking more at objects than thoughts in a non-reductive, general kind of historical analysis.[\[42\]](#)

Cronin concluded that Foucault did not use his genealogical approach to capture “inner truths,” but to reveal the power relations embedded in truth-claims. Foucault thought that insight and understanding of local forms of struggle were more important than discerning laws and causes of historical developments. He even went further to argue that the very acts of attempting to discern laws and causes were inherently ideological and therefore integral to and dependent upon social and cultural as well as historical context.[\[43\]](#)

Music education historians have often written as if the story were one of constant reforms. Some begin with the indigenous people whom the Pilgrims reformed. Most begin with the Puritans and Pilgrims and the singing schools that reformed their practices, followed by Lowell Mason and his disciples who reformed them, and so on. This follows the Kantian plan of constant improvement toward moral goals. Applying the Kantian idea to music education history would call for abandoning this model in favor of something else, perhaps Spengler’s historical pessimism that looks at cultures and civilizations in large, over-arching terms. That approach would, of course, give way to Foucauldian archaeological and genealogical approaches that would look for power relationships in disciplinary institutions and the like.

A Spenglerian approach would have music education historians look at the rise and fall of music education in Western civilizations or in other civilizations. This would utilize the work of historians who have followed the Kantian approach and found lines of progress toward moral ends. A Spenglerian approach would extend the process and try to tell the story of how music education has past its prime and is now in decline in Western civilization, or at least in traditional European-American societies and their sub-cultures. It may be hard to find sponsors for such a project, in part because the institutions and organizations that have recently supported music education research have vested interests in avoiding this scenario. It is important to remember that Spengler was an independent historian, working on his own outside of and therefore beyond the control of academic and governmental institutions and organizations.

To follow Foucault's approach, music education historians would have to expand their methodology and try to throw off, or at least acknowledge the biases of their disciplinary positions, not only in governments and schools, but also in a humanist, capitalist, Western society that recognizes the social sciences (or disciplines) as key to understanding human nature and uses those sciences to exert discipline. A discipline is a follower; a discipline is a way of seeing the world or at least a small part of the world. These imply restrictions and limitations which music education historians have thought very little about. [\[44\]](#)

It is possible that all three (and more) approaches are viable. Just as Kant was a product of eighteenth-century German and Spengler a product of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Germany, so too is Foucault a product of mid- to late-twentieth-century France. Just as the American and French revolutions affected Kant and World War I affected Spengler, so too did the tumultuous times of the 1960s affect Foucault. Even (and perhaps especially) historians live and work in historical, geographical, social, cultural, and aesthetic contexts. It is reasonable to expect context to affect their work as much or more than anyone they might study.

As the Music Educators National Conference (founded in 1907) approaches its one-hundredth anniversary, calls to document and discuss music education's past will naturally arise. This will present opportunities for historians to agree and disagree about what happened and what it means. Some will follow the Kantian way and find things are better now than ever before. Others will follow Spengler and show how things reached a peak in 1907 (1927? 1945? 1968? 1984?) and have been going down hill ever since. Others will examine documents and artifacts, read the secondary literature, and tell many stories of how various people at various times and places have taught and learned music through listening, performing, and creating while paying special attention to disciplinary issues. Any and all approaches are potentially useful.

Foucault's ideas are certainly more recent than Kant's and Spengler's, but they are no less temporal (and temporary). Foucault added to Kant and Spengler (and numerous others); he did not supplant them. One day, perhaps not far in the future, other historical philosophers or philosophical historians will articulate new ways of looking at the past. They and their followers will no doubt interpret the past to serve their present needs and values, and they will suggest courses for their future. Future music education historians (and even present ones) will benefit substantially if they pay close attention.

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- [10]Edward Bailey Birge, *History of Public School Music in the United States* (Boston: Oliver Ditson Company, 1928), also available in a “New and Augmented edition” (Bryn Mawr, PA: Oliver Ditson Company, 1937); James A. Keene, *A History of Music Education in the United States* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1982); Theodore Tellstrom, *Music in American Education: Past and Present* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971); and Michael L. Mark and Charles L. Gary, *A History of American Music Education* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1991), 2nd ed. (Reston, VA: MENC—The National Association for Music Education, 1999). [view reference](#)
- [11]For a listing of these studies, see George N. Heller, *Historical Research in Music Education: A Bibliography*, 3rd ed. (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas, Division of Music Education and Music Therapy, 1995); and “Recent Publications” features in *The Bulletin of Historical Research in Music Education*, 1995–99, and *The Historical Special Research Interest Group Newsletter*

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[12] John Farrenkopf, *Prophet of Decline: Spengler on World History and Politics* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 78, 80, 134, 228, 272). [view reference](#)

[13] Charles J. Hall, *A Chronicle of American Music, 1700–1995* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1995), passim; and L. Dean Webb, Arlene Metha, and K. Forbis Jordan, *Foundations of American Education*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996), 150–159, 209–228. [view reference](#)

[14] Heller, *Music and Music Education History: A Chronology*, 18–20; and Mark and Gary, *A History of American Music Education*, 187–88, 234–236, 255–288. [view reference](#)

[15] Strauss and Howe, *Generations: The History of America’s Future*, 233–246, 247–260. [view reference](#)

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[17] *Ibid.*, 21–23, 41, 83, 273. [view reference](#)

[18] *Ibid.*, 72. [view reference](#)

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[21] *Ibid.*, 44, 45, 97, 189, 281, 201, 229, 281. [view reference](#)

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[28]Joseph Cronin, Foucault's Antihumanist Historiography (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellon Press, 2001), 2. [view reference](#)

[29]Cronin, Foucault's Antihumanist Historiography, 5. [view reference](#)

[30]Ibid., 23. [view reference](#)

[31]Ibid., 6–7, 9, 11, 15–17, 42, 90; see also, Jurgen Pieters, "Historicism," in Encyclopedia of Postmodernism, 178–179. [view reference](#)

[32]Cronin, Foucault's Antihumanist Historiography, 26. [view reference](#)

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[34]Ibid., 38. [view reference](#)

[35]Cronin, Foucault's Antihumanist Historiography, 40. [view referenc](#)

[36]Ibid., 48. [view reference](#)

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[38]Cronin, Foucault's Antihumanist Historiography, 85–89. [view referenc](#)

[39]Ibid., 91. [view reference](#)

[40]Ibid., 101–112. [view reference](#)

[41]Cronin, Foucault's Antihumanist Historiography, 142. [view reference](#)

[42]Ibid., 129, 137, 142, 148, 157, 160,165. [view reference](#)

[43]Ibid., 288. [view reference](#)

[44]Sharyn Clough, "Science," in Encyclopedia of Postmodernism, 356. [view reference](#)

[About the Author](#) - George N. Heller earned bachelor's (1963), master's (1969), and Ph.D. (1973) degrees in music education from the University of Michigan. He was a private piano instructor and organist and choir director, and he taught vocal, instrumental, and general music in Michigan public schools, 1963-66, and 1971-73. From 1966 to 1968, Heller was in the U. S. Army Bands at Ft. Sheridan, Illinois, and Heidelberg, Germany, where he served as tuba soloist, assistant conductor, and staff

arranger.

Heller was a teaching fellow in music at the University of Michigan and an instructor in music at Eastern Michigan University prior to joining the faculty at the University of Kansas in 1973. He has been a visiting professor at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (1985-86, summer 1998, and summer 2000), the University of Washington (summer 1994), and the University of Miami (spring 2001, spring 2002). Heller retired from the University of Kansas in May 2002.

Dr. Heller's special interests include secondary general music methods, world music, and the history of music education. He has published over one hundred articles and book chapters on these topics and has contributed twenty-two articles on music education to *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music* (1986). Heller is the author of *Ensemble Music for Wind and Percussion Instruments* (1970), *Historical Research in Music Education: A Bibliography* (three editions: 1985, 1992, and 1995), *Music and Music Education History: A Chronology* (three editions: 1991, 1993, and 1996), and *Charles Leonhard: American Music Educator* (1995).

Professor Heller was the first national chair of the History Special Research Interest Group of the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) and was the founding editor of *The Bulletin of Historical Research in Music Education* (1980-99). He was the music education area advisor for *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music* (1986). Heller remains active in the music education profession as both a researcher and writer, and he continues to serve in professional organizations. He is on the Editorial Committee of the *Journal of Music Teacher Education* of the MENC and is Editor Emeritus of the *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education*. In February, 2003, the Kansas Music Educators Association inducted Heller into its Hall of Fame.