

“Preparing to Peruse a Historical Monograph”
Nicholas Katsafanas

Mode: > 66.7%
74.8% — 76.2% — 74.2%

Prelude: With a fair amount of ambivalence, knowing as well as anyone that Nikos typically spends the hours of 3PM through 7PM, Monday through Friday, verifying the European origin of his dietary tract, I approached Mr Kazantzakis at 6:59 PM, ambling toward the screened-in patio of his modest row house located spitting distance from Garden City, and began as such:

I
(74.8%)

Well Mr Kazantzakis
if I'm being honest with you
completely honest with you
if I'm holding back next to no honesty whatsoever
I should note that
yes
it's indubitably true
that of late
I've found myself gluttonously chewing
four to seven slices of gum in simultaneity
for a variety of reasons—in fact
it was just yesterday afternoon
prior to leaving our apartment to go grab a coffee
that I indiscriminately
shoved an entire pack of gum
into my mouth

and exuberantly chewed this large ball of gum
wondered if chewing gum was actually good for your
teeth

when the thought occurred to me:

*Is emo the highest form of classical music America
is historically responsible for?*

When discussing American music

I thought while chewing an entire pack of gum

a litany of genres

from post-bop jazz

to experimental rock

to avant-metal to the so-called

classically trained composers of American descent

are discussed as 'the truly classical music of America.'

'But what if emo is the truly classical American music?'

I thought to myself

chewing an entire pack of gum

preparing myself to pay full-price for a coffee out

somewhere

despite the fact I had an entire pot of coffee at my

apartment

waiting to be imbibed for free.

The primary conceit of emo music

is that its creators are young and white and male

and that they originate from neighborhoods

that are safe if not opulent and utterly hate their lives.

Nothing

it should be noted

is ever proceeding well for the emo band

as the slightest deviation

from the emo band's best case scenario is always

apocalyptic

despite the fact that

sociopolitically at least

they have everything going for them.

The emo participant exists at the apex of the American
totem pole
and despite this fact
everything remains essentially objectionable to them.
Nothing is going well! The emo song is
in practice
the antithesis of the virtue signal. And it occurred to me
as I left my apartment to pay four dollars for a coffee
that would inevitably be co-opted by an art school
professor
with no regard to socially acceptable decibel levels
pontificating about people as brands to a foreign
exchange student
that this type of wide-eyed narcissism
that this unironic ignorance of sociopolitical totem poles
this obsession with direct
lived experience at the expense of everything conceptual
is perhaps the apex of what should comprise American
classical music?
And I nodded my head at this notion
as we entered the Honda
asking Tina if she'd be willing to play
'One-Eighty by Summer' on our way to the coffee shop.

II
(76.2%)

I suppose you could say it was fortuitous
if not a direct product of fate itself
that with these thoughts in mind
while browsing my Shopping List on Amazon dot com
while considering the merits
of the so-called university professor

after my encounter with this pea-brained art professor
from Yoleni's
I noticed that the Constantine Eleven monograph by my
old college professor
Marios Philippides
was now on sale—reduced from the borderline-insulting
price
of ninety dollars for the hardcover
to the increasingly palatable price of nine dollars for the
Kindle edition.
I'd had no communication with Philippides
since my time at Massachusetts
which is unsurprising
as I doubt strongly Philippides recalls me in the least
as almost the entirety of my late adolescence
was marked by my dedication to my dissipation-process
which I'd extended into an era some may choose
to characterize as a post-youth era
so the two of us had no need
no reason to communicate with one another
primarily because Philippides had no idea who I was.
Just because two persons ostensibly share
a modicum of so-called 'Greek blood'
in no way means they should communicate with one
another. For Philippides's part
he has no idea who I am
and for my part
my only interaction with Philippides
took place in the midst of my dissipation-process
of which I was dedicated to—
yet being that I'd been looking for a monograph on the
so-called 'last emperor of the Greeks'
and being that Philippides was the only author
with a recent monograph published on the final so-called
Constantine of Helen

it just so happened that our paths would once again
cross
this time on the Kindle app of my iPhone. Perhaps it was
fate
just as it was fate that I'd sit through an ebullient
bloviation session
from a pea-brained art school professor on one day
then on the next day find my own old professor's
monograph fortuitously on sale
reduced to a price more appropriate for the proletariat as
such.

III
(74.2%)

After confirming the price reduction multiple days in a
row
I finally pulled the trigger and bought the book
only downloading said book during a solitary circular
sojourn around Foxwoods
Ike busy attempting to continue his luck on the slot
machines—
having won two hundred dollars
on one roll prior to our high class Chinese dinner
which he magnanimously comped
and Tina passed out in the car
tired and hungover after an ill-advised decision to
daydrink
prior to our venturing to the casino for the night.
At first
in preparation of my reading
I sat in line at Dunkin Donuts
surprisingly the only coffee shop open at the expansive
casino

and bought a medium iced coffee for myself with almond
milk.

Three men stood in front of me
and struck me as abutting old men
until I began to consider they very well could be the
same age as I

clinging
it struck me
to perhaps some fading beacon of youth
one of them adorned in deluxe Michael Jordan sneakers
the other making a long speech to the Dunkin Donuts
barista

about how much he likes his Caramel coffee yet
curiously punctuating the note
by repeatedly saying he's not that picky. In the rainforest
casino

sipping my iced coffee
with water audibly falling all around me

I got my five dollar double poker game out of the way
realizing slowly that the first two machines didn't work
then slowly realizing I completely forgot how to play
double poker

despite being so exuberant at the thought of finally
finding

a double poker machine to play.

I googled 'How to play double poker'
but couldn't seem to find a concise explanation
an explanation that would allow me to play double poker
immediately

which was the extent of everything I wanted at the time.

Leaving the double poker machines
after immediately losing five dollars

I decided to spend the last of my cash on an ice cream
cone

then begin reading Philippians' monograph.

The ice cream barista informed me there were no cones
left
which was disappointing in the extreme.
Feigning no disappointment
I ordered two scoops of the cappuccino gelato
and was subsequently given a spoon half the size of my
own pinky finger
which isn't a particularly large pinky finger
I've never had my pinky finger described as abnormally
large by anyone
to the best of my knowledge
to scoop out both scoops of ice cream from the
surprisingly deep cup. I didn't object
instead feeling curiously lucky to pay seven dollars for
this ice cream cup
then walking around to find myself quite enjoying said
ice cream
the end-game of said ice cream of course being
that I ate the last half scoop essentially with my bare
hands
walking around by myself
enjoying nothing more than eating this ice cream
with both an absurdly tiny spoon and also with my bare
hands.
Finally
after washing the cappuccino gelato off my hands in the
Foxwoods rest area
I sat on a park bench and opened up my Kindle app
to open up Philippides' monograph
on the final so-called emperor of the Greeks.

Footnotes

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Well Mr [K][a]zantz[a][k][i][s], [i]f I'm [b][e]ing hone[s]t with [y]ou, [c]omp[li][e]te[ly] hone[s]t with [y]ou, if I'm h[old]ing [b]a[c]k [n]ext to [n][o] hone[s]ty what[s]o[ever], I should [n]o[te] that, ye[s], [i]t's [i]nd[u]b[ita]b[ly] tr[ue] that of [l]ate [I]'ve [f]ound m[y]s[e]lf [g]l[u]ttou[s]l[y] ch[ew]ing [f]our to [s]even [s][i]c[es] of [g]u[m] in [s][i]multaneit[y], [f]or a va[r]iet[y] of [r][e]asons---[i]n [f]a[c]t, [i]t was ju[s]t ye[s]terday [a]fternoon, [p]rior to [l]eaving ou[r] a[p]a[r]tment to [g]o [g]rab a [c]o[ff]ee that I i[n]d[i]s[c]r[i]m[in]ately shoved a[n] e[n]t[ire] [p]a[ck] of [g]um i[n]to [m]y [m]outh and ex[u]b[erant]ly ch[ew]ed this [l]arge [b]all of [g]um, [w]ondered if che[w]ing [g]um [w]as actually [g]ood [f]or your teeth, when [th]e [th]ought o[cc]urred to [m][e]: Is e[m]o the [h]ighe[s]t [f]orm of [c]l[a]ss[ic]al [m]usi[c] A[m]er[i]c[a] [i]s [h]i[s]to[r]i[c]ally [r]e[s]p[on]sible [f]or? When di[s]c[u]ssing A[m]er[i]c[an] [m]usi[c], I thought [w]hile che[w]ing a[n] e[n]t[ire] [p]a[ck] o[f] g[u]m, a litany of [g]en[re]s, fr[om] [p]ost-bo[p] [j]azz, to ex[p]erim[en]tal ro[c]k, to [a]nt- [m]etal to the [s]o- [c]a[l]l[ed] [c]l[a]ss[ic]a[l]ly trained [c]om[p]o[s]ers of [A]m[er]i[c]an [d]e[s]cent, are [d]i[s]c[u]ssed as 'the tru[l]y [c]l[a]ss[ic]al [m]usi[c] of A[m]er[i]c[a].' 'B[u]t wh[a]t if e[m]o is the t[r]u[l]y [c]l[a]ss[ic]al A[m]er[i]c[an] [m]usi[c]?' I thought to [m]y[s]elf, che[w]ing a[n] e[n]t[ire] [p]a[ck] o[f] g[u]m, [p]re[p]a[r]ing my[s]e[f] to [p]ay [f]ull- [p]r[i]c[e] [f]or a [c]o[ff]ee out [s]ome[w]here, des[p]ite the [f]a[c]t [I] h[a]d a[n] e[n]t[ire] [p]o[t] of [c]o[ff]ee at [m]y a[p]art[m]ent, waiting to [b]e im[b]ibed [f]or [f]ree. The [p]ri[m]ar[y] [c]onc[ei]t of [e]m[mo] [m]usi[c] [i]s that [i]ts [c]re[ator]s are young a[n]d white a[n]d [m]ale, and [th]at [th]ey or[i]g[i]n[al]ly [f]rom [n]eighbo[r]hoods that are sa[f]e i[f] n[ot] o[p]ule[n]t a[n]d utter[ly] h[a]te their [l]ives. [N]othing, it should be [n]oted, is [e]ver [p]ro[c]e[ding] w[e]ll for the [e]mo band, as the [s]lighte[s]t [d]e[v]i[ati]on from the [e]mo [b]and's [b]e[s]t [c]a[s]e [s]cenario is [a]lways [a]p[ro]c[a]l[y]p[tic], de[s]p[ite] the [f]a[c]t th[at], [s]o[c]io[p]ol[it]ic[a]lly at [l]ea[s]t, [th]ey have [e]very[th]ing going for [th]em. The e[m]o [p]ar[tic]ip[an]t [e]x[is]ts at the a[p]ex of the A[m]er[i]c[an] [t]o[te]m [p]o[le], and des[p]ite thi[s] fa[c]t [e]verything re[m]ains [e]ss[en]tially o[b]je[c]t[ive] to

them. Noth[i]ng [i]s going well! The emo [s]ong [i]s, [i]n pract[i]c[e], [th]e [a]nti[th]e[s]i[s] of the virtue [s]ignal. [A]nd it o[cc]urred to [m]e, as I le[ft] [m]y a[p]art[m]ent to [p]ay [f]ou[r] dollars [f]o[r] a [c]o[ff]e[e] that would i[n]evita[b]l[y] [b]e [c]o-o[p]ted [b]y a[n] art [s]c[h]ool [p]ro[f]e[ss]or, with n[o] regard to [s]o[ci]a[l]l[y] a[cc]e[p]ta[b]l[e] d[e]c[i]b[e]l [l]evels. [p]ont[i]f[i]c[a]ting [a]b[ou]t [p]eo[p]le as [b]r[an]ds to [a] [f]o[r]eign exch[a]nge [s]tudent, [th]at [th]i[s] t[y]p[e] of w[i]d[e]-e[y]e[d] [n]ar[c]i[ss]ism, [th]at [th]i[s] un[i]ron[i]c [i]g[n]oran[c]e of [s]ocio[p]ol[i]t[i]c]al t[em]p[or]es, thi[s] ob[s]e[ss]i]on w[i]th di[r]e[c]t, l[i]ved [e]x[p]e[r]i[en]c[e] at the [e]x[p]en[s]e of [e]verything [c]on[c]e[p]tual---is [p]erha[p]s the a[p]ex of what should [c]om[p]rise A[m]er[i]c[a]n [c]l[a]s[s]i[c]al [m]usi[c]? [A]nd I [n]o[dd]ed my [h]ead [a]t this [n]otion [a]s we en[t]ered the [H]on[d]a [a]s[ki]ng [K]a[t] i[f] sh[e]’d b[e] [w]i[l]ling to [p]l[ay] ‘[O]ne-[E]i[gh]ty by [S]ummer’ on our [w]ay to the [c]o[ff]ee sho[p].

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I [s]u[pp]ose you [c]ould [s]ay it was [f]ortuitous, i[f] not a [d]ire[c]t [p]ro[d]u[c]t of [f]ate it[s]e[lf], that with [th]ese [th]oughts in m[i]nd, wh[i]le browsing my Sho[pp]ing L[i]st on A[m]az[o]n d[ro]p [c]o[m], while [c]on[s]i]dering the [m]erits of the [s]o-[c]alled univer[s]it[y] [p]ro[f]e[ss]or a[ft]er my en[c]ounter w[i]th th[i]s [p]ea-brained art [p]ro[f]e[ss]or [f]rom Yo[re]n[i]’s, I [n]o[t]ic[ed] [th]at [th]e [C]on[s]tantine E[ven] [m]o[n]o[graph] b[y] [m]y old [c]ollege [p]ro[f]e[ss]or, [M]ari[o]s [P]h[i]l[i]p[ides], was [n]ow on [s]ale---re[d]u[c]ed from the [b]or[d]erl[i]ne-[i]n[s]ulting [p]ri[c]e of [n]i[n]ety [d]ollars for the hard[c]over, to the [i]n[c]rea[s]ingl[y] [p]a[ta]b]le [p]ri[c]e of [n]i[n]e [d]o[ll]ars for the [K]i[n]d]le e[d]ition. I’d had [n]o [c]o[m]muni[c]ation w[i]th [P]h[i]l[i]p[ides] [s]i[n]c[e] [m]y t[i]me at [M]a[ss]achu[s]etts, wh[i]ch [i]s un[s]ur[p]rising, as I doubt [s]trongl[y] [P]h[i]l[i]p[ides] re[c]alls [m]e in the [l]ea[s]t, as a [l]i[m]o[s]t the entirety of my [l]ate a[d]o[le]s[ce]n[c]e was [m]ar[k]ed b[y] [m]y [d]e[d]i[c]a[t]io[n] to [m]y [d]i[ss]i[p]a[t]io[n]-[p]ro[c]e[ss], which I’d [e]xte[n]d[e]d i[n]to a[n] [e]r[r]a [s]ome m[a]y [ch]oose to [ch]a[r]a[c]terize as a [p]o[s]t-youth [e]r[r]a, [s]o the two of us

had [n][o] [n][ee]d, [n][o] r[ea]son to [c]o[m]muni[c]ate [w]ith [o]ne a[n]o[th]er, [p]ri[m]ari[l]y [b]e[c]ause Ph[i][i][i][pp]i[d]es had [n]o [i][d]ea who [I] was. Ju[s]t [b]e[c]ause [t]wo per[s]ons o[s][t]en[s]i[b]ly share a [m]odi[c]um of [s]o-[c]alled ‘Gree[k] [b]lood’ in no way [m]eans they [sh]ould [c]o[m]mu[n]i[c]ate [w]ith [o]ne a[n]o[th]er. [F]or [Ph][i][i][i][pp]i[d]es’s [p]art, [h]e [h]as no [i][d]ea who [I] am, and [f]or [m]y [p]art, [m]y on[l]y [i]n[t]eraction with [Ph][i][i][i][pp]i[d]es [t]ook [p]la[c]e [i]n the [m][i]d[s]t of [m]y [d][i][ss]i[p]a[tion-[p]ro[c]e[ss], of [w]hich I [w]as [d]e[d]i[c]a[t]ed to---yet [b]eing that I’d [b]een [I]oo[k]ing [f]or a mono[g]r[aph] on the [s]o-[c]alled ‘[I]a[s]t em[p]eror of the [G]r[ee]k[s]’, and [b]eing that [Ph][i][i][i][pp]i[d]es was the [o]n[l]y [a]uthor with [a] r[e]c[ent] monograp[h] [p]u[b]l[i]shed on the [f]inal [s]o-[c]alled [C]on[s]tantine of [H]e[l]en, it ju[s]t [s]o [h][a]ppened that our [p]a[th]s [w]ould [o]n[c]e again [c]ro[ss], thi[s] t[i]me on the [K]indle [a][pp] of m[y] [i]Phone. [P]erh[a]p[s] it was [f]ate, just [a]s it was [f]ate th[at] I’d [s]it through an e[b]u[l]ient [b][l]o[vi]a[tion] [s]e[ss]ion [f]rom a [p]ea-~~b~~[r]a[i]ned art [s]chool [p]ro[f]e[ss]or on one [d]ay, [th]en on [th]e n[e]xt [d]ay [f]ind [m]y [ow]n [o]ld [p]ro[f]e[ss]or’s [m]onog[r]a[ph] [f]ortuitou[s]ly on [s]ale, [r]e[d]u[c]ed t[o] a [p]ri[c]e [m]ore a[pp]r[o]p[ri]ate [f]or the [p]r[io]eta[r]iat as [s]uch.

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A[ft]er [c]on[f]ir[m]ing the [p]ri[c]e [r]e[d]u[c]tion [m]ulti[p]le [d]ays in a [r]ow I [f]inally [p]ulled the t[r]igger and [b]ought the [b]oo[k], [o]n[l]y [d]own[lo]a[d]ing said [b]oo[k] [d]u[r]ing a [s]o[n]ita[r]y [c]i[r]cu[l]ar [s]o[j]urn a[r]ound [F]oxwoods, I[k]e busy a[t]temp[t]ing [t]o [c]on[t]inue his [I]u[ck] [o]n the s[il]o[t] machines---[h]aving wo[n] two [h]u[n]dred [d]o[ll]ars on o[n]e [r]oll [p]ri[or] to our [h]igh [c][i]a[s]s Chin[e]se [d]i[n]ner, wh[i]ch he [m]a[gn]a[n]i[m]ou[s]l[y] [c]om[p]ed---[a]nd [K]a[t] [p]a[ss]ed out in the [c]ar, [t]ired a[n]d hungover [a]fter a[n] ill-[a][d]v[i]sed [d]e[c]ision to [d]ay[d]r[in]k [p]ri[or] to our [v]entu[r]ing to the [c]a[s]i[n]o for the [n]ight. At fir[s]t, in [p]re[p]a[r]ation of my [r]ea[d]ing, [I] [s]at in [l]i[n]e at [D]un[k]in [D]onuts, [s]ur[p]risingl[y] the on[l]y [c]o[ff]ee sho[p] o[p]en at the ex[p]a[n]sive [c]a[s]ino, [a]nd bought a [m]e[d]i[u]m [i]ced

[c]o[ff]ee [f]or [m]y[s]el[f] with al[m]ond [m]il[k]. Three [m]en [s][t]ood in [f]r[on]t of [m]e and [s][t]r[u]ck [m]e as a[b]u[tt]ing old [m]en un[t]il I [b]egan [t]o [c]on[s]ider they very well [c]ould [b]e the [s][a]me [a]ge as I, [c][i]ng[i]ng, [i]t [s]tru[ck] me, to [p]erha[p][s] [s]ome fa[d]ing b[ea][c]on of youth, one of them a[d]orned in [d]eluxe [M]i[ch]ael Jor[d]an [s]n[ea][k]ers, the other [m]a[k]ing a long [s][p][ee]ch to the [D]un[k]in [D]onuts bar[i][s]ta about [h]ow [m]uch [h]e li[k]es his [C]ara[m]el [c]off[ee] yet [c]uriou[s][l]y [p]un[c]tu[a]ting the [n]ote by [r]e[p]eatedly [s]a[ying] he's [n]ot that [p]i[ck]y. In the [r]ain[fore]st [c]a[s]ino, [s]i[pp]ing my i[c]ed [c]o[ff]ee, [w]ith [w]ater [au][d]i[b]ly [f]a[ll]ing [a]ll [a]round m[e], I got my [f]ive [d]ollar [d]ou[b]le [p]o[k]er g[a]me out of the w[ay], rea[l]izing [s][l]owly [t]hat [t]he [f]i[r]st two machines [d]i[d]n't wo[r]k, then [s][l]owly rea[l]izing I [c]om[p]l[e]te[l]y [f]orgot how to [p]lay double [p]o[k]er, [d]e[s]p[ite] [b]eing [s]o exu[b]erant at [t]he [t]ought of [f]i[n]ally [f]i[n]d[ing] a [d]ou[b]le [p]oker machine to [p]lay. I [g]oo[g]led 'How to [p]lay [d]ou[b]le [p]o[k]er' [b]ut [c]oul[d]n't [s]eem to f[i]nd a [c]on[c]i[s]e ex[p]lan[a]tion, an ex[p]lan[a]tion that would a[l]low me to [p]l[a]y [d]ou[b]le [p]o[k]er imm[e]di[ate]ly, [w]hich [w]as the [e]xtent of [e]verything I [w]an[t]ed at the [t]i[m]e. [L]eaving the [d]ouble [p]oker [m]ach[i]nes a[ft]er i[m]m[e]di[ate]ly [l]osing [f]ive [d]o[ll]ars, I [d]e[c]i[d]ed to [s]p[end] the [l]a[s]t of my [c]a[s]h o[n] a[n] i[c]e [c]ream [c]one, then begin [r]ea[d]ing [P]h[i]l[i]pp[i]n[e]s' monog[r]a[ph]. The i[c]e [c]r[ea]m ba[r]i[s]ta in[f]ormed me there were n[o] [c]o[n]es le[ft], [w]hich [w]as di[s]a[p]pointing in the extr[e]me. [F]eign[ing] [n]o [d]i[s]a[p]pointment, I or[d]ered t[wo] [s][c]oo[p]s of the [c]a[pp]uccin[o] ge[l]at[o] and was [s]ub[s]e[qu]ent[ly] given a [s][p]oon hal[f] the [s]ize of my own [p]i[n]k[y] [f]i[n]ger, wh[i]ch [i]s'n't a [p]articu[l]ar[l]y [l]arge [p]i[n]k[y] [f]i[n]ger, I'v[e] ne[v]er had my [p]i[n]k[y] [f]inger de[s]c[ri]bed [a]s [a]b[n]orma[l]ly [l]arge [b]y anyone, to the [b]e[s]t of my k[n]owledge, to [s][c]oo[p] out [b]oth [s][c]oo[p]s of i[c]e [c]ream from the [s]ur[p]risingly [d]e[e]p [c]u[p]. I [d]i[d]n't obj[e]ct, in[s]tead fee[l]ing [c]uriou[s][l]y [l]u[ck]y to [p]ay [s]even [d]o[ll]ars for thi[s] i[c]e [c]ream [c]u[p], then wal[k]ing around to [f]i[n]d m[y]s]el[f] [q]uite [e]njoying [s]aid i[c]e [c]ream, the [e]nd-game

of [s]aid i[c]e [c]ream of [c]our[s]e [b]eing that I ate the [l][a][s]t
[h][a]f [s][c]oop e[ss]entia[l]y [w]ith my [b]are [h][a]nds,
[w]al[k]ing around [b][y] m[y][s]elf, enjoying nothing more than
[ea]ting thi[s] i[c]e [c]r[ea]m with [b]oth [a]n [a][b][s]urd[ly] tin[y]
[s][p]oon and al[s]o with my [b][a]re h[a]nds. [F]ina[l]ly, [a][f]ter
washing the c[a][p]puccin[o] ge[l]at[o] o[ff] my h[a]nds in the
[F]oxwoods [r]e[s]t a[r]ea, I [s]at on a [p]ar[k] bench and
o[p]ened u[p] my [K]in[d]le a[pp] to o[p]en u[p]
[P]hilipp[i]d[e]s' mo[n]o[log][r]a[ph] on the [f]i[n]al [s]o-[c]alled
em[p]e[r]or of the [G][r]ee[k][s].