

The representation of alterity: Aspects of subjectivity in Schubert's second *Moment musical* and Wilde's 'The Nightingale and the Rose'

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## Abstract

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This study uncovers and interprets the representation of alterity in Schubert's *Moment musical* in A<sub>b</sub>, op. 94 no. 2 (1828) and Wilde's 'The Nightingale and the Rose' from *The Happy Prince and Other Stories* (1888). Furthermore, the study locates and contextually investigates analogies between Schubert's representation of alterity and Wilde's.

There is a strong likelihood that Schubert was part of a Viennese subculture that was involved in illicit activities and dissident experimentation. Since Maynard Solomon published his essay 'Franz Schubert and the Peacocks of Benvenuto Cellini' in 1989, the possibility of Schubert's homosexuality has received a vast amount of critical attention. Whatever his sexuality, his music has long been seen as containing distinctly feminine traits and subversive elements. Similarly to Schubert, Wilde's homosexuality and resulting ostracism forms an essential aspect of his life, oeuvre and of subsequent and current Wilde studies. The way in which both Schubert and Wilde's marginalisation and illicit activities lent a sense of alterity to their works is intriguing.

Taking on the loose appearance of deconstructive readings, the analysis of Schubert's work incorporates musical semiotics, while the analysis of Wilde's fairy tale builds on ideas raised in the Schubert analysis. The deconstructive readings focus on the binary opposition between the concepts of redemption and defeat as found in Wilde's fairy tale. The duality between redemption and defeat is shown to have particular resonance with the Romantic image of the artist as messiah and martyr.

This study offers the hypothesis that the sense of alterity experienced by Schubert and Wilde is reflected in their works as a longing for the unattainable, a quest for redemption, and that the representation of this alterity is often subversive and dissident. Specific ways in which Schubert and Wilde represent alterity are by refusing climactic moments, by juxtaposing opposites, by symbolising homoeroticism, and by purposefully disobeying stylistic obligations.

## Keywords

- alterity
- analysis
- deconstruction
- *différance*
- dissidence
- duplicity
- ‘The Nightingale and the Rose’ (Wilde)
- hermeneutics
- *Moment musical* in A<sub>b</sub>, op. 94 no. 2 (D. 780) (Schubert)
- redemption
- Franz Schubert
- sexuality
- Oscar Wilde

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Society, as we have constituted it, will have no place for me, has none to offer; but Nature, whose sweet rains fall on unjust and just alike, will have clefts in the rocks where I may hide, and secret valleys in whose silence I may weep undisturbed. She will hang the night with stars so that I may walk abroad in the darkness without stumbling, and send the wind over my footprints so that none may track me to my hurt: she will cleanse me in great waters, and with bitter herbs make me whole.

Oscar Wilde, from *De Profundis*  
(Wilde 2005: 355)

Sieh, vernichtet liegt in Staube  
Unerhörtem Gram zum Raube,  
Meines Lebens Martergang  
Nahend ew'gem Untergang.

Franz Schubert, from *Mein Gebet*  
(Einstein 1951: 247)

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### 1.1 Background to the study

This study is inspired by my fascination with the distinct resemblance that certain aspects of Franz Schubert's and Oscar Wilde's lives and oeuvres have with one another. The juxtaposition of Schubert (1797-1828) and Wilde (1854-1900) uncovers many related areas of interest to me: alterity, sexuality, subjectivity, naivety. Parallels in the historical and cultural climate in which Schubert and Wilde lived are also of significance to me.

In 1982 the American theorist and musicologist Edward T. Cone published his article 'Schubert's Promissory Note: An Exercise in Musical Hermeneutics'. Cone analyses Schubert's *Moment musical* in A-flat, op. 94 no. 6, and proposes that the initially happy theme of the piece becomes irreparably contaminated from contact with a 'foreign element', a promissory note that 'has strongly suggested an obligation that it has failed to discharge' (Cone 1982: 235, 240; McClary 2007: 197). Cone offers the hypothesis that the 'contamination' in the sixth *Moment musical* is a musical representation of Schubert's affliction with syphilis. In a rare comparison between Schubert and Wilde (who also had syphilis), Cone quotes Edmond Wilson, who theorises that Wilde represented his syphilitic infection in, amongst other works, his fairy tales (Cone 1982: 240-241; Ellmann 1988: 92).

There is a strong likelihood that Schubert was part of a Viennese subculture that was involved in illegal activities and dissident experimentation. As is shown in Chapter 3, Schubert was a member of illicit and clandestine societies (even being arrested once) and was involved with illegal experimentation such as animal magnetism. Since Maynard Solomon published his article 'Franz Schubert and the Peacocks of Benvenuto Cellini' (Solomon 1989) twenty years ago, the possibility of Schubert's homosexuality has received a vast amount of critical attention and current musicological opinion maintains

that there is a strong likelihood that Schubert displayed homosexual inclinations (McClary 2007: 170). Even if he himself were not homosexual, his music has long been seen as containing distinctly feminine traits (Gramit 1993: 72). Similarly to Schubert, Wilde's homosexuality forms an essential aspect of his life and work (Sinfield 2003: 137).

The possibility that both Schubert and Wilde's marginalisation and illicit activities lent a sense of alterity to their works intrigues me. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, both homosexuals and persons suffering from infectious diseases would have been marginalised in some way and would have felt some sort of alienation: a sense of being different, the Outsider, the Other. McClary (2007: 191) states:

Some of Schubert's constructions – like narratives produced by many homosexual writers, including Marcel Proust, André Gide, Radclyffe Hall, Tennessee Williams, or James Baldwin – often present a tragic vision of the world in which the self and its pleasures are mutilated by an uncomprehending and hostile society.

This quotation finds surprising resonance in the following extract from one of Wilde's fairy tales, *The Fisherman and his Soul* (Wilde 2005: 105):

And the black waves came hurrying to the shore, bearing with them a burden that was whiter than silver. [...] And the shore received it, and lying at his feet the young Fisherman saw the body of the little Mermaid. [...] And to the dead thing he made confession. Bitter, bitter was his joy, and full of strange gladness was his pain. [...] And his Soul besought him to depart, but he would not, so great was his love. [...] And the sea covered the young Fisherman with its waves.

This irreconcilably tragic view of the world, a notable characteristic of all Wilde's fairy tales, has a close correspondence with his life, as he himself recognised in *De Profundis* of 1897 (Ellmann 1988: 299; Shewan 1977: 65). The similarity with McClary's former quotation about Schubert shows that both Schubert and Wilde represented their sense of alterity – their sense of feeling like the Outsider or the Other – in their work. The hermeneutic analysis of the occurrences of this representation inspired my study.

## 1.2 Aims of the study

This study aims to uncover and interpret the subjectivity, in particular the representation of alterity, in Schubert's *Moment musical* no. 2 (1828) and Wilde's 'The Nightingale and the Rose' (1888). Furthermore, this study attempts to locate and contextually understand analogies between Schubert's representation of alterity and Wilde's.

Coker (1972: 61), in his *Music and Meaning*, posits that iconic significance within both the music-text and the musical experience leads to two classes of aesthetic interpretation: *congeneric* and *extrageneric*. According to Coker, congeneric meanings are 'those resultants of a dominantly iconic situation in which someone interprets one part of a musical work as a sign of another part of that same work or a diverse musical work'. Conversely, extrageneric meanings are iconic situations 'in which someone interprets a musical work or some portion of it as a sign of some non-musical object'. By means of subjective, extrageneric analyses, this study illustrates how certain aspects of the lives of Schubert and Wilde are mirrored in their work. The autonomy of the Artwork is, in the spirit of current critical theory, politely disregarded, and my study is on occasion speculative and perhaps generates even more questions than answers. The speculative aspect is justified on the grounds that this study is of an exploratory nature, generating material that is not intended to be the final say on any matter, but which can itself be interpreted.

The works I analyse are Schubert's *Moment musical* in A<sub>b</sub>, op. 94 no. 2 (D. 780) and Wilde's fairy tale 'The Nightingale and the Rose' from *The Happy Prince and Other Stories*. Taking on the loose appearance of a deconstructive reading,<sup>1</sup> the analysis of Schubert's work incorporates musical semiotics, while the analysis of Wilde's fairy tale builds on ideas raised in the Schubert analysis. This deconstructive reading focuses on the binary opposition between the concepts of redemption and defeat as found in the fairy

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<sup>1</sup> I use the word 'appearance' because deconstruction is a general and widely varied way of looking at a text which does not constitute a methodology or formal system.

tales. The duality between redemption and defeat is shown to have particular resonance with the Romantic image of the Artist as Messiah and Martyr (Wilson 2006: 6-29).

Both analyses will investigate the representation of alterity in the above-mentioned works of Schubert and Wilde. My study will offer the hypothesis that the sense of alterity experienced by Schubert and Wilde is reflected in their works as a longing for the unattainable, a quest for redemption and that this representation is often subversive and dissident.

### 1.3 Research questions

The preceding discussion leads to the main research question of this study:

How is Schubert's alterity represented in his second *Moment musical*, how is Wilde's alterity represented in 'The Nightingale and the Rose', and in which ways are these representations analogous?

In order to answer the main research question, attention must be given to the following secondary questions:

- Is there a representation of alterity to be found in Schubert's *Moment musical* no. 2 and Wilde's 'The Nightingale and the Rose', and if so, does it stem from their homosexual inclinations, their syphilitic infections, both, or neither?
- How are the concepts of defeat, dissidence and redemption represented in Schubert's *Moment musical* no. 2 and Wilde's 'The Nightingale and the Rose'?
- Do Schubert and Wilde present the idea of 'Artist as Martyr' and/or 'Artist as Messiah', and if so, how?

#### 1.4 Rationale for the study

My reasons for attempting this study have been stated in the ‘Background to the study’. The following is a rationale for the specific works I have selected by Schubert and Wilde.

I have chosen Schubert’s *Moments musical* no. 2 and Wilde’s ‘The Nightingale and the Rose’ for a number of reasons. Firstly, as has been stated, Cone’s article analyses a *Moment musical* and offers a comparison with Wilde’s fairy tales. Secondly, both these works demonstrate an apparent naivety and simplicity: the *Moments musicaux* give the impression of being nonchalantly improvised, perhaps as part of a casual *Schubertiade*, and Wilde’s fairy tales were ostensibly intended for children (Dunbar 2003: 86). Lastly, both Schubert’s *Moment musical* no. 2 and Wilde’s fairy tale were written while their creators were suffering from syphilitic infection, a possible rationale for the sense of alterity found in these works.

Although analysing a *Lied* of Schubert offers the addition of a poetic text which could be used to support my argument, I have chosen not to analyse a *Lied*, since I hypothesise that Schubert’s music itself contains enough material for my argument. Furthermore, the text of a *Lied* could perhaps not have reflected his own views entirely, but rather those of the poet; therefore such a text cannot be seen as a foundation upon which to ground theories regarding Schubert’s representation of alterity.

#### 1.5 Delimitations of the study

This study does not attempt to define and research every aspect of the association between Schubert and Wilde, neither does it attempt to construct similarities between them. Rather, this study juxtaposes specific facets of their association. The reasons for the choice of these facets have been stated previously. Furthermore, this study does not examine the entire oeuvres of Schubert and Wilde, but focuses on Schubert’s *Moments musicaux* and Wilde’s first collection of fairy tales, *The Happy Prince and Other Stories*.

## 1.6 Methodology

I will proceed with a general deconstructive reading of Schubert's *Moment musical* no. 2, incorporating the work of, amongst others, the philosophers Derrida, Gadamer, Levinas and the musicologists Cone, Kramer and McClary (Beard & Gloag 2005: 77-79; Lechte 2008: 47). My analysis is in the same vein as that of Cone – based not only on harmonic, melodic, rhythmic, formal and structural characteristics, but also on extra-musical associations, or as Cone states, 'the supposed reference of a musical work to non-musical objects, events, moods, emotions, ideas, and so on'. As Cone proposes, I attempt to derive from the theoretical analysis of the work a hermeneutic, extra-musical explanation of its musical content. (Cone 1982: 234-235.)

In order to accomplish a deconstructive reading of Wilde's 'The Nightingale and the Rose' with reference to Schubert's *Moment musical* no. 2, I discuss the precise nature of the term 'deconstruction', its origin, history and technique, and its application to music. For this end I incorporate the French Post-Structuralist School's philosophic and literary theories, especially of the classic postmodernist texts of Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Derrida 1976) and *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, in which his concept of *différance* is set forth (Derrida 2003: 225-240). Rose Rosengard Subotnik's application of deconstruction to music (Subotnik 1996) and the various subsequent critiques upon her work is also of importance.

Lastly, I analyse and interpret my research findings on Schubert and Wilde in order to obtain feasible outcomes and results concerning my research questions and aims.

## 1.7 Literature overview

My primary sources are Schubert's *6 Moments musicaux*, D780, op. 94 (Schubert 1984) and Wilde's two collections of fairy tales, *The Happy Prince and Other Stories* (Wilde 2005) and *A House of Pomegranates* (Wilde 2005).



The article that initiated this study, Cone's 'Schubert's Promissory Note: An Exercise in Musical Hermeneutics', mentions Schubert and Wilde in connection with one another (Cone 1982: 240-241), as does McClary's 'Constructions of Subjectivity in Schubert's Music' (McClary 2007: 189). Both articles are of great importance to my study. Although a vast amount of literature exists on both Schubert and Wilde respectively, there is, to the best of my knowledge, no other notable information on any aspect of their connection with each other.

When Maynard Solomon published his essay 'Franz Schubert and the Peacocks of Benvenuto Cellini' (Solomon 1989: 193-206) in *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music*, a great deal of controversy was created concerning Schubert's sexuality, so much so that the journal dedicated an entire volume (1993, vol. 17 no.1, *Schubert: Music, Sexuality, Culture*) to the topic. This volume contains a number of articles I refer to.

In 2007 Ashgate published multi-volume collections of essays by leading contemporary musicologists entitled *Ashgate Contemporary Thinkers on Critical Musicology Series*. This series, especially the contributions of Kramer and McClary, is of importance to my study. Another work of Kramer, *Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge* (Kramer 1995) is also very useful, in particular the chapters 'From the Other to the Abject' (pp. 33-66) and 'Music and Representation' (pp. 67-97).

Richard Ellmann's monumental biography of Oscar Wilde (Ellmann 1988), which won the Pulitzer Prize, is a work of exceptional standard and remains a foremost literary biography. Ellmann also edited a noteworthy collection of essays on Wilde (Ellmann 1969), which includes essays by W.H. Auden, James Joyce, Thomas Mann, G.B. Shaw and W.B. Yeats.

Considering that my deconstructive readings will focus on the binary opposition between redemption and defeat, two books will be central in understanding the 19<sup>th</sup>-century artist as messiah and martyr. The first, Willoughby's *Art and Christhood: The Aesthetics of Oscar Wilde* (Willoughby 1993), contains the notable chapters 'Jesus as a Model for

Selfhood in *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*’ (pp. 19-33) and ‘Toward a New Aestheticism: Christ’s Vision in *A House of Pomegranates*’ (pp. 34-47). The second book, *Rebels and Martyrs: The Image of the Artist in the Nineteenth Century* (Stephenson 2006), was published to accompany an exhibition of the same name given in 2006 at London’s National Gallery.

For information on deconstruction, hermeneutics and literary theory from a postmodern perspective two works are of the highest importance to me: *From Modernism to Postmodernism: An Anthology*, edited by Lawrence Cahoone (2003); and John Lechte’s *Fifty Contemporary Thinkers: From Structuralism to Post-Humanism* (Lechte 2008). These books provide insight into the concepts and philosophies associated with modern and postmodern thinkers relating to my study, including Adorno, Derrida, Foucault, Gadamer and Lyotard. The writings of the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995) are seminal in understanding the concept of alterity and the Other.

Within the field of Schubert studies, there exists a distinction between English language Schubert research and German language Schubert research. Although this study incorporates much German scholarship, some of which has not – to my knowledge – been transcribed for an English readership, my sources are predominantly English. This study, for more reasons than the language it is written in, falls into the category of English language Schubert research.

## **1.8 Difficulties encountered during the study**

The story of Schubert’s life is probably the most tragic of all the great masters, more tragic than the life stories of Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schumann or Tchaikovsky. The tragedy of his life gave his earlier biographers ample material to imbue Schubert with a demigod-like stature, not unlike that given to Beethoven. Florid descriptions of Schubert’s exemplary morals and saintly nature abound. Sir George Grove stated in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century that ‘though irregular after the irregularity of his time, Schubert was neither [*sic*] selfish, sensual nor immoral’ (Martens 1928: 539).

Edmondstone Duncan's 1905 biography of the composer asserts Schubert's virtuous nature in extravagantly flowery terms (ironically, the biography's title is simply 'Schubert'), speaking in the following extract about Schubert's death (Duncan 1905: 77):

The end came at three that afternoon, it being Wednesday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 1828, and the life of this man – so precious in the sight of ordinary mortals – was rendered back again to Him who gave it; and as, with sorrowing eyes, we gaze into the gloom of that still chamber, who can doubt but that quires of angels sang him to his rest, and that his place would be with the abode of the Blessed?

Even Alfred Einstein (1971: 353), in his 1951 biography of Schubert, succumbs to kowtowing terms:

He is without spiritual discord; he still has the honesty and courage to express the full sensuousness and richness of life. [...] The feeling he inspires in later ages is an infinite longing for a paradise of purity, spontaneity and innocence.

The height of the moral pedestal upon which Schubert was placed caused its collapse to be so much more sensational and Solomon's 1989 article very soon reached a status of notoriety. The hiatus about Schubert's sexuality reached its pinnacle in the early 1990s, with Schubert's 'defenders' on both sides of the spectrum striking and counter-striking (McClary 2007: 170-171). In more recent years the debate has lost the label of a scandal, making it possible for a more level-headed approach to be taken.

Since my study of Schubert's *Moment musical* no. 2 is of a subjective nature, it is difficult not to stray into areas where an ideology is forced upon Schubert and his oeuvre. A precarious balance needs to be kept; on the one hand, to be wary of Schubert (and Wilde, for that matter) worship, and on the other hand, to not be found guilty of sensationalism and ideology mongering, especially considering the gay activism of recent decades.

## 1.9 Notes to the reader

- I will refer to the predominant current musicology as ‘critical musicology’ rather than ‘new musicology’. In recent years, musicologists have argued that the term ‘new musicology’ has become anachronistic, since the ‘new’ developments it refers to are by now almost twenty years old. Alastair Williams (2001: vii-xi), in *Constructing Musicology*, advocates the name ‘critical musicology’ as a useful designation for recent trends in musicology. The term ‘critical musicology’ has received widespread acceptance, as is exemplified in Ashgate’s 2007 publication of the Ashgate Contemporary Thinkers on Critical Musicology Series.
- Since no recognised term for homosexuality existed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, I employ the term ‘homosexual’ anachronistically and with reference to the entire spectrum of homoerotic activities. I have chosen the term ‘homosexual’ above words like gay and queer, since ‘homosexual’ indicates a clinical condition without alluding to a specific cultural milieu (Cowdery 2006: 3). Susan McClary (2007: 228) chooses to use ‘same-sex erotic activities’ with reference to early 19<sup>th</sup>-century homosexuality, but I find this term unnecessarily cumbersome.
- When using recognised terminology, I will use the English translation of French and German terms, except where those terms have formed a specific character in their original languages. Examples of words which I will refer to in their original language are Heidegger’s *Dasein* and Derrida’s *différance*. Latin words offer their own locus of meaning and will thus be left in Latin; examples are *hymen* (ambiguously both inside and outside), *ousia* (being) and *pharmakon* (ambiguously both poison and antidote) (Derrida 2003: 229).
- This study, although subtly related to intertextuality, is not an intertextual study. Kristeva, who was influenced by the work of Bakhtin, coined the term ‘intertextuality’ to describe the interdependence between literary texts and the way in which it is ‘constructed from a mosaic of quotations’, and that every text is

‘the absorption and transformation of another’ (Bullock & Trombley 2000: 442). This study examines hermeneutic aspects of two separate texts. Considering that the one text is music-text and the other is word-text, this study can be termed ‘interdisciplinary’.

- All German and French quotations are translated by the author of this study, unless otherwise specified.
- Some of the music discussed is not given in the music examples. In such cases the reader is advised to consult Appendix A.

## Chapter 2

### Deconstruction and the deconstructive process

#### 2.1 Derrida and the history of deconstruction

Deconstruction has, since its Derridian origins, become a broad and encompassing technique, widely varying in its application. This is in part due to the labyrinthine texts of Derrida, which have spawned a number of contested interpretations (Lechte 2008: 134-135). Therefore, before a deconstructive reading of Schubert's *Moment musical* no. 2 and Wilde's „The Nightingale and the Rose' can be attempted, a short chapter that overviews the history of the term and its implications and intimations is necessary.

##### 2.1.1 Origin and development

Deconstruction is a trend in literary theory that had its origins in the work of the French philosopher and literary theorist Jacques Derrida (1930-2004). Derrida, in his seminal works of the 1960s, *Of Grammatology* (1967, translated 1976) and *Writing and Difference* (1967, translated 1978), inaugurated post-structuralism and disseminated an elaborate technique of analysing and interpreting texts which he called deconstruction, after Heidegger's term *Destruktion*. Heidegger used this term to designate not a destruction of tradition, but an elucidation of the elements of tradition itself, concealed or manifest. Derrida, who was strongly influenced by Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic theories, proposed that a text can mean something very different from what is at first obvious and that the author's apparently intended meaning can be subverted, creating a new and alternative reading of the text. (Bullock & Trombley 2000: 202-203; Bushakevitz 2008b: 7; Lechte 2008: 28, 129-130, 137.)

Deconstruction is intrinsically linked to postmodernism, being itself partly a reactionary trend against positivism, structuralism and the „new criticism’ of modernism<sup>2</sup> (Bullock & Trombley 2000: 203). Postmodernism emphasises a rejection of the „facts’ of modernism and offers the acceptance of any number of varying interpretations (Jameson 2003: 565). Jean-François Lyotard (1926-1998), in his *The Postmodern Condition* (1979), states the following concerning the shift from modernism to postmodernism (Lyotard 2003: 259):

I will use the term *modern* to designate any science that legitimates itself with reference to a metadiscourse of this kind making an explicit appeal to some grand narrative [...]. Simplifying to the extreme, I define *postmodernism* as incredulity toward metanarratives.

The „incredulity toward metanarratives’ with which Lyotard defines postmodernism finds kinship with the principles and spirit of deconstruction. Deconstruction arose from the womb of postmodern thought, especially that of the French Post-Structuralist School which included Derrida, Foucault and Lyotard. Later, Derrida’s technique of deconstruction exerted considerable influence on the so-called Yale School, a group of American literary theorists whose work reached its zenith in the early 1980s; the Yale School included Paul de Man and Harold Bloom. In more recent years, deconstruction has experienced a diminishing of its influence; however, it has broadened its base to include various intertextual and interdisciplinary morphings. (Bullock & Trombley 2000: 202-203; Bushakevitz 2008b: 12.)

### 2.1.2 Procedures and terminology

Deconstruction is primarily concerned with the establishment and interpretation of binary oppositions within a hierarchy. Derrida, who throughout his life was preoccupied with, amongst other concepts, the ideas of death, mourning, secrecy and violence, made it clear

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<sup>2</sup> There exist two conflicting views on the relation of modernism to postmodernism. The first is that postmodernism is a new formation rejecting modernism; the second is that postmodernism is a continuation of modernism. Beard and Gloag (2005: 141) state succinctly: “Does [postmodernism] imply a rejection of modernism [...]? Alternatively, might the implication that modernism is left intact after the prefix ‚post’ open up a more positive dimension that can suggest some degree of continuation between the two concepts?” I subscribe to the opinion that postmodernism superseded modernism and began a new milieu.

that deconstruction was a subversive technique based on the violent hierarchy of two opposing elements, stating that deconstruction seeks to „avoid both simply neutralizing the binary oppositions...and simply residing within the closed field of these oppositions, thereby confirming it [...]. We are not dealing with the peaceful coexistence of a *vis-à-vis*, but rather with a violent hierarchy’ (Beard & Gloag 2005: 51; Lechte 2008: 130). This hierarchy is violent because one of the opposing elements is always in a subordinate position and is continually struggling to achieve superiority over the other element.

In order to establish a hierarchy, for Derrida, there must be a space between the two oppositions, a space which cannot be conceptualised, since it is merely a signifier and not acknowledged as existing self-present (Derrida 2003: 233). The polar ends of this space contradict each other, yet they are held together by a shared, albeit irresolvable solidarity (Culler 2002: 46). To indicate this obscure entity, which he deems „beyond the order of understanding’, Derrida coined the famous neologism *différance* in 1968 (Cahoone 2003: 225; Derrida 2003: 226). *Différance* is a combination of the two meanings of the French verb *différer* – „to differ’ and „to defer’; thus *différance* is difference deferred (Lechte 2008: 132). This play (*jeu*) on language with language is characteristically Derridian, for *différance* is not only endlessly deferred, it also only can exist in writing, not in speech: „this graphic difference (the *a* instead of the *e*), this marked difference between two apparently vocalic notations, between vowels, remains purely graphic: it is written or read, but it is not heard’ (Derrida 2003: 226). Graphically though, *différance* is clearly a double-edged neologism; thus in both its meaning and its *Dasein* (to use Heidegger’s term) it exists in the spirit world *between* entities.

Like *différance*, the arsenal of deconstruction contains other Derridian terminology which is ostensibly ambiguous. Some of these are based on the same paradox as *différance*: *pharmakon* is both the poison and the antidote; *hymen* is both the inside and the outside. The nearest that it is possible to get to any conceptualisation of the logic of *différance* and the paradox of *pharmakon* and *hymen* probably lies in the word *aporia*, coined by Puttenham in his *English Poesie* (1589). Although the original meaning was „something doubtful’, in Derrida’s oeuvre *aporia* points to a self-engendered paradox, a sinister,



inevitable impasse which cannot be solved and thus has to be forever avoided, creating a gap. (Derrida 2001: 1835; Derrida 2003: 231; Lechte 2008: 132; Norris 2002: 47-49.)

Two more terms which are of importance in Derrida's writings are *supplement* and *khōra*. The supplement is both the surplus and the necessary addition of the *différance*; it is that which has always already existed, but which is anomalous and paradoxical and thus cannot be acknowledged to exist. The *khōra*, a term originating in the writings of Plato, is 'a logic of the ambiguous, of the equivocal, of polarity' which oscillates between two poles: *neither/nor* and *both this and that*. (Bullock & Trombley 2000: 844; Derrida 1998: 231-232; Derrida 2003: 231; Lechte 2008: 132.)

The apparently incompatible, sometimes even contradictory double lives of the above terms lie on the limits of meaning, prophesying but not realising their own lacuna. This is, as Christopher Norris (2002: 3) states, in line with deconstruction's aim of 'rigorously *suspending* this assumed correspondence between mind, meaning and the concept of method which claims to unite them'. The text becomes the playing field for 'difference deferred' infinitely and 'with a certain laughter and a certain dance' (Derrida 2003: 240).

## 2.2 Purpose and aims of the deconstructive reading

There are many methods of interpreting and analysing texts, and deconstruction has since its inception been seen as being one of the most controversial techniques, often viewed as an intellectual game, a dangerous weapon, or a sabotaging of tradition (Norris 2002: i). This study has chosen to attempt a deconstructive reading of Schubert's *Moment musical* no. 2 and Wilde's 'The Nightingale and the Rose' not because deconstruction is a trendy and elaborate receptacle in which to mould pre-formed conceptions, but rather because deconstruction is by nature a subversive technique which offers alternative, radical and sometimes frightening interpretations of texts. For purposes of achieving an understanding of the inner, hidden psyches of Schubert and Wilde, deconstruction is the ideal arena in which to dismantle the various topoi which reside in their complex works.

The deconstructive readings aim to show if and how both Schubert and Wilde felt a sense of being the Other. This deconstruction also offers insight into how and why Schubert and Wilde represented (consciously or otherwise) aspects of their possible sense of alterity in some of their works.

### **2.3 Method of the deconstructive readings**

The juxtaposition of opposing binaries is a key aspect in the creation of an alternative reading of the text. The binaries must be at conflict with each other, yet they still should reconcile the distance between their polarity in order to illustrate the *différance*.

The dichotomy I have chosen for my readings is one between *redemption* and *defeat*. These two terms form the *khōra* of these readings and are neither opposites nor at loggerheads with each other. Redemption should not be viewed as victory, for redemption is a quest for absolution, and absolution is merely exoneration, not an acquittal. Therefore, if Schubert and Wilde's quest was for redemption, defeat would not be failure, since defeat would be inevitable even if redemption had been achieved. Victory is always already impossible.

The duplicity of redemption/defeat is, in this reading, shown to be illustrated in „The Nightingale and the Rose' by a number of motifs, symbols and metaphors. Symbols are sometimes also metaphors, such as those of the Nightingale as Artist/Christ/Wilde, the moon as the eternal feminine and the Student as society. As is expanded on in Chapter 3, duplicity is an important facet of Schubert's music. This is perhaps the most significant proof of and insight into his musical representation of personal alterity, since Schubert was described by a number of his friends and early biographers as himself possessing a double nature: the one orthodox and proper, the other subversive and dissident. In 1858 Schubert's friend Joseph Kenner wrote the following (Solomon 1989: 197; Youens 1992: 12):

Anyone who knew Schubert knows how he was made of two natures, foreign to each other, how powerfully the craving for

pleasure dragged his soul down to the slough [*Schlammgefühl*] of moral degradation, [which] probably caused his premature death and certainly hastened it.

„The Nightingale and the Rose’ furthermore illustrates duplicity in its interpretations, since there are two main interpretations, which appear to be unrelated and even at odds with each other. The two main general interpretations of Wilde’s fairytale, as is expanded upon later, are

- that it is an allegorical tribute to the unrecognised artist; and
- that it is a fable about the crucifixion, suffering and infinite love of Christ/Wilde.

These interpretations form the basis of this study’s deconstructive reading of „The Nightingale and the Rose’. As Derrida states, „a text is not a text unless it hides from its first comer, from the first glance, the law of composition and the rules of its game’ (Derrida 2001: 1830). The study’s deconstructive reading shows that hidden aspects in Wilde’s fairytale are the various religious, sexual and mythological connotations which reside deep within the story and which portray an alternative, insurrectionary interpretation, one in which Wilde’s homosexuality and his syphilitic infection play a decisive part. Similarly, in Schubert’s *Moment musical* no. 2, there is shown to be a variety of dissident and subversive elements which are intrinsic (congeneric) to the music-text and which point to extrinsic (extrageneric) factors – subjective factors relating to Schubert’s personal alterity.

The following chapter will analyse Schubert’s second *Moment musical* from both a congeneric and extrageneric perspective.

## Chapter 3

### Representations of alterity in Schubert's *Moment musical no. 2*

#### 3.1 Extrageneric representation: limits and possibilities

It has long been disputed whether a composer portrays extrageneric material in his works and if so, how much. The following section deals with aspects of Schubert's life and work which are of particular importance in understanding Schubert's musical and personal alterity; they include his association with dissident groups, his settings of poems by Count August von Platen, and the long-alleged dichotomy between Schubert and Beethoven.

##### 3.1.1 Schubert's sense of alterity and its representation

An important characteristic of most great artists is the possession and incorporation of originality. Originality signifies a novel approach, but does not necessarily designate a departure, a deviation. Many artists demonstrate originality by exploring further along already extant paths, trailblazing ahead, but from paths created by earlier artists. Deviation, on the other hand, is not continuing along a path, it is not even following the road less taken; it is changing direction and going off the road on a tangent.

Deviation from the norm is an aspect of Schubert's music that has received much critical attention since 1838, when Schumann wrote about Schubert's „feminine character’ (Gramit 1993: 70-72; McClary 2007: 187, 191). Kramer (1998: 27) speaks about the wound which this deviation would have caused Schubert, a wound created by subjectivity which intensifies this subjectivity in a vicious circle: „The wound hurts; it throbs; to keep the wound open is perversely to locate subjectivity at the site of a break that memorialises pleasure by the continuation of pain’. Foucault, writing about the „sensualization of power’, links pleasure (implicitly but not exclusively sexual) with power, and ultimately with death (Foucault 1980: 44-45, 156). The pleasure of the wound is commented upon

touchingly by Derrida (1987: 27), who writes, „the wound can have (should have) one proper name: I recognize that I love – you – by this: that you leave in me a wound that I do not want to replace’ (Kramer 1998: 27). Schubert’s memorialising of pleasure is, according to McClary (2007: 187), a notable pointer for sexual Otherness in his oeuvre and is associated with „the narrative structures that gay writers and critics are exploring today’.

### 3.1.2 Musical deviation as a reflection of personal deviation

Deviation from the norm is not only an aspect of Schubert’s music, it was a part of his life as well. In 1817 or 1818 Schubert joined an unorthodox group of Viennese intellectuals called the „Unsinnsgesellschaft’. This semi-secret society gave its members secret code names – Schubert was called „Ritter Juan de la Cembalo’ – and produced nonsense plays with names like *Insanius auf Erden* featuring characters such as „3/4 Gott’. Members dressed in elaborate costumes: the effeminate Johann Carl Smirsch was in drag, with the code name of „Nina Wuzerl’. Numerous drawings and caricatures of members of the group exist and Schubert himself is portrayed on a number of occasions. Solomon (1989: 205) writes the following:

Schubert and his compatriots inhabited a clandestine realm, one constantly beset by a variety of fears – of surveillance, of arrest and persecution, of stigmatization and exile. These were not idle concerns, for distinctions between religious heresy, political subversion, and sexual deviation were never very finely drawn by hierarchical authority. Indeed, idealistic and aesthetic impulses often merge effortlessly into quasi-oppositional politics.

It was Schubert’s membership of another, far more clandestine group that was to cause Schubert’s 1820 arrest „upon suspicion of subversive activities’ when the police raided the gathering place of the probably anonymous group. Schubert escaped with only a black eye, but his friend Johann Senn was banished from Vienna and never saw Schubert again. Prince Metternich’s Austria, in the wake of the French Revolution and its consequences for Europe, was filled with unrest and resistance. From 1815 Metternich

introduced a system of containment, with strict policing and easy arrest. The police report on the reasons for Senn's harsh sentence is vague and, according to Muxfeldt, full of innuendo. Although he was expelled on political reasons, it is likely that his supposed homosexuality played a role. A few years after the Senn incident Schubert apparently applied for membership of the notorious „Ludlams Höhle' group, but the police raided again, this time on charges of the possession of pornographic material, causing the disbanding of the society. (Barzun 2000: 519-520; Deutsch 1946: 128-129; Muxfeldt 1996: 504-505; Solomon 1989: 205; Steblin 1997: 52-55.)

Schubert's alterity and rebellious dissidence manifested itself at an early stage; in 1818 his father appears to have expelled him from home, partly due to conflict regarding career, marriage and religion (Deutsch 1946: 194, 228; Solomon 1989: 194). *Mein Traum*, a brief prose work Schubert wrote in 1822, possibly describes this banishment, although it has been speculated that *Mein Traum* was written while in an opium dream and contains no hidden narrative (Pesic 1999: 137). Regardless of whether he was expelled or not, Schubert's conflict with his father started early and a substantial reconciliation was never to occur.

A last example of Schubert's involvement with a subversive and clandestine Viennese subculture is his association with a group led by the painter Ludwig Schnorr von Carolsfeld (1788-1853) that experimented with then-illegal animal magnetism. Schnorr, who imagined himself as a healer and clairvoyant, was covertly practicing *Heilmagnetismus*, a branch of Mesmerist treatment that sought connections between psychosomatic anguish and sexual desire. Schubert attended numerous treatment sessions, even participated once by playing some of his music to a patient who was under hypnosis. According to Feurzeig (1997: 223-229), whose article „Heroines in Perversity: Marie Schmith, Animal Magnetism, and the Schubert Circle' examines in particular the case of Marie Schmith<sup>3</sup> (of which Schubert knew), the treatment was on occasion violent, as can be seen in Schnorr's documentation of Schmith's treatment:

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<sup>3</sup> Marie Schmith, who was a close relative of Schubert's close friend Joseph von Spaun (1788-1865), is sometimes referred to as Marie Schmidt (Deutsch 1946: 90; Feurzeig 1997: 233).

Sagte sie, man solle ihr die Fersen brennen, gerade dort, wo den Nerven nach den Vorderfüße liege, und die Hand über dem Querhandwurzelbauch, wo der Mediannerve liegt. Meh. [an associate of Schnorr] brannte sie nun mit einer glühenden Kohle, wie sie es verlangte. Es führen bei jedesmahligen Brennen convuls. Stoße durch den ganzen Leib, aber sie konnte das gebrannte Glied bewegen. Zuerst die linke, dann die rechte Hand, denn [*sic*] den linken, und rechten Fuß. Nun verlangte sie, er solle sie auch auf den Rückgrath brennen, weil sie den Nerven noch nicht bewegen könne; was dann auch geschah.<sup>4</sup>

Schnorr and his collaborators were continually fearful of official prosecution, a fear which was not unmerited when considering the above bizarre treatment (Deutsch 1946: 90; Feurzeig 1997: 234-235).

Considering the strong likelihood that Schubert belonged to a group of friends who were involved in illegalities and seditious experimentation as part of a Viennese subculture, Schubert's possible sexual Otherness and its influence on his music takes on a notable significance in the following words by Kramer (1998: 30):

The most powerful and protean venue of unrationalized subjectivity is that of sexuality. [...] Sexuality takes pride of place in part because of its traditional associations with secrecy, transgressiveness, and irrationality. These terms can all be readily reinterpreted and revalued as basic features of authentic, deeply interior subjectivity.

Kramer (2007a: 29) acknowledges that he himself is someone „who always tries to yield to Freudian temptations’, and there are of course questions that can be raised concerning the musical representation of interior subjectivity formed by sexuality. Is it possible to discern a composer's sexuality from his music only, and can sexual orientation be constructed inside music itself? McClary (2007: 169-170) says no, sexual orientation cannot be deduced merely from the music, but in Schubert's case, considering the extra-

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<sup>4</sup> She said that her heels should be burned at the place where the nerves lie at the front of the feet, and her hand over the palm, where the central nerves are located. Meh. burned her then with a glowing coal, just as she wished. There were violent convulsions through her entire body with each burn, but she could still move the burned limb. First the left, then the right hand, thereafter the left and right foot. Then she asked to be burned on her spine, because she could not yet move the nerves, which was then also done.

musical evidential substantiation of Solomon and others of Schubert's possible homosexuality, the subversive qualities already known to exist in Schubert's music could be viewed in the context of his subversive and dissident personal characteristics.

### 3.1.3 Schubert's Platen settings

Whatever his sexual preference, Schubert did explore homoerotic themes in his music, both implicitly and explicitly (Kramer 1998: 93). An interesting and much studied example is Schubert's two settings of poems by the poet Karl August Georg Max, Graf von Platen-Hallermünde (1797-1835), known as Count August von Platen (Coote 1983: 15). Platen, whose homosexuality was an open secret, was acquainted with members of Schubert's circle (Solomon 1989: 205). Schubert set two of Platen's poems to music in 1822: *Die Liebe hat gelogen*, op. 23 no. 1; and *Du liebst mich nicht*, op. 59 no. 1 (Kramer 1998: 106). These songs have much in common with the stylistic procedures of the *Moment musical* no. 2, such as the juxtaposition of the minor-major dichotomy encountered so often in bars 4-8 of the *Moment musical*. Both of the Platen songs begin with a similar juxtaposition, as can be seen in the following two examples:

Example 3.1 Schubert, *Die Liebe hat gelogen*, op. 23 no. 1, bars 1-3

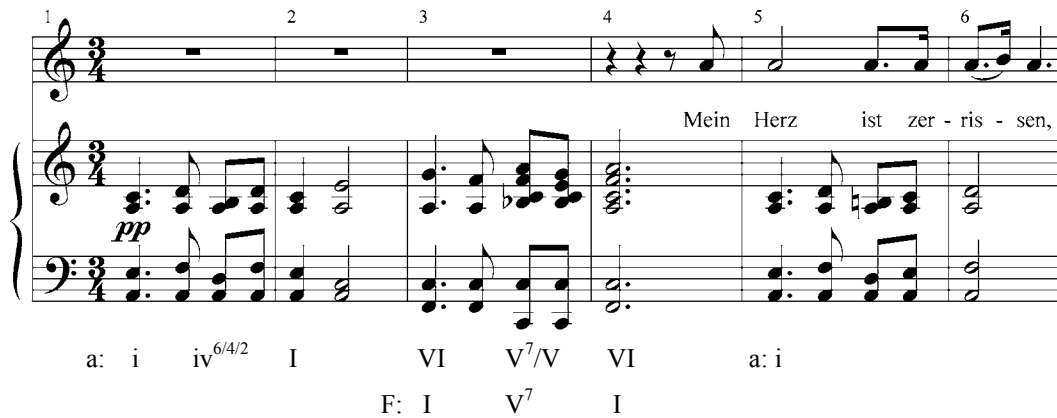
*Langsam*

Die Lie-be hat ge-lo-gen,

c: i    N<sup>6</sup>    iv    V<sup>5/4</sup>    V<sup>4/3(♭5)</sup>/V    V    c: i

G: I<sup>5/4</sup>    V<sup>4/3(♭5)</sup>    I



Example 3.2 Schubert, *Du liebst mich nicht*, op. 59 no. 1, bars 1-6<sup>3.1</sup>


a: i iv<sup>6/4/2</sup> I VI V<sup>7/V</sup> VI a: i  
 F: I V<sup>7</sup> I

These two examples show that both songs are in minor keys and both have primary rhythmic motifs (bar 1 and bars 1-2 respectively) that end on a major chord upon repetition, returning to the tonic minor when the singer enters. Both shifts are brought about by means of secondary dominants ( $V^{4/3(5)}/V$  and  $V^7/V$ ) and both are preceded by a pivot chord ( $c:V^{5/4}/G:I^{5/4}$  and  $a:VI/F:I$ ). Why does Schubert set both introductions so similarly? Of course, there could be other songs by Schubert which use the same procedure, but perhaps the correspondence of the two Platen settings are more than coincidental. The poems of both songs are about the betrayal of love and are written in ambiguous gender. Similar to the *Moment musical* no. 2 (as is demonstrated in 3.3.2), these songs have themes of unkept promises and the burden of defeat. However, in the *Moment musical* no. 2, shifts from the minor to the major are shown to symbolise moments of hope (see Examples 3.6 and 3.7). This is notably similar in the Platen songs, in both of which Schubert, by moving to a major key, offers a moment of hope just before the singer enters. The hope is shattered when the minor key returns and the word-text begins (bar 2<sup>4.2</sup> and bar 4<sup>3.2</sup> respectively).

The Platen songs can be seen to have a similar representation of alterity as the *Moment musical* no. 2, but how do the Platen songs explore homoerotic themes? The Platen songs generated controversy when they first appeared. A critic from the Leipzig *Allgemeine*

*musikalische Zeitung* wrote (in quaintly old-fashioned grammar) the following in 1827 (Dittrich 1997: 216):

Hr. Schubert sucht und künstelt – nicht in der Melodie, aber in der Harmonie, gar sehr, und besonders modulirt er so befremdlich und oft so urplötzlich nach dem Entlegensten hin, wie, wenigstens in Liedern und anderen kleinen Gesängen, kein Componist auf dem ganzen Erdboden.

Kristina Muxfeldt, who has written substantially on Schubert's Platen settings, states a number of reasons which show that Schubert knew about Platen's homosexuality. Ambiguities in the texts of the poems and the nuanced approach with which Schubert set these ambiguities show that he knew that the love Platen wrote about was not heterosexual love. In particular, Muxfeldt argues that the emphatic dissonance with which Schubert set the phrase „Was blüh'n die Narzissen?“ (from *Du liebst mich nicht*) demonstrates that he knew the implications of this phrase. The myth of Narcissus, with its homosexual implications discussed in 4.3.1.5, is an *idée fixe* in Platen's oeuvre, as was Ganymede<sup>5</sup> and Hyacinth. The similarity here with both Wilde and Benvenuto Cellini is striking: Ganymede, Hyacinth and Narcissus are figures of great importance to Wilde. Cellini (1500-1571) made sculptures of all three figures. Both Schubert and Wilde were compared by people who knew them with Cellini, a famously homosexual artist twice convicted of sodomy. (Kramer 1998: 108; Muxfeldt 1996: 497, 501-506; Pope-Hennessy 1985: 320; Solomon 1989: 201; Yeats 1969: 15.)

### 3.1.4 The Schubert-Beethoven dichotomy

The tendency of juxtaposing a virile Beethoven with a feminine Schubert began early, during the first decades after Schubert's death. As has been touched upon earlier, Schumann wrote in an 1838 review that Schubert is „a feminine character, much more voluble, softer and broader; or a guileless child romping among giants.... [He] conducts

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<sup>5</sup> Much has been written about Schubert's setting of Goethe's *Ganymed*, with its distinctly homoerotic connotations, both musical and extra-musical (see Kramer's „The Ganymede complex: Schubert's songs and the homoerotic imagination' in Kramer 1998). However, this study is not an appropriate platform for a discussion about Schubert's *Ganymed*.

himself as wife to husband, the one giving orders, the other relying upon pleas and persuasion' (Gramit 1993: 72). Kreissle's biography of 1865 mentions that when Schubert's remains were exhumed his skull was found to have had a „fast weibliche Organisation' (Gramit 1993: 71). The early English biographers of Schubert also found feminine qualities in Schubert's music and excused this by „identifying him with an Other – a foreign, exotic, or otherwise marginal group' (Gramit 1993: 70-72; McClary 2007: 173, 191).

By contrast, Beethoven has always been associated with the masculine and the heroic. Schubert greatly esteemed the older composer and had a thorough knowledge of his works, yet his musical emulation of Beethoven – the obvious measuring staff for all 19<sup>th</sup>-century composers – does not encompass one of the most distinct of Beethovenian features, the masculine and heroic aspect (Gardner 2008: 177-178). In fact, Schubert distances the heroic and will be shown to avoid climax and redemption, preferring anticlimactic phrase structure and the connected representation of defeat. Beethoven's Fifth Symphony in particular was thoroughly studied by Schubert (Gardner 2008: 179). With such an unambiguously masculine work as a model, it would have been easy for Schubert to follow in the elder composer's stylistic footsteps. Yet, according to McClary (2007: 187), Schubert chose to rather invent entirely new constructions on almost every parameter of Beethoven's musical language: „although we often speak of Schubert as if he managed to transmit his own subjective feelings directly into his music, these “feelings” had to be constructed painstakingly from the stuff of standard tonality’.

Schubert attempts a heroic style in works like his Piano Sonata in D major (D. 850) and the four hand piano works *Trois Marches Héroïques* (D. 602) and *Grande Marche Héroïque* (D. 885). However, Gardner (2008: 179) holds that Schubert cannot escape from himself and can only mimic a truly heroic style in these works. According to Lash (1985: 5), in his book *The Hero: Manhood and Power*, the virile, masculine and heroic go together; without virility, masculinity and even violence, the heroic cannot exist:

Foremost in the heroic configuration is virility, the essence of the masculine sex. The hero is undeniably *he*, the male of the human species. Gender is an issue here, for ideally the hero incarnates masculinity at its best, most noble aspects, even though he is potentially equal to the worst of which his sex is capable. His career is turbulent and controversial because virility is close kin to violence – perhaps even its dark, unruly twin.

The connotation that Schubert himself was effeminate is not being made in this study; the above quote has reference to the representation of heroism in Schubert's music. The heroic is unattainable in Schubert's music not only because the heroic goes with virility and masculinity, but also because it denotes force, compelling motion – another much discussed aspect in the Beethoven/Schubert dichotomy. Whereas Beethoven's music has forward thrust, Schubert's music consists largely of reminiscences which move ahead only by overlapping one another. Dahlhaus (1986: 8-9) comments the following on the matter:

In Schubert, unlike in Beethoven, the most lasting impression is made by remembrance, which turns from later events back to earlier ones, and not by goal-consciousness, which presses on from earlier to later. The teleological energy characteristic of Beethoven's contrasting derivation is surely not absent in Schubert, but it is perceptibly weaker. Conversely, Schubert's procedure gains an element of the involuntary: the link between themes is not deliberately brought about, it simply happens.

The notion that Schubert could compose involuntarily reminds one of Johann Michael Vogl's remark that Schubert was „clairvoyant”; it also broadens the gap between Beethoven and Schubert, since Beethoven laboured meticulously over manuscripts while Schubert rarely revised any work (Feurzeig 1997: 241; Gramit 1993: 69). Even the fact that Schubert's oeuvre is dominated by the Lied, a fundamentally feminine genre, negates the possibility of complete conciliation with Beethoven (Gramit 1993: 69; Kramer 1998: 3).

The dichotomy between Beethoven and Schubert is of importance to this study because it offers a clear example both of Schubert's alterity and his musical representation of it.

Although he lived in the same city as Beethoven, met him personally, and idolized him and his music, Schubert's music is dissimilar to Beethoven's in very significant and telling ways, enough to indicate a markedly dissident quality in Schubert's musical output.

### **3.2 The origins and development of the *Moment musical* no. 2**

#### **3.2.1 Genesis**

Considering Schubert's short life, the *Moments musicaux* were composed relatively far apart from each other, possibly over a period of five years (1823-1828). In 1823 and 1824 what are now the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> *Moment musicaux* appeared published separately under the titles of *Air russe* and *Les Plaintes d'un Troubadour*, the titles probably suggested by the publisher, M.J. Leidesdorf. The other *Moments musicaux* were composed not long before Schubert's death in 1828, for publication in the second half of the year. The title was originally misspelled as *Momens musicales*, probably an error of the publisher. The mistake could also have been Schubert's, since he tended to employ his defective French more than what was appropriate, French being the second language of Viennese intellectuals at the time. (Baylor 1994: 6; Deutsch 1946: 47, 387-388, 791; Feil 1986: 116-117; McClelland 2008: 158.)

Schubert's late piano works are distinct in their position in his oeuvre. Alfred Einstein calls them Schubert's „last words' and states that the composer „had his final say in the short pieces of his last years. [...] It is their deeper, Schubertian originality that distinguishes these pieces (Einstein 1951: 229, 331). Many of these shorter piano pieces were arranged in groups that portray a sense of key unity, leading scholars to think that the *Drei Klavierstücke* (D. 946) and the two sets of impromptus (D. 899 and D. 935) each were intended to form collections of quasi-sonatas (McClelland 2008: 158). However, the same cannot be said of the *Moments musicaux*, which form only a set or group, not a sonata or suite. This makes the individuality of each *Moment musical* far more distinct, since Schubert does not seem to have been considering any greater unity than the unity

within each short piece. Even this unity was malleable due to the genre being one of improvisation, offering compositional freedom that allowed Schubert to delve into his interior and to bare his soul, to portray alterity.

### 3.2.2 Extant analyses

The *Moment musical* no. 2 in A-flat major has been chosen because it is an introspective work rich in analytical possibilities, especially those of an extrageneric nature. It does not seem to have received any notable English-language critical attention, in contrast to the *Moments musicaux* nos. 1, 3, and 6. Studies of Schubert's late shorter piano pieces (other than the sources included in Chapter 1) include the following:

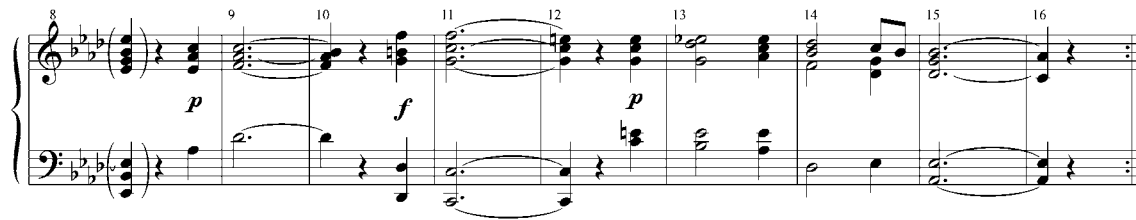
- Beach, D. 1998. Modal Mixture and Schubert's Harmonic Practice. *Journal of Music Theory*, 42 (1): 73-100.
- DeLong, K. 2008. Revisiting Schubert's Czech connections. *The Unknown Schubert*. Edited by B.M. Reul and L.B. Bodley. Burlington: Ashgate.
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- Frisch, W. (ed.) 1986. *Schubert: Critical and Analytical Studies*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Hughes, M., Moss, L. & Schachter, C. 1968. Analysis Symposium: Moments Musicals [sic], Op. 94. *Journal of Music Theory*, 12 (2): 184-239.
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- Rothgeb, J. 1969. Another View on Schubert's Moment Musical, Op. 94/1. *Journal of Music Theory*, 13 (1): 128-139.
- Teboul, J-K. 1998. À la recherche de la cellule motivique fondamentale du *Klavierstück* no. 2 de Schubert. *Ostinato rigore: Revue internationale d'études musicales*, 11 (12): 327-338.

### 3.3 Harmonic alterity: promissory notes and letters of resignation

#### 3.3.1 Cone and the promissory demand in the *Moment musical* no. 6

Edward T. Cone (1982: 235), in his seminal article „Schubert’s Promissory Note: An Exercise in Musical Hermeneutics’, holds that Schubert’s *Moment musical*, op. 94 no. 6 in A<sub>b</sub> major, makes a musical promise which it does not keep. Taking phrase structure and motivic recurrence into account, Cone states that Schubert creates a tonicization in bars 11-12 by sharpening the E<sub>b</sub> to an E<sub>q</sub>; but then he disregards this implied leading note (f: V) and immediately reverts back to the original key in the next bar, bar 13 (A<sub>b</sub>: V<sup>4/3</sup>), as can be seen in the following example:

Example 3.3 Schubert, *Moment musical* no. 6 in A<sub>b</sub>, bars 10-16<sup>2</sup>



The E<sub>q</sub> in bar 12 is a promissory note, a note which has „strongly suggested an obligation that it has failed to discharge – in the present case, its function as a leading tone’. A musical promise need of course not be kept; in fact, composers during the 19<sup>th</sup> century demonstrated a progressive snubbing of responsibility for the reparation of promissory situations. However, the context of this particular work needs to be taken into consideration. Both the fact that promissory repayment was customary (even obligatory) in Schubert’s time, and the surface-level simplicity of the *Moment musical* in question demonstrate that the refusal here of the promissory note’s demand for reparation is unsettling, even disturbing. (Cone 1982: 235.)

Cone posits that the context of Schubert’s blatant refusal points to something beyond its congeneric significance (Cone 1982: 240):

I can go further and suggest a more specific interpretation of that context: it can be taken as a model of the effect of vice on a sensitive personality. A vice, as I see it, begins as a novel and fascinating suggestion, not necessarily dangerous though often disturbing. It becomes dangerous, however, as its increasing attractiveness encourages investigation and experimentation, leading to possible obsession and eventual addiction.

The danger that lies in the „vice’ is the contraction of syphilis, as Cone later reveals (Cone 1982: 241; McClary 2007: 197). As a sufferer of syphilitic infection, Schubert was already a proverbial leper outside the city walls and would have had an undeniable sense of alterity.

Apart from syphilis, Cone’s article hints at a further possible explanation for Schubert’s unusual treatment of the promissory requirement in his *Moment musical* no. 6: his possible homosexuality. „One can imagine [Schubert] becoming more and more fascinated by his [sensual] discoveries, letting them assume control of his life as they reveal hitherto unknown and possibly forbidden sources of pleasure’ (Cone 1982: 240). Although Cone does not explicitly indicate what these „forbidden sources of pleasure’ are, they cannot have been female prostitutes, since prostitution was a legal, socially accepted practice in Schubert’s Vienna; the Empress Maria Theresa’s chastity commissions had been disbanded long before then already, and there were 1500 registered prostitutes in the Austrian capital alone (Solomon 1989: 194).

There are a number of reasons why Cone would have preferred being vague about Schubert’s possible homosexuality: firstly, as a theorist, Cone would not have felt prepared to venture so far out of his field; secondly, without the invaluable research of Maynard Solomon (which only appeared later), Cone had no „evidence’ for his case; and lastly, Schubert’s sexuality is not the issue of Cone’s article – he was making a case for the representation of Schubert’s syphilis in his music. Nevertheless, the prospect that Cone alludes to Schubert’s possible homosexuality years before Maynard Solomon’s article „Franz Schubert and the Peacocks of Benvenuto Cellini’ is indeed intriguing. It is clear, though, that behind the façade of the worldly, hedonistic composer, there lies

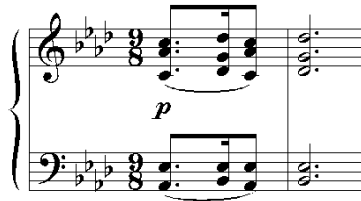


another Schubert, one who exists in elusive sightings of inner conflicts and stylistic subversions.

### 3.3.2 Promissory deferral in the *Moment musical* no. 2

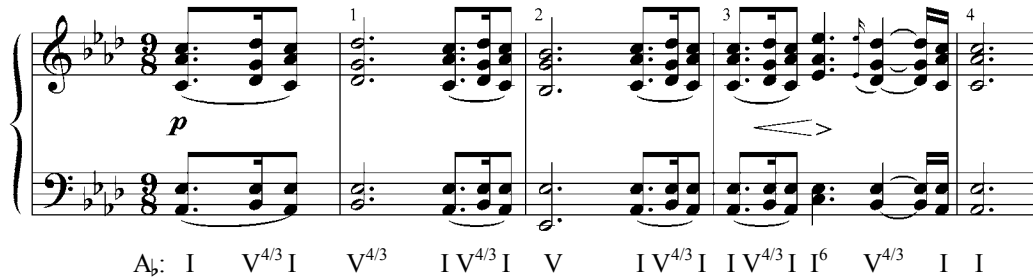
Promissory notes and situations prophecy shattered hopes; they imbue Schubert's music with a „sense of desolation, even dread' (Cone 1982: 241). The dual opposition between redemption and defeat is clearly portrayed, since the mere fact that there *is* a promissory situation shows that redemption is still striven for. The *Moment musical* no. 2 demonstrates a promissory situation similar to the one Cone discusses. The primary motivic cell is as follows:

Example 3.4 Schubert, *Moment musical* no. 2 in A $\flat$ , primary motivic cell (bars 0<sup>3</sup>-1<sup>2</sup>)



This primary motif is rhythmically duplicated to create a sub-phrase (bars 0<sup>3</sup>-2<sup>2</sup>). The material of the primary motivic cell then goes through a rhythmic compaction and creates another sub-phrase, thus completing the first whole phrase (bars 0<sup>3</sup>-4<sup>2</sup>), as can be seen in the following example:

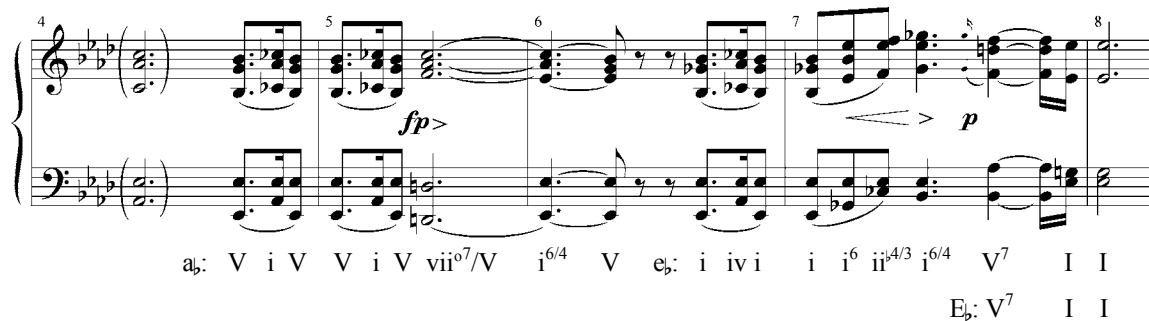
Example 3.5 Schubert, *Moment musical* no. 2 in A $\flat$ , first phrase (bars 0<sup>3</sup>-4<sup>2</sup>)



A $\flat$ : I V<sup>4/3</sup> I V<sup>4/3</sup> IV<sup>4/3</sup> I V IV<sup>4/3</sup> I IV<sup>4/3</sup> I I<sup>6</sup> V<sup>4/3</sup> I I

This first phrase shows every sign of Classical regularity: it is four bars long, consists of two equally sized sub-phrases (bars 0<sup>3</sup>-1<sup>2</sup> and 1<sup>3</sup>-2<sup>2</sup>), has little rhythmic variation, and consists only of primary chords (I, I<sup>6</sup>, V and V<sup>4/3</sup>). But what happens next is surprising, as is shown in Example 3.6:

Example 3.6 Schubert, *Moment musical* no. 2 in A $\flat$ , second phrase (bars 4<sup>3</sup>-8<sup>2</sup>)



a $\flat$ : V i V V i V vii<sup>o7</sup>/V i<sup>6/4</sup> V e $\flat$ : i iv i i i<sup>6</sup> ii<sup>4/3</sup> i<sup>6/4</sup> V<sup>7</sup> I I  
E $\flat$ : V<sup>7</sup> I I

In the second phrase (bars 4<sup>3</sup>-8<sup>2</sup>), Schubert changes immediately to the tonic minor (A $\flat$  minor), introducing the first segment of the primary motivic cell on the dominant of the new key (see bar 4). In many of his songs, such as *Auf dem Wasser zu singen*, *Die junge Nonne*, *An die Leier* and „Gute Nacht“ from *Winterreise*, Schubert portrays optimism by a modulation from the tonic minor to the tonic major; thus, the weakening of the tonic from major to minor could signify the opposite – pessimism, loss of joy, defeat.

What makes the shift from the major to the minor in the second phrase (bars 4<sup>3</sup>-8<sup>2</sup>) even more interesting is the fact that it occurs again during the phrase. After an extended

imperfect cadence ending on  $a_b:V$  (bar  $6^1-6^2$ ), the dominant, an  $E_b$  major chord, is immediately followed by an  $E_b$  minor chord (bar  $6^3$ ) signalling the arrival of the latter key. Although this change to  $E_b$  minor is not a change from tonic major to tonic minor (I – i), the  $E_b$  major chord (bar  $6^2$ ) gives a tonic illusion – a pseudo-tonicization as it were – which causes the shift from tonic minor to dominant minor ( $a_b:i - e_b:v$ ) in bar 6 to sound (and look) very similar to tonic major to tonic minor.

The rests in the second phrase are also of interest. In his partial analysis of the 6<sup>th</sup> *Moment musical*, Cone draws attention to the spacing of rests, pointing out that Schubert exaggerates the promissory situation by positioning rests in such a way that they contribute to defeat experienced when the promissory demand is not met (Cone 1982: 236). In the *Moment musical* no. 2 a similar procedure occurs, and even to a greater degree. The two quaver rests (Example 3.6, bar 6) that separate the promissory situation and its tragic dismissal are not only the first rests in the piece; they also occur in the middle of a phrase and create a moment of static suspense. It is as if the rests are the signifiers of the impending defeat, for the moment of suspense is not resolved; it is dismissed, as has been stated, by an abrupt change to  $E_b$  minor.

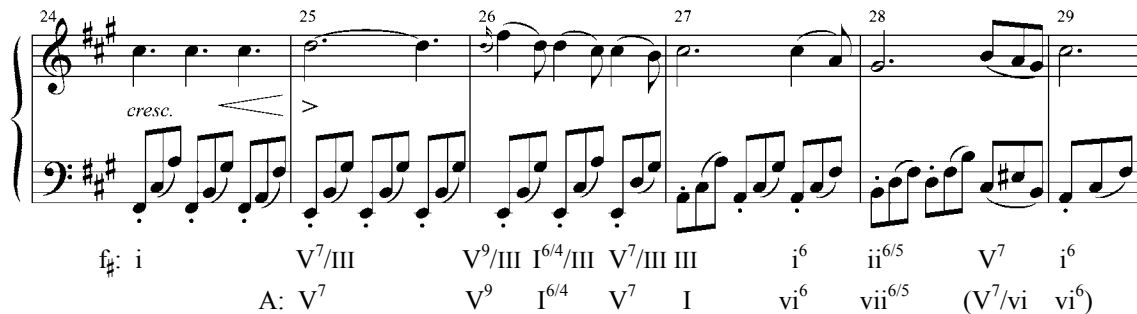
It should be mentioned that the first two phrases of the *Moment musical* no. 2 do not only embody defeat and promissory deferral. The second phrase contains a moment of redemption as well: after the piece's tonal meanderings from  $A_b$  major to  $A_b$  minor to  $E_b$  minor, the second phrase ends on a *tierce de picardi* (Example 3.6, bars 7-8), creating an ostensible modulation to the dominant key of the work,  $E_b$  major. This is the first moment of strength in the work, situated at the end of the first meta-phrase, directly before an exact restatement of the work's first phrase (starting at bar  $8^2$ ). The  $V^7-I$  perfect cadence (bars  $7^3-8^2$ ) ending the second phrase (bars  $4^3-8^2$ ) creates a strong dominant closure of the meta-phrase, preparing the way for an easy 'recapitulation' at bar  $8^3$ .

The pseudo-modulation to a major key (bars  $7^3-8^2$ ) offers a sense of hope, especially considering the material that precedes it: the consistently step-wise melody (save the

interval of a minor third in bar 3, Ex. 3.5) suddenly tries to break free from its confines and is infused with a dramatic burst of *Sehnsucht*, rising a sixth in bar 7<sup>1</sup>-7<sup>2</sup> before giving up its heroic ambitions and falling, the climax denied. Instead of a climax, Schubert offers the reconciliatory modulation to E<sub>b</sub> major. The redemptive major chord (bar 8<sup>1</sup>) is emphasised by an anticipation, a semi-quaver heralding its arrival (bar 7<sup>3.3.2</sup>). Seen in terms of a redemption-defeat *différance*, the modulation is a sense of hope, but not of victory. Redemption is not victory, since it is not acquittal but merely absolution.

The sense of hope created by the momentary minor to major shift (bars 7-8) reoccurs in the B section of the work (bars 18-35), as can be seen in the proceeding example:

Example 3.7 Schubert, *Moment musical* no. 2 in A<sub>b</sub>, bars 24-29

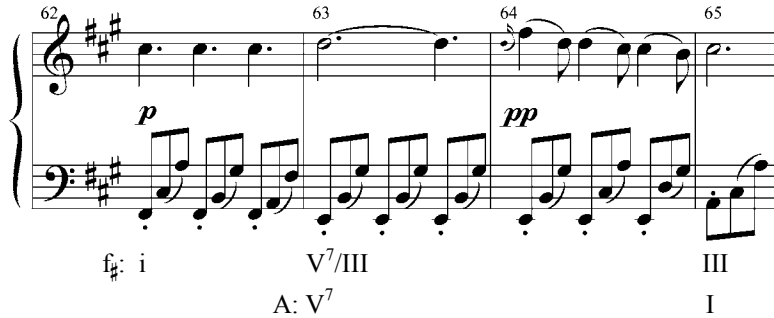


$f\#:$  i                       $V^7/III$                        $V^9/III$   $I^{6/4}/III$   $V^7/III$  III                       $i^6$                        $ii^{6/5}$                        $V^7$                        $i^6$   
A:  $V^7$                        $V^9$                        $I^{6/4}$                        $V^7$                       I                       $vi^6$                        $vii^{6/5}$                       ( $V^7/vi$   $vi^6$ )

In bars 24-25, the redemptive major modulation is again heralded, this time not by an anticipation, but by dynamic emphasis (bars 24-25). Schubert writes a crescendo, inserts a pin-head crescendo *and* adds an accent mark to the first major key chord. This smacks of climactic endeavours, but a climax is not reached: the  $V^7$  harmony in A major gently resolves to a mere moment of tonic harmony (bars 27<sup>1</sup>-27<sup>2</sup>), whereupon it quietly gives up and retreats back to F<sub>#</sub> minor with a shrug of its shoulders. At the reoccurrence of the B theme in the B<sup>2</sup> section (bars 55<sup>3.3.2</sup>-73<sup>3</sup>), Schubert again emphasises the major modulation by means of dynamics, as can be seen in Example 3.8, but this time it is by omitting the crescendos he wrote at the theme's first appearance (Example 3.7, bars 24-

25). Instead, he adds an irreverent *pianissimo* at the highest note of the phrase (bar 64<sup>1</sup>), thus going against the melodic inflection:

Example 3.8 Schubert, *Moment musical* no. 2 in A $\flat$ , bars 62-65



The insertion of the *pianissimo* is not only musically irreverent; it is a type of promissory situation, one where the logical climax is denied. This *pianissimo* is not in the same vein as the *subito piano*'s Beethoven so often employs to create shock or humour. Schubert's *pianissimo* is tragic due to its utter lack of pride, of climactic identity. This distancing of heroism, of climax, is a notable feature of Schubert's music, and is often given as evidence of the Schubert-Beethoven dichotomy (Gardner 2008: 177-178).

The denial of promissory requirements is linked to the current deconstruction because such denials are occasions of intense subversion, of blatant disobedience to musical requirements (Beard & Gloag 2005: 51). Subversion in Schubert's *Moment musical* no. 2 is an intimate thing; it does not make loud statements, propel the listener to understand its agenda, or even declare the notion that there could be an agenda. Examples 3.7 and 3.8 especially show that the redemption-defeat *différance* is in very delicate opposition to each other. A climactic denial could cause enough of a musical upset to create its own climax, but Schubert's rejection of heroism is subtle and nuanced. His promissory deferrals embody the essence of *différance*: difference and deferral. By his eternal postponement of promissory requirements Schubert defers indefinitely and uniquely.

The two occasions in the first two phrases of the second *Moment musical* where promissory situations are created and then deferred (bar 4 and bar 6) signify even more than does the promissory note Cone discusses in his article. Cone's promissory note is mysteriously unresolved; the two promissory situations in the first few bars of the *Moment musical* no. 2 (Examples 3.5 and 3.6) are similarly unresolved, but in addition, they both illustrate Schubert's portrayal of desolation and defeat by abrupt major to minor shifts and the specifically indicated insertion of rests.

As is often the case with Schubert's music, there is a bittersweet happiness in the *Moments musicaux* which on occasion lies on the brink of sentimentality, but which, like Ariel sings in *The Tempest*, „doth suffer a sea-change into something rich and strange' (Shakespeare 2002: 665). Promissory situations, so easily overlooked or disregarded, embody this „rich and strange' aspect of Schubert's oeuvre. They exist between the realms of presence and absence; as Derrida's concept of erasure would indicate, they are ~~promissory deferrals~~, at the same time present and absent (Kurth 1997: 27-28).

Yet, the promissory moments remain inconspicuous, hidden, even secret, as if they are too terrible to name, or too otherwise to name. Perhaps Schubert could not give them their name.

### **3.4 Enharmonic alterity**

#### **3.4.1 Enharmonic romance and representation**

The key changes between the broader sections of the second *Moment musical* can be described as being characteristically Schubertian in their mismatched tonal relationships, being seemingly irreconcilable at first glance but yet flowing seamlessly into each other. These tonal changes have delicate associations with one another, demonstrating an aspect of Schubert's purposeful representation of alterity, this time by means of enharmonic otherness.

The first meta-phrase of the second *Moment musical* shifts to the dominant, ending on a strong  $V^7/V-V$  cadence of the original key (Example 3.6, bars 7-8), a cadence usually found at its most emphatic at the end of the A section in most formal structures of the classical period. But not in this case (Example 3.9): instead, Schubert concludes the first section (bars 1-17) of the *Moment musical* on a  $V^7/IV-IV$  cadence of the original key (bars 16<sup>3</sup>-17), here shifting to the subdominant, D<sub>b</sub> major. The subdominant is a weaker key in relation to the tonic than is the dominant. Schubert then proceeds from D<sub>b</sub> major to F<sub>♯</sub> minor, starting the B section in the new key, as is shown in the next example:

Example 3.9 Schubert, *Moment musical* no. 2 in A<sub>b</sub>, bars 15<sup>3</sup>-18



$D_b$ :  $V^7$  I I  $f_{\sharp} (g_b)$ : i  
 $A_b$ :  $V^7/IV$  IV IV  
 $g_b (f_{\sharp})$ : V V

The tonal relationship between the former and the latter key is that of an enharmonic shifting of the D<sub>b</sub> major to C<sub>♯</sub> major, this then masquerading as the dominant of the new key, F<sub>♯</sub> minor. Therefore the B section is enharmonically in G<sub>b</sub> minor, forming an interesting tonal relationship with the work's tonic key, A<sub>b</sub> major, and with the tonal structure of the A section in general, as is shown in the following table:

Table 1 Schubert, *Moment musical* no. 2 in A<sub>b</sub>, tonal structure of A and B sections

A section (bars 1-17)							B section (bars 18-35 <sup>3</sup> )			
A <sub>b</sub>	a <sub>b</sub>	e <sub>b</sub>	E <sub>b</sub>	A <sub>b</sub>	a <sub>b</sub>	D <sub>b</sub> (C <sub>♯</sub> )	f <sub>♯</sub> (g <sub>b</sub> )	A	f <sub>♯</sub>	g <sub>♯</sub> /G <sub>♯</sub> (a <sub>b</sub> /A <sub>b</sub> )
I	i	v	V	I	i	IV	iv/IV	III/IV	iv/IV	I

As can be seen, the new key of the B section is related to the work's tonic key as iv/IV enharmonically. Not only is the pivot chord (Example 3.9, bar 17) on the subdominant of the *Moment musical*'s primary key weak, the secondary key (iv/IV) to which the work modulates is an even weaker key, being the subdominant of the subdominant, and furthermore, a minor-key subdominant. This weak modulation is distinctly feminine in character, timid and frail.

### 3.4.2 The enharmonic as a representation of the *Doppelgänger*

Schubert was a notable exponent of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century theme of the *Doppelgänger* or alter ego, exhibiting duplicity of meaning in much of his work – most famously in his setting of an untitled poem by Heine which appears in Schubert's *Schwanengesang* as „Der Doppelgänger’ (Kurth 1997: 4). Richard Kurth, in his article „Music and Poetry, a Wilderness of Doubles: Heine–Nietzsche–Schubert–Derrida’, writes extensively about the artistic depiction of Self-as-Other and Other-as-Self. As has been mentioned earlier, Schubert himself was described by his friend Joseph Kenner as having „two natures, foreign to each other’, so a representation of this duplicity in his music would be analogous with Schubert's personality (Youens 1992: 12).

Kramer (1998: 54-55), with reference to enharmonic identity and difference in Schubert's song *Heimliches Lieben*, connects enharmonic ambiguity with the *Doppelgänger* theme, describing it as „the alter ego in whom the subject sees its undisciplined, unsocialized side, which in this case once more means the compulsion to nurse an erotic wound’. Schubert's *Der Doppelgänger*, according to Kramer (1998: 55) depicts a speaker who



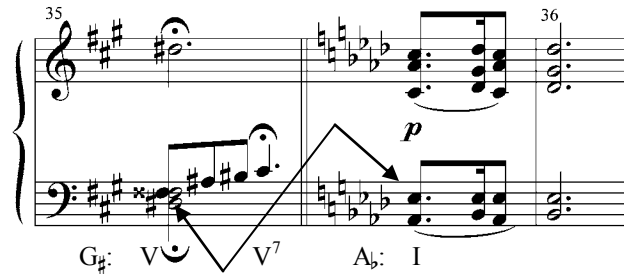
„encounters a figure whom he gradually recognizes as a mocking and distorted version of himself”.

The *Doppelgänger* brings to mind staple 19<sup>th</sup>-century artistic duplicities which juxtapose a symbol of order and propriety with one of disorder and subversion. These include figures such as Schumann’s characters Florestan and Eusebius, who became associated with the composer’s schizophrenia (Walker 1972: 486); E.T.A. Hoffmann’s association between himself and Kapellmeister Kreisler, his libellous creation (Anonymous 1970: 550; Bushakevitz 2008c: 4-3; Fife 1907: 11-12); and Nietzsche’s distinction between the Apollonian and the Dionysian (Nietzsche 2003: 117; Runes 1962: 292). Hoffmann (1776-1822) describes his alter ego – Kapellmeister Kreisler – as a typically crazy artist, one who by nature is clearly „different” (Hoffmann 2000: 3-4).

The B section of the second *Moment musical* is in many ways the alter ego of the A section. With a Schenkerian approach, the B section could be said to be moulded not only from the *Ursatz* (or fundamental structure) of the A section, but also from the middleground (compare Example 3.5 with Example 3.7) (Cook 1994: 36-38). This common ancestry grants the strange tonal shift from A<sub>♯</sub> major to F<sub>♯</sub> minor a degree of accreditation. Schubert’s enharmonic romancing can be said to have a homoerotic connotation, creating a strange matrimony between two notes that are in fact the same note, but yet are wholly different and ostensibly irreconcilable with one another. Only by transforming the underlying harmonic structures supporting these notes can apparent homogeneity, the marriage of heaven and hell, be constructed.

The duplicity (the mysterious *Doppelgänger* ever lurking in Schubert’s shadow) of enharmonic notes is strengthened by the character of their harmonic structures. Pitches, timbres, chords and keys have long been associated with colours (not only by people with synaesthetic sensitivity), and in Schubert’s second *Moment musical* the colour of each key magnifies the significance of the enharmonic ambiguities, since most enharmonic notes shift between sharp and flat key territories. For instance, the D<sub>♯</sub> in the bass of bar 35 enharmonically transforms into an E<sub>♭</sub> in bar 36, as can be seen in the following example:

Example 3.10 Schubert, *Moment musical* no. 2 in A $\flat$ , bars 35-36



35 36

G $\sharp$ : V V $^7$  A $\flat$ : I

The harmonic significance of this is the fact that the D $\sharp$ /E $\flat$  is here the only common denominator between the two keys; nevertheless, any self-respecting composer would understand the immense harmonic difference between the colours of G $\sharp$  major and A $\flat$  major. Of course, any two keys would have tonal differences, but G $\sharp$  major (with six sharps and a double sharp) and A $\flat$  major (with four flats) are essentially at opposite ends of the tonal spectrum. Furthermore, it should be noted that there is no occasion in the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Moment musical* where Schubert chose to spell a key enharmonically because it would create more convenient notation. All the enharmonic transformations are necessitated by purposeful tonal alterity and not for the sake of notational convenience.

### 3.4.3 Aspects of enharmonic alterity in other *Moments musicaux*

The two facets of Schubert's representation of alterity by means of enharmonic procedures which have been discussed above are therefore:

- his purposefully weak enharmonic modulation at bars 17-18; and
- the portrayal of a seditious double, an alter ego, by means of enharmonic representation and key choices.


Both of these aspects are found in other *Moments musicaux* as well.

### 3.4.3.1 Modulatory captivity in the *Moment musical* no. 6


In the *Moment musical* no. 6, the work that partially analyzes in his article on the promissory note, an interesting example of an unsatisfactory modulation occurs. From bar 16<sup>3</sup>, where the second section starts, an odd – even sinister – motif is repeated. This motif could be seen as a diseased double of the work’s opening motif. The two motifs are shown in the next example:

Example 3.11 Schubert, *Moment musical* no. 6 in A<sub>b</sub>, bars 0<sup>3</sup>-2<sup>2</sup> and 16<sup>3</sup>-18<sup>2</sup>

a) motif 1 (bars 0<sup>3</sup>-2<sup>2</sup>)

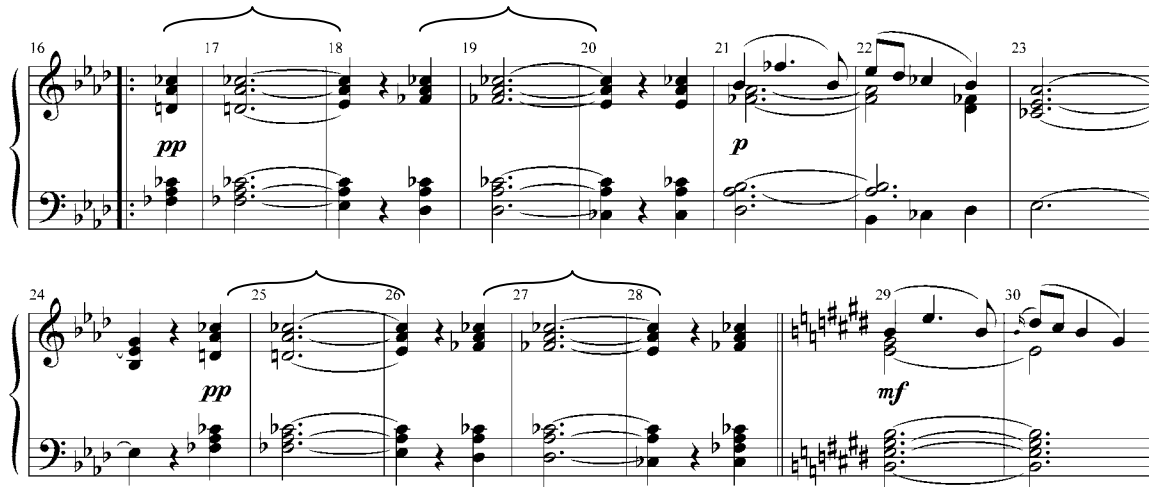


b) motif 2 (bars 16<sup>3</sup>-18<sup>2</sup>)



The latter motif is built from the residual cinders of the opening motif, the healthy half of the duplicitous situation. The primary motif is changed into a chord in dominant construction, expanding outwards in the bass as opposed to the primary motif’s introverted resolution. The second motif, the alter ego of the first, dominates the second section of the work, as can be seen in the proceeding example:

Example 3.12 Schubert, *Moment musical* no. 6 in A $\flat$ , bars 16<sup>3</sup>-30

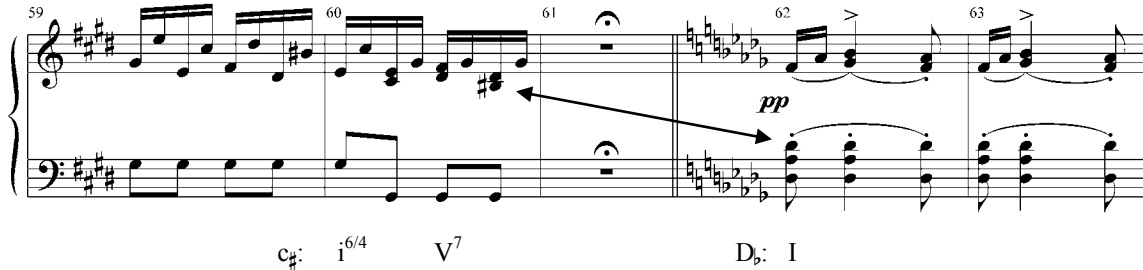


In bars 20<sup>3</sup>-24<sup>1</sup> a melody forms, but it is suppressed and the odd, sickly motif returns in bar 24<sup>3</sup>. Finally, in bar 29, the pressure seems to be finally alleviated with a modulation to E major, the enharmonic equivalent of the *Moment musical*'s tonic minor's relative major key: a $\flat$  - F $\flat$  (E). However, the suspense that Schubert builds up from bar 16<sup>3</sup> is left unrequited: the change to E major (bar 29) is merely the enharmonic equivalent of a modulation to the tonic minor's submediant, a substitute tonic: I - i - VI/I (A $\flat$  - a $\flat$  - F $\flat$ /E). The first chord of the new key, E major (bar 29), is the tonic in second inversion, reminding one of a redemption-6/4 chord, but being far from it: the modulation is weak and unclimactic to the point of being anti-climactic. As in the *Moment musical* no. 2, the enharmonic shift here is timid and fragile, even though the relationship between the two keys cause the shift to be from a dark key (A $\flat$  minor) to a relatively bright one (E major).

### 3.4.3.2 Alter ego and grotesquerie in the *Moment musical* no. 4

Although the fifth *Moment musical* is probably the most blatantly violent of the group, the fourth *Moment musical* is the most intensely laden with frenetic anger. Leaping into action after a short upbeat, the key of C $\sharp$  minor (this being the only one of the *Moments musicaux* in a sharp key), the persistence of the semiquaver ostinato rhythm, and the neo-Baroque flavour grant the *Moment musical* no. 4 a distinct vein of tragic understatement. As has been shown to be the case in a number of *Moments musicaux*, the second section of this work is in an enharmonically related key, on this occasion the enharmonic major tonic: C $\sharp$  minor – D $\flat$  major (C $\sharp$  major). The contrast between the two tonalities, the frenzied first section and the earthy *Ländler*-like second section is dramatically enhanced by a sudden general stop at bar 61, as can be seen in the preceding example:

Example 3.13 Schubert, *Moment musical* no. 4 in C $\sharp$  minor, bars 59-63



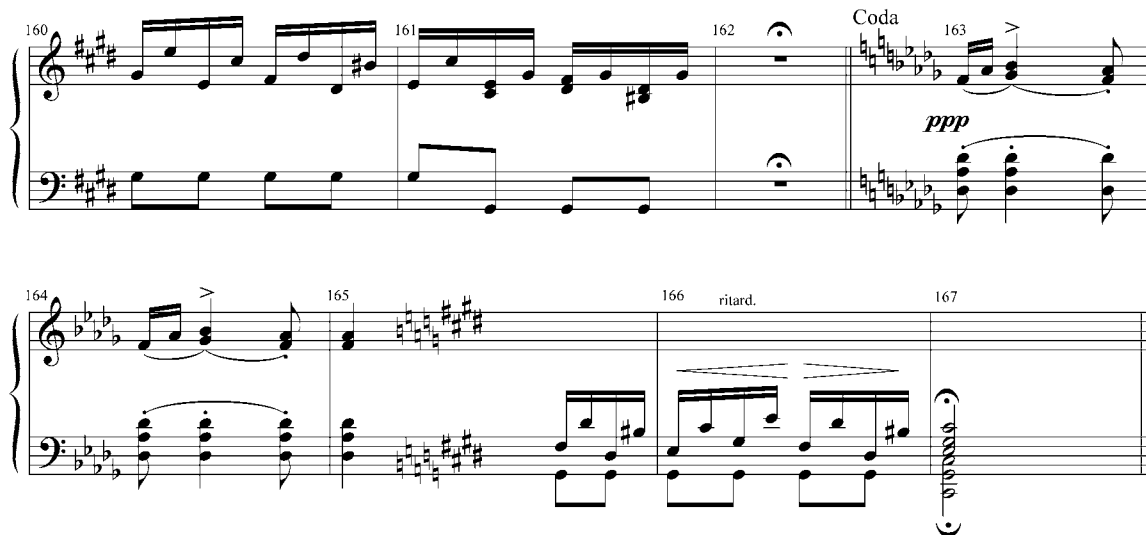
59 60 61 62 63

$c\sharp$ :  $i^{6/4}$   $V^7$   $D\flat$ : I

The first section ends on an unresolved  $V^7$  (G $\sharp$ , B $\sharp$ , D $\sharp$ , F $\sharp$ ) chord (bar 60). The leading note (B $\sharp$ ) is then enharmonically resolved to the tonic of D $\flat$  major (C $\sharp$  major) at the start of the second section (indicated with an arrow). It is obvious that Schubert selected D $\flat$  major instead of C $\sharp$  major for reasons of colour and timbre: the former key's personality and colour differs vastly from those of the latter, so Schubert could not have notated the second section in C $\sharp$  major – it would be too large a theoretical mistake for a composer of Schubert's calibre.

Within the context of the improvisatory nature of the *Moments musicaux*, the jolt that the sudden general pause causes is a moment of distorted mockery by Schubert, since every good improvisator will know that a section cannot end without a cadence, let alone without any warning or preparation whatsoever. The honeyed sentimentality of the proceeding section adds laughter to the mockery, since the *Länder* waltz illusion, though itself being innocent, has just been forcibly inserted between two sections of tragic upliftment. This juxtaposition of sentiment is even more explicit at the end of the work, as is shown in the next example:

Example 3.14 Schubert, *Moment musical* no. 4 in C $\sharp$  minor, bars 160-167



The musical score for Example 3.14 consists of two systems of piano music. The first system covers bars 160 to 163. Bar 160 features a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a supporting line. Bar 161 continues the melodic and harmonic development. Bar 162 is a whole rest in both staves, indicating a general pause. Bar 163 begins a section marked 'Coda' and 'ppp' (pianissimo), with a treble clef and a melodic line, and a bass clef with a supporting line. The second system covers bars 164 to 167. Bar 164 continues the 'Coda' section. Bar 165 is the end of the 'Coda' section. Bar 166 is marked 'ritard.' (ritardando) and features a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a supporting line. Bar 167 is the final bar, marked 'ritard.' and features a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a supporting line.

Here the jolt of the general pause is perhaps expected to be followed by a recurrence of the middle section, but as soon as the sweet D $\flat$  major tonality of the pseudo-*Ländler* has broadcast itself, the work ends in a cadential flurry in C $\sharp$  minor, causing the realisation that the few bars in D $\flat$  major (bars 163-165<sup>1</sup>) were in fact part of the coda (bars 163-167). The contrast between A and B – the C $\sharp$  minor section – distorts the saccharine sentimentality of the D $\flat$  major section, bringing to mind the context of 19<sup>th</sup>-century grotesquerie. Youens (1997: 185), in her psychosexual reading of Schubert's *Der Zwerg*, D. 771, states the following:

The grotesque as an artistic category was much bruited-about by the early Romantics, including Friedrich Schlegel, who in fragments 305 and 389 of the 1798 *Athenaeum* defined the grotesque as dependent on clashing contrasts between form and content, on the unstable mixture of heterogeneous elements and the explosive force of the paradoxical. The most profound depths of the grotesque are evident in the confrontation with its opposite, the sublime. [...] To write of what is grotesque in the most elevated poetic manner, associated with the world's greatest poets [Shakespeare and Dante], was perhaps an exercise in making form integral to the content by seeming to be at odds with it.

Even though Schubert's fourth *Moment musical* is not a work that shows an obvious resemblance to either Romantic representations of the grotesque or works by Schubert that reflect elements of grotesquerie, subliminal indications in the work do show links with the concept. It should be remembered that whereas Schubert modelled his piano music on the work of Beethoven, his Lieder were more often the vehicle with which Schubert expressed experimental innovation. The grotesquerie of *Der Zwerg* is greatly enhanced by the word-text of the song, while Schubert's 4<sup>th</sup> *Moment musical* needs to generate imagery in the music alone.

The grotesque element in the *Moment musical* no. 4 could not exist without the duplicity created by the enharmonic tonalities in the work. The key change from C $\sharp$  minor to D $\flat$  major and then almost immediately back to C $\sharp$  minor shows that, although ostensibly only major and minor modes of the same tonality, the difference between the two keys goes further than the shared character properties between them.

### **3.5 Alterity in melodic design: melodic subversion and the mandate of propriety**

Berlioz famously stated that he esteemed Schubert's music because it 'contains nothing of what certain people call melody' (Youens 1996: 42). This statement seems rash, but it has a notable element of truth in it, especially considering the Biedermeier aesthetics of the milieu in which Schubert lived and the relative conservatism of earlier song composers (Dahlhaus 1988: 167). Schubert's melodies are often sensually chromatic, at

times portraying what Agawu terms „Wagnerian chromatic anguish’ (McClary 2007: 223; Youens 1996: 42). Dahlhaus speaks of several „subversive’ procedures that Schubert follows and calls him „a composer whose musical imagination is to an exceptional degree tied to the sensuous phenomenon’ (Agawu 1987: 325; Dahlhaus 1986: 7).

The B section of the second *Moment musical* is a lulling compound triple time barcarolle, raising spectres of deathly gondoliers and bringing to mind Mendelssohn’s „Venetianisches Gondellied’, op. 30 no. 6 (1830) from his *Lieder ohne Worte*<sup>6</sup> and Chopin’s Barcarolle, op. 60 (1846). Incidentally (or perhaps not), both Mendelssohn’s and Chopin’s barcarolles are in the same key as the B section of Schubert’s *Moment musical*: F $\sharp$  minor. The static, block-like primary motif of the A section is transformed into an elegiac melody in the B section. This section is nothing less than a *Lied*; the right hand is a lyric mezzo singing a perfectly vocalic melody. For the duration of the second section, from bar 18 until bar 35 (see Appendix A), the melody remains consistently more than an octave above the accompanimental figure, only breaching this space momentarily in bar 30. Even though this is very similar to a *Lied*, the melody here is curtailed and never breaks free, placidly ending on a hanging D $\sharp$  (bar 35).

In terms of a redemption/defeat dichotomy, the B section can melodically be considered a *Doppelgänger* of the A section. Whereas the A section, with its chorale-like harmonisations which almost always occur together with the melody’s rhythm, is almost religious in its propriety and inert sensibility, the second section lets go of its inhibitions, and the „singer’, using the most subjective of all musical instruments, enters. Within the five sections of the *Moment musical*, the infusion of two melodic sections inside the watchful walls of the more harmony-based sections creates a protected contrast:

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<sup>6</sup> According to Baylor (1994: 6), Mendelssohn’s later title of *Lieder ohne Worte* could fittingly be applied to all of Schubert’s *Moments musicaux*.



Table 2 Schubert, *Moment musical* no. 2 in A<sub>b</sub>, melodic and harmonic variation

A	B	A <sup>1</sup>	B <sup>1</sup>	A <sup>2</sup>
harmonic	melodic	harmonic	melodic	harmonic

An attempt is not being made here to classify a prominently melodic section of a work as necessarily being a subversive element; even in this case, the nature of the B section is derived from the A section. The importance of the „singer’ in the B section is of representational importance because of its relation with the A section; without the first section, the second would have a lacuna. This concept is explained by Derrida’s *supplement*: absence and presence are mutually supplementary and are at once surplus and necessary addition (Derrida 2003: 231). The B section is subversive because of the mandate of propriety it has received from the ashes of the first section, whose ghost still hovers over it. As has been mentioned, Derrida illustrates residue by crossing out words, thus the words are both absent and present together, one being a self-inversion of the other (Kurth 1997: 27-28). ~~Propriety~~ is then erased, but is still present.

The residue and its relation to absence and presence form an intrinsic connection, like Derrida’s *pharmakon*, which is both the poison and the antidote (Derrida 2003: 231; Lechte 2008: 132). Kurth (1997: 27) explains the interrelation of presence and absence well:

There can be no sense of some presence without the awareness that it could also be absent but is not, without the sense, then, that this presence defers some absence. Likewise, there can be no sensing of some absence without a concept of the missing person or thing, whose presence is deferred by that absence.

The B section indicates its mandate from the A section only in melodic residue. Harmonically, this section is clearly a submissive retreat into a doubly subdominant enharmonic tonality (iv/IV). Likewise, the melody is unambiguously held in captivity (bars 18-35). The melodic circularity around the fulcrum of the dominant note of C<sub>♯</sub>

indicates confinement, as does the repetition of this C<sub>#</sub> (see Appendix A). The concept of a melodic fulcrum is important in the second *Moment musical*: the A section (and by implication the closely related A<sup>1</sup> and A<sup>2</sup> sections as well) also has a clear fulcrum, in this case on C (bars 1-13), around which the melodic line is centred.

There are two melodic attempts to break free, at bars 22-23 and bars 29-30, but both are curtailed by the return of the recurring C<sub>#</sub> (bars 24 and 32). These attempts at escape are distinctly reminiscent of bars 7-8 and bars 13-14, where futile escape attempts also occur. The attempts are all expressed by melodic insurgence and can be seen best in bar 7 and bar 22, where rebellious melodic irregularity is quickly suppressed and the melody returns to its fulcrum. The melodic inhibition with which Schubert restricts himself by regarding the fulcrum as an unsurpassable law, thus purposefully chaining himself to a tree, could be a symbol for the impossibility of his own escape. The escape Schubert sought but did not find could be an escape from death, suffering, defeat, or sexual otherness.

Residual cinders in the B section are all that remain of the melodic mandate given by the A section (Kramer 1995: 242). This occurrence has been identified as being a trope within Schubert's oeuvre (Kramer 1998: 169). Kramer (1998: 169) has a self-styled term for recurring residual material: he speaks of the „revenant”. This is „neither quotation nor paraphrase, but a return within the discourse of a “present” subject of the recognizable speech act of a “past” subject’. Kramer built the term from the French verb *revenir*: „to come again, return, reappear, haunt, rebegin, recover, regain consciousness, but also to fetch as profit, revenue, also again to recant or retract’. The revenant is the mysterious, dissident ghost of the Other, the *Doppelgänger*, the morally irreverent and the morally irrelevant. (Kramer 1995: 242; Kramer 1998: 152, 196.)

Schubert the man encounters himself in his projected self-image of Schubert the composer, and he takes fright (Kramer 1986: 202). Ted Hughes (1930-1998) has skilfully captured this thought in the following excerpt from his poem „Full Moon and Little Frieda’ (Hughes 1995: 87):

Cows are going home in the lane there, looping the  
hedges with their warm wreaths of breath –  
A dark river of blood, many boulders,  
Balancing unspilled milk.

„Moon!’ you cry suddenly, „Moon! Moon!’

The moon has stepped back like an artist gazing amazed  
at a work

That points at him amazed.

Hughes alludes to the inescapability of subjectivity in art, an interiority so intrinsic that it can even surprise the artist. What relation Schubert’s musical revenant has to the personal demons on his back can only be guessed. What is clear is that in his music, especially in such late works as the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Moment musical*, he distinctly and unequivocally refuses to requite musical mandates and promises, instead leaving only subliminal indications that these mandates and promises ever existed (Feil 1986: 116).

### **3.6 Rhythmic and metric alterity**

#### **3.6.1 Rhythm and metre in Schubert’s oeuvre**

Rhythm and its branch, metre, are of particular importance in Schubert’s oeuvre. Much research has been devoted to the peculiar and unique way that Schubert uses rhythm. Most important amongst these is the work of Arnold Feil, whose book *Studien zu Schuberts Rhythmik* (1966) is the forerunner of many articles on the topic by him and others. Feil (1982: 327, 337) notes the following in his article „Rhythm in Schubert: some practical problems’:

In the music of Franz Schubert rhythm has its own special role – or, rather, it has a special function, unlike and more important than its function in the music of his contemporaries. [...] To take the strict law of rhythm from the plane of the bar to that of groups of bars, where it can have no validity, would be a foolish limitation of means. The opposite process – exploiting within the bar the possibilities of rhythmic structuring of groups of bars – this, on the

other hand, opens up new horizons. Schubert saw this and utilized it.

This employment of phrases to form a broader metre (thus the wholesale metre of groups of phrases), called hypermeter, is an especially notable feature in the music of Schubert's final year, 1828, as McClelland (2008: 158) states in his article „Hypermeter, phrase length, and temporal disjuncture in Schubert's *Klavierstück* No. 3 (D. 946)'. In Schubert's music, the expressive quality often is more the result of rhythmic factors than of tonal ones, although there are of course varying degrees of formalization of rhythm (Brooks & Warren 1960: 562; McClelland 2008: 159). The hypermeter and temporal disjuncture in Schubert's late works add to the music's gestural significance, its extraordinary „qualities of motion' (Feil 1986: 123).

Schubert's metric alterity is often indicated by means of accentuation. His music is full of accent marks, some of them difficult to distinguish from small crescendo hairpins, and is often marked *fp* or *fz* at moments of stress. These seemingly dynamic indications represent various types of accentuation which fall into two categories: tonal accents (harmonic, cadential, structural and melodic emphasis) and metric accents (stress, durational and agogic emphasis, and syncopations) (McClelland 2008: 160). In early 19<sup>th</sup>-century Vienna the „regular recurrence of stressed beats' was still very much a musical mandate, usually cancelling out the possibility of changing the metre of a piece at times of relative formal insignificance (within a section, for instance). So Schubert, instead of shifting the metre, indicates metric change by means of accentuation. This is an important consideration when considering Schubert's indication of dynamics. (Feil 1986: 110-111.)

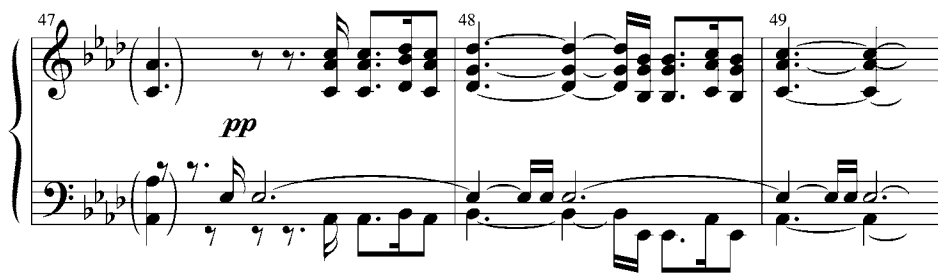
### **3.6.2 Funerals and carnivals: the death of a dance**

The second *Moment musical* is a dance, a waltz in compound triple time. The fact that its dance is hidden, elusive and in slow motion does not negate its existence; neither does Mahler's statement that „vom Tanz geht alle Muzik aus' take away the splendour of its significance (Draughon 2003: 388). The 2<sup>nd</sup> *Moment musical* may be a dance, but it has

none of the pleasure and laughter of the dance; instead, it is a work filled with a hushed resignation and the acceptance of defeat, even death.

Schubert's juxtaposition of the dance with death, with defeat and with eternal *Sehnsucht* recalls Bakhtin's concept of carnivalism. The romancing between foreign elements (such as Schubert's enharmonic alterity) is similar to the ambivalence of the carnival (Kristeva 1986: 59). According to Lechte (2008: 12), „ambivalence is the key to the structure of the carnival. The logic of the carnival is [...] the qualitative logic of ambivalence where the actor is also the spectator, destruction gives rise to creativity, and death is equivalent to rebirth'. The laughter and sensuous pleasure of Schubert's dance is muted to the point of annihilation by the inescapable reality of his realisation that his creativity stems from a destruction of normal identity. This realisation is depicted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Moment musical* as a masking of the dance: As can be seen in the proceeding example, Schubert transforms the primary motif of the work into what seems like a fanfare for brass; but it is no fanfare, how can it be at half tempo and in *pianissimo*?:

Example 3.15 Schubert, *Moment musical* no. 2 in A<sub>b</sub>, bars 47-49<sup>2</sup>

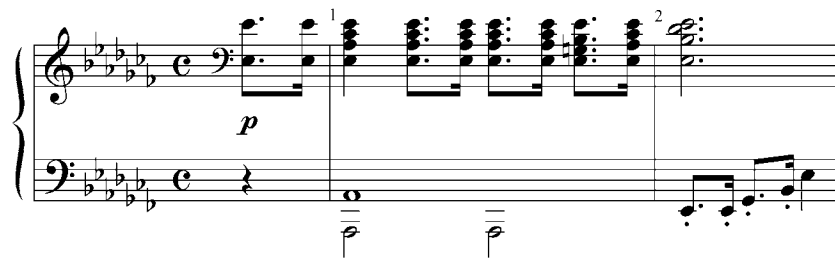


This excerpt contains both the dotted rhythms and the intervals of 4<sup>th</sup>s and 5<sup>th</sup>s (in the bottom two voices) which are exemplary of fanfare motifs. However, the E<sub>b</sub> pedal note in the top note of the left hand is an ominous sign. Pedal points on E<sub>b</sub> are a notable feature of the second *Moment musical*: the first 14 bars of the work contain a continuous E<sub>b</sub> pedal point interrupted only on three occasions (bars 5<sup>2</sup>, 7<sup>3</sup> and 13<sup>2</sup>). In the first section's

reoccurrence (A<sup>1</sup>, bars 36-55), this pedal point is not as long, but from bar 47 its character changes; it becomes accentuated and eerie, a semiquaver followed by a long note, resembling a fatalistic horn call (Baylor 1994: 6). In bar 51 it is assigned even greater significance, shifting to the upper melodic line and receiving accent marks.

The introduction of the repetitive horn call (Example 3.15) is a remarkable foreign element, causing a metric violation of that most sacred body, the first theme. The attention Schubert has, from the very beginning of the work, paid to keeping the primary motif's downbeat passive and innocent is now disregarded as a subversive element is added in the middle of the bar. This element is not merely an irreverent pedal point, it is also a rhythm distinctive of a funeral march. Two famous examples of funeral marches in piano literature are Beethoven's „Marcia funebre sulla morte d'un Eroe' from his Piano Sonata no. 12, op. 26 (1801), and Chopin's „Marche funèbre' from his Piano Sonata no. 2, op. 35 (1839). The composition dates of these works frame that of the second *Moment musical*. The rhythmic similarity to the above excerpt from Schubert's *Moment musical* no. 2, and the funeral march's typical flat-key tonality, can be seen in the following two examples:

Example 3.16a Beethoven, „Marcia funebre sulla morte d'un Eroe' from Piano Sonata, op. 26, bars 0<sup>4</sup>-2<sup>3</sup>



The musical score for Example 3.16a shows the beginning of the funeral march from Beethoven's Piano Sonata, op. 26. The score is in common time (C) and features a piano (p) dynamic. The right hand plays a series of chords, and the left hand plays a bass line with a semiquaver followed by a long note.

Example 3.16b Chopin, „Marche funèbre’ from Piano Sonata no. 2, op. 35, bars 1-2



Schubert's 2<sup>nd</sup> *Moment musical* is not a funeral march at any occasion in the work; it just shows motivic and rhythmic resemblances to typical funeral march characteristics. Rather, the *Moment musical* is transformed into a dance of death in socks; a reluctant, half-tempo *Totentanz*, the macabre facet not patently manifest in the music, but appearing in the subversive representation of extra-musical alterity and corruption by foreign elements. Lydia Goehr (2003: 636) states that „human beings are said to dance their final death dance suspended between life and death, time and space, body and spirit'. The 2<sup>nd</sup> *Moment musical* has many types of suspension (not using the musical connotation of the word), being recalcitrant almost to the point of being static, shunning outbursts, climaxes and heroics. Schubert must have realised that his carnival, whatever dissident form it had taken, was by 1828 reaching its conclusion.

### 3.6.3 Feminine endings and ambiguous versification

As has been mentioned, the feminine qualities of Schubert's music have been noted since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup> An important aspect of this is Schubert's predilection for feminine clausal and motivic endings, which is related to his avoidance of the heroic. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Moment musical*, Schubert's ambiguous versification lends a significant Otherness to his metric procedures in the work. The first phrase is a good example. Beginning on an upbeat of a dotted crotchet, the *Moment musical's* metric ambivalence begins immediately. According to Feil (1986: 117), „a strong beat must be accented perceptibly

<sup>7</sup> The term ‚feminine’ in this context has to do with a relative weakness. This is a linguistic remnant of the age when women were regarded as being the weaker sex (Kennedy 1999: 293). I use the term ‚feminine ending’ not only for cadences, but for motifs as well.

at the beginning of a composition so that a listener can learn how to measure the passage of time'. Under normal circumstances, the accentuation in the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Moment musical* would be on the upbeat, the first strong beat, creating (not considering the upbeat) a line of anapaestic tetrameter. However, this anapaestic tetrameter would fall out of synch with the musical accentuation, as is shown below:

Example 3.17 Schubert, *Moment musical* no. 2 in A<sub>b</sub>, bars 0<sup>3</sup>-4<sup>2</sup>, versification



The image shows a musical score for Schubert's *Moment musical* no. 2, bars 0-4. Above the treble staff, there are two lines of accentuation: "Musical accentuation:" with slanted lines (/) and "Anapaestic tetrameter:" with horizontal lines (—). The musical notation includes dynamics like "p" and various articulation marks like arrows and slurs. Bar numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are indicated above the treble staff.

The musical accentuation is validated by the fact that the upbeat is not only an important part of the first phrase, but it is also a moment of activity which is followed by a moment of passivity on the downbeat. This anomaly, the weakness of the downbeat, is continued until bar 3, where the downbeat is active. However, this downbeat does not merit accentuation either, since it is between two accented beats. (Schubert marks accentuation on bar 3<sup>2</sup>.) Thus the first phrase is not in anapaestic tetrameter, but in dactylic tetrameter (one accented syllable followed by two unaccented syllables). The only place where the dactylic foot is broken by means of a secondary accent is at bar 3<sup>2</sup> (indicated by an arrow), causing what linguists refer to as a „hovering accent’ in the versification between bar 3<sup>2</sup> and bar 3<sup>3</sup> (Brooks & Warren 1969: 563).

Of course, a downbeat merits accentuation merely on the basis of its being a downbeat; but in this specific case, even if the downbeat were to be purposefully emphasised its passivity would cause it to have a very weak accentuation. These factors make the feminine ending of each foot in the phrase inevitable. Even though feminine endings are by nature on weaker beats, Schubert’s apparent shifting of the barline (reminiscent of



Brahms) and his ambivalence regarding the nature of the first phrase's starting point add to the sense that the downbeat of every bar in the first phrase is a weaker beat (Feil 1986: 110-111).

The following chapter will discuss Wilde's „The Nightingale and the Rose', without commenting in detail on any links or similarities with Schubert's second *Moment musical*. Chapter 5 will then discuss analogies between the two works.

## Chapter 4

### Wilde's 'The Nightingale and the Rose': influences and symbols of alterity

#### 4.1 The Victorian fairy tale as a Wildean vehicle

The second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is seen by many historians as being the golden age of English children's literature. It was the era of Carroll's *Alice* books, Kipling's *Jungle Books*, Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. The interest in literary fairy tales had its origins in popular translations, made during the 1820s, of the brothers Grimm's *Die Märchen der Brüder Grimm*. (Dunbar 2003: 85; Grimm & Grimm 1910.)

Wilde's fairy tales fall into an ambiguous category, since it is debated whether they are intended for children or for adults. *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* is, if not specifically intended for, accessible to children, but *A House of Pomegranates* veritably assaults the reader with a myriad of mythical allusions, double entendres and linguistic experimentation, such as Wilde's rhyming of 'hieroglyph' and 'catafalque' with 'hippogriff' and 'Amenalk' (Holland 1990: 11).

The dilemma of whether allusive fairy tales with adult themes are suitable for children is not a singularly Wildean phenomenon; it pervades a large amount of Victorian children's literature, possibly because very few Victorian writers wrote exclusively for children. However, the dilemma is most piquantly problematic when considering Wilde's intended audience. Although there are conflicting opinions, most critics argue that in *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* Wilde apparently writes mainly for an adult audience. An early reviewer of *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* stated in 1888 that Wilde 'has chosen to present his fables in the form of fairy tales to a public which will assuredly not be composed of children', a view also held by Barzun. Somewhat divergently, another early critic wrote (with scrupulous punctuation), 'Wilde's fairy tales are intended, perhaps mainly, for adults – but for children too'. (Barzun 2000: 621; Dunbar 2003: 86-87.)

#### 4.1.1 Wilde's choice of the fairy tale genre

*The Happy Prince and Other Tales* was Wilde's first memorable publication and the work from which his reputation as an author arose (Ellmann 1988: 299; Holland 1990: 11). It is necessary to understand why Wilde wrote fairy tales, why he chose to commence his career as an author with a rather un-Wildean set of stories apparently for children. Why would Wilde firstly choose a children's genre and then secondly write fairy tales with dangerous, even subversive agendas and programmes? Four reasons will be given.

Firstly, according to Willoughby (1993: 19), 'Fairy tale and fairy-tale conventions had become a convenient and popular Victorian means of presenting topical moral problems without reference to Naturalistic demands; for Wilde, whose stories satirize the very notion of a mutually understood moral problem, the associative resonance of the genre nevertheless ensures a readership'. Therefore Wilde chose the fairy tale genre so that he could enshroud his symbolisms, metaphors and allegoric implications inside a seemingly innocent form.

Secondly, Wilde's mother, Lady Jane Francesca Wilde (1821-1896), was a staunch Irish Nationalist and a notable collector of Irish folk tales (Holland 1990: 9; Yeats 1964: 164). She published an important book relating to the topic, *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland* in 1888, the same year Oscar published *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* and his friend W.B. Yeats edited the volume *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (Ellmann 1988: 625-627; Jeffares 1964: 10). Like his mother, Wilde was proud of his Irish heritage, famously stating in 1893, 'I am not English. I am Irish which is quite another thing' (Ellmann 1988: 372). Richard Pine (1995: 180) has demonstrated that there is a link between the stories in Lady Wilde's *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland* and her son's fairy tales (Dunbar 2003: 88). Apart from being exposed to folk tales and fairy tales from an early age, Wilde could have been influenced by his mother's and Yeats's research on folk tales during the 1880s.

Thirdly, it will be shown in the analysis of „The Nightingale and the Rose’ that Wilde, like Schubert, particularly revealed himself, his private voice, when he was unconfined by formal and intellectual restrictions. Schubert’s *Moments Musicaux* show a confessional Schubert, a composer unaffectedly true and oblivious to the audience’s response; likewise, Wilde’s fairy tales, in particular „The Nightingale and the Rose’, depict a usually virtuosic, witty author’s private sentiments. Some of these sentiments, such as the union between love and suffering and the mystery of transfiguration, were only going to resurface in *De Profundis* of 1897 (Ellmann 1988: 299; Johnson 2000: 105).

Lastly, Wilde, like Schubert, preferred the miniature. Schubert wrote over 600 *Lieder* and Wilde wrote over 100 poems and short stories, his longest single work by far being his only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, a mere 150 pages in length (Holland 2003: 5-8). According to Kramer (1995: 145-147), the miniature, with its brevity, restrictions to heroism and epic impossibility, is a distinctly feminine genre. The fact that certain artists prefer feminine genres does not necessarily have any implication on their sexuality (McClary 2007: 175). Yet, the representation of the feminine in works of art can give clues to the alterity experienced by their creators, especially considering Kristeva’s view of the „foreigner’s mask’ (a mask which can conceal but cannot hide) imbuing many aspects of an artist’s creative output (Kristeva 1991: 33-35).

#### **4.1.2 A précis of ‘The Nightingale and the Rose’**

A young Student is in search of a red rose to give to the Professor’s daughter so that she would dance with him at the Prince’s ball the following evening. But there is no red rose in his garden. The Nightingale, having long pondered the mystery of Love, takes immense pity on the Student’s predicament and searches throughout the garden for a red rose.

There are white roses and yellow roses, but the red Rose-tree has no roses. The Tree tells the Nightingale that there is a way to produce a red rose, but it is a terrible way. She must

sing through the night with her heart pressed against a thorn and when morning comes a rose will have been birthed from her song and stained red by her heart's-blood.

The Nightingale decides to sacrifice herself to get the Student a red rose, since Love to her is better than Life. That night, after flying over the garden one last time and bidding farewell to her old friend, the holm-oak tree, the Nightingale presses her breast against a thorn on the Rose-tree and begins to sing. Her song resounds over hills and vales and grows louder and wilder as the dawn approaches. Finally, as her life ebbs away, a red rose appears.

At noon the Student sees the beautiful rose and marvels at it, thinking that it must have a long Latin name. The Professor's daughter, however, rejects the offering of the rose, stating that it did not cost enough. The rejected Student, angry at the impracticality of Love, throws the rose into a gutter and returns home to his books.

#### 4.1.3 Origins

„The Nightingale and the Rose' is the second of the five fairy tales collected in *The Happy Prince and Other Stories* (Wilde 2005: 114). It is probably the most well-known of all Wilde's fairy tales and has been adapted for the stage and has been converted into a libretto for an opera (by the composer Elena Firsova) of the same name (Burke-Kennedy 2003: 95; Miller 1994: 30). Composers such as Rimsky-Korsakov and Saint-Saëns composed songs on the subject. Wilde called the story „the most elaborate' of the group (Shewan 1977: 43).

Wilde's „The Nightingale and the Rose' has a number of analogous predecessors. A medieval myth states that the blood of Christ turned all white roses red at the time of his crucifixion (Willoughby 1993: 28-29). There furthermore exist two Persian legends which are both similar to Wilde's story: the first is of a nightingale who leans her breast against a thorn to remember her sorrows; the second is of a nightingale who fell in love with a white rose and sang, pressed against its thorns, until he died – staining the white

rose red with his blood (De Vries 1974: 341). Keats mentions a rose in connection with a nightingale in his „Ode to a Nightingale’, a poem which Wilde almost definitely knew, since he admired Keats and even wrote a sonnet „On the Sale by Auction of Keats’s Love Letters’ (Keats 1994: 231; Wilde 2005: 290).

## 4.2 Representational tropes

### 4.2.1 The Artist as martyr and messiah

The image of the artist as martyr and messiah incorporates and embodies a number of mythological and ideological traditions. One of these is the myth of the *divino artista*, the divine artist. The myth of the divine artist arose from the idea of the *deus artifex*, which views God as a creator, whose work is similar to that of an artist. Stories about God as Creator existed long before the Biblical version – similar myths existed earlier in, amongst others, Babylonian, Egyptian and Indian cultures. In the sixteenth century Pietro Aretino referred to both Michelangelo and Titian as a „persona divina’.<sup>8</sup> The myth of the *divino artista* soon was intertwined with legends of the Christ, especially in apocryphal writings:

Among the many Gnostic apocrypha that became attached to the Gospels, there is one that portrays the Christ child himself as an artist (The Infancy Gospel of St. Thomas [...]). The Saviour models birds of clay, which take wing at his command. [This] forms the bridge between the ancient conception of an artist god – the Lord of Creation of the Judaic tradition – and that of the artist child, whom we encountered at the beginning of biography in more modern times. (Kris & Kurz 1979: 53.)

The Messiah as artist is the mirror image of the artist as messianic creator. Since Giorgio Vasari’s *The Lives of the Artists* (1550), in which Vasari attempted to change the general perception of the artist (limited to architects, painters and sculptors) from the status of

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<sup>8</sup> The epithet ‚diva’, used with reference to opera singers and actresses, also has its origins in this term (Kris & Kurz 1979: 59).

artisan to artist, the painter has occupied a higher echelon of society; but this elevation also made the painter an outsider – less a tradesman, more a creative philosopher (Bushakevitz 2008a: 8; Kris & Kurz 1979: 53, 58-60; Steptoe 1998: 259).

From 28 June to 28 August 2006 London's National Gallery ran an exhibition called *Rebels and Martyrs: The Image of the Artist in the Nineteenth Century* (Stephenson 2006: 2). This exhibition highlighted, amongst other things, the Romantic artist's striving to reach the level of the ultimate creative being: God. The societal contempt for this aspiration – with which artists were often met – led the Romantic artist to see himself as a Christ-like figure, „despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief”, as Wilde quotes Isaiah 53: 3 in *De Profundis* (Wilde 2005: 351). Painters who showed a particular identification with Christ include Delacroix, Ensor, Gauguin, Munch and, in particular, Van Gogh (Oliver et al 2006: 139).

The image of the martyred artist is an intrinsic aspect of the arts in the Romantic era, encompassing all the main art forms – music, painting and writing. Wagner is a good (if overused) example of a composer who interpreted Christ-like features into his own life. Wagner identified himself with many of his music's heroes, such as Siegfried, Tristan and Parsifal – who often were, in turn, symbols of Christ (Gutman 1971: 240-241). The crucifixion was important to Wagner, since it symbolised to him the redemption of Aryans by an Aryan redeemer, a redeemer who possessed a „superblood' which was „an archetypal manifestation of the Aryan species' (Gutman 1971: 594-595). *Parsifal* was the musical portrayal of much of Wagner's pseudo-Christian mythology, with Parsifal himself becoming a saviour, refusing human affection and worldly success in order to achieve transcendence and to offer redemption and salvation to ordinary mortals – excluding Jews and other non-Aryans (Borchmeyer 1986:20; Gutman 1971: 595; Jacobs 1935: 116-117).

Romantic poets and writers often incorporated the idea of the artist as martyr and messiah, a prime example being Baudelaire, with whose work Wilde, ever the Francophile, was acquainted. Baudelaire expounded his doctrine in *Les Fleurs du Mal*

(1855), where a poet-hero (largely an autobiographical figure of Baudelaire) travels through various „ideals’, starting with absolute beauty and progressing through sexual deviation to the „ideals’ of drug and alcohol abuse, Satanism, sado-masochistic pleasure and eventually (perhaps inevitably), the ideal of death (Mossop 1961: 27-35). Baudelaire (1961: 152-153) condenses his view of the artist as martyr and messiah in the last three stanzas of „La Mort des artistes’, a poem from the final section of *Les Fleurs du Mal*:

Nous userons notre âme en de subtils complots,  
Et nous démolirons mainte lourde armature,  
Avant de contempler la grande Créature  
Don’t l’infernal désir nous remplit de sanglots!

Il en est qui jamais n’ont connu leur Idole,  
Et ces sculpteurs damnés et marqués d’un affront,  
Qui vont se martelant la poitrine et le front,

N’ont qu’un espoir, étrange et sombre Capitole!  
C’est que la Mort, planant comme un soleil nouveau,  
Fera s’épanouir les fleurs de leur cerveau!<sup>9</sup>

Baudelaire’s artist is his own messiah – he must be, since the world will not grant him what he deserves. The world is the abode of the flowers of evil: Ennui, Demons, Pain, Spleen and Satan (Culler 1993: xxxiii). Martyrdom is a wish for the artist, since only through death can the inevitable suffering of the artist be consoled.

It can be seen that the idea – even ideal – of the artist as martyr and messiah permeated the arts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Wilde’s portrayal of the unrecognised and suffering artist in „The Nightingale and the Rose’ stems from this idea and combines the theme of the suffering artist with that of the suffering Christ. Wilde’s depiction, like the portrayals of many Romantic artists (including the preceding examples of Wagner and Baudelaire) is autobiographical. As will be shown later, Wilde took the association even further,

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<sup>9</sup> We will wear out our souls concocting subtle schemes, / And we’ll be wrecking heavy armatures we’ve done / Before we gaze upon the great and wondrous One, / For whom we’ve often sobbed, wracked by the devil’s dreams! / But some have never known their Idol face to face – / These poor, accursed sculptors, marked by their disgrace, / Who go to beat themselves about the breast and brow, / Have only but a hope, strange somber Capitol! / It is that Death, a new and hovering sun, will find / A way to bring to bloom the flowers of their minds! (Translation by J. McGowan, in Baudelaire 1961: 152-153.)



comparing himself directly with Christ at times, most notably in *De Profundis* (1897) (Wilde 2005: 349).

#### 4.2.2 Wilde and Christianity

Wilde's oeuvre is saturated with references, both implicit and explicit, to Christ (Willoughby 1993: 15). Wilde had a good knowledge of the Bible and some of his writing (as will be shown later) purposefully imitates certain Biblical writing styles (Ellmann 1988: 93-94). Although Wilde planned to write a book on Christianity, his greatest fixation with Christ is to be found in *De Profundis* (Ellmann 1988: 359; Willoughby 1993: 16). Yet Wilde's fascination with Christ was not a religious fascination; his Christ was not a moralist or a miracle worker: Wilde's Christ was the ultimate artist (Auden 1969: 119; Ellmann 1969: 1). Wilde (2005: 349) reveals as much in *De Profundis*:

I see a far more immediate connection between the true life of Christ and the true life of the artist [...]. Nor is it merely that we can discern in Christ that close union of personality with perfection which forms the real distinction between the classical and romantic movement in life, but the very basis of his nature was the same as that of the nature of the artist – an intense and flamelike imagination. He realised in the entire sphere of human relations that imaginative sympathy which in the sphere of Art is the sole secret of creation.

Here Christ is shown to be the ultimate aesthete, a creative artist with impeccable instincts (Willoughby 1993: 16). Wilde developed a complex mythology around Christ, depicting him not as a deity, but as a great man within his fellow humanity, „the most supreme of individualists' (Wilde 2005: 350). Wilde once wrote to Yeats, „I have been inventing a new Christian heresy. It seems that Christ recovered after the Crucifixion, and escaping from the tomb lived on for many years, the one man upon earth who knew the falsehood of Christianity' (Ellmann 1988: 358). James Joyce, in his article on *Salome*, holds that Wilde's Christ is a Gnostic figure (Joyce 1969: 60). This would explain how

Wilde could have an intense admiration for the mystical aspect of Christianity while being entirely divorced from the ceremonial, religious and even moral obligations of it.

Wilde's reworking of Christianity is reminiscent of William Blake's transposition of Biblical narratives to fit „modern' times. An example of this is the well-known ending of the third chapter of his epic *Jerusalem: The Emanation of The Giant Albion* (1804-1820) (Blake 1966: 718):

England! awake! awake! awake!  
Jerusalem thy Sister calls!  
[...]  
Our souls exult, and London's towers  
Receive the Lamb of God to dwell  
In England's green and pleasant bowers.

Developing, like Wilde, a personal, mythical Christianity (although Blake was more concerned with the Old Testament than Wilde was), Blake (1757-1827) cunningly juxtaposed aspects of Christianity with Greek mythology and Roman paganism (Osborne 1970: 137-138). Blake found great posthumous admiration, almost deification, from the Pre-Raphaelites (Rose 1992: 6). Being an admirer both of Blake and of the Pre-Raphaelites,<sup>10</sup> Wilde could have been influenced by them in the Christian-pagan juxtaposition found in many of his works (Ellmann 1988: 41).

#### 4.2.3 Heine's *Neuer Frühling*

Another earlier mentioning of the rose and the nightingale together is to be found in Heine's *Neuer Frühling* (1830), a set (perhaps even a cycle) of 24 poems in which both the rose and the nightingale feature as central motifs. Heine (1797-1856) infuses the poems with a Christian mysticism strangely akin to that found in Wilde's „The Nightingale and the Rose', attributing messianic and creational powers to the nightingale (Heine 1993: 325-337; Marcuse 1960: 166-167). The fifth poem's first three stanzas are especially notable (Heine 1993: 327-328):

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<sup>10</sup> Wilde's connection with the Pre-Raphaelites is further discussed in 4.2.5.

Im Anfang war die Nachtigall  
Und sang das Wort: Züküht! Züküht!  
Und wie sie sang, sproß überall  
Grüngras, Violen, Apfelblüt.

Sie biß sich in die Brust, da floß  
Ihr rotes Blut, und aus dem Blut  
Ein schöner Rosenbaum entsproß;  
Dem singt sie ihre Liebesglut.

Uns Vögel all in diesem Wald  
Versöhnt das Blut aus jener Wund;  
Doch wenn das Rosenlied verhallt,  
Geht auch der ganze Wald zu Grund.<sup>11</sup>

As can be seen, this poem is remarkably similar to Wilde's fairy tale, so much so that it seems likely that Wilde could have read the poem. Even if an English translation of this poem did not exist at the time, Wilde could read it in German, as he knew the language (Ellmann 1988: 18).

The Heine excerpt above clearly contains a considerable amount of Christian mysticism. Although this is not the right platform for a detailed discussion of the excerpt, it is worth noting a few aspects, as they pertain to Wilde's depiction of Christ in „The Nightingale and the Rose’.

As Susan Youens (2007: xv) eloquently states, Heine was „a master of pellucid profundity’, saying much with few and simple words. In the poem ‚Ich hatte einst ein schönes Vaterland’ Heine uses the term ‚das Wort’ (the Word) to refer to the Holy Writ (Youens 2007: 104-105). In the above poem, the same occurs: ‚das Wort’ immediately brings the Bible to mind. The beginning of the above poem, ‚Im Anfang war die Nachtigall’, is clearly meant to allude to John 1: 1, ‚Im Anfang war das Wort, und das

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<sup>11</sup> In the beginning was the Nightingale / and [she] sang the word ‚Züküht! Züküht! / And while she sang there blossomed everywhere / green grass, violets and apple blossoms. / She bit herself in her breast, there flowed / her red blood, and from the blood / a beautiful rose tree sprang; / to it she sings of the ardour of her love. / All us birds in this forest / are atoned by the blood from that wound; / but when the rose-song dies away / the whole forest is also doomed.

Wort war bei Gott, und Gott war das Wort'.<sup>12</sup> Thus Heine's nightingale is a representation of God, and by implication, Christ. The implied death of the nightingale is by self-martyrdom very much akin to the nightingale's self-martyrdom in Wilde's fairy tale (Wilde 2005: 114-115). Heine's most explicit reference to the death and redemptive power of Christ, „Versöhnt das Blut aus jener Wund', is taken further by Wilde, whose nightingale experiences death by crucifixion (Willoughby 1993: 27). The grand narrative of Heine's *Neuer Frühling* is in itself similar to Wilde's tale. The set of poems, which begins with a young lover singing to his love, becomes more and more sinister and ends on a macabre note of despair in the 24<sup>th</sup> poem (Heine 1993: 337):

Wie ein Greisenantlitz droben  
Ist der Himmel anzuschauen,  
Roteinäugig und umwoben  
Von dem Wolkenhaar, dem grauen.

Blickt er auf die Erde nieder,  
Müssen welken Blum und Blüte,  
Müssen welken Lieb und Lieder  
In dem menschlichen Gemüte.<sup>13</sup>

Heine's pessimistic ending is analogous with Wilde's story's ending: that the sacrifice was in vain, that all hope is gone and that redemption has been forfeited. Heine's impossible redemption was his unalterable Jewishness – he was a stranger without a fatherland in the very Germany that was so beloved to him; Wilde's impossible redemption was his unalterable homosexuality.

The irony of Heine's title of *Neuer Frühling* becomes evident as his set of poems progresses, since the more ominous the mood becomes, the more seemingly inappropriate the title of *Neuer Frühling* („new spring' – new life, rebirth) becomes. The irony is not lost in Wilde's story either: from the death of the nightingale comes the rebirth and new life of a red rose. However, the rose into which the nightingale's love and blood were

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<sup>12</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word.

<sup>13</sup> Like the face of an old man above / is the sky to behold, / red- and one-eyed and woven around / with grey cloud-hair. / If he looks down upon the earth, / flower and blossom must wilt, / love and song must wilt / in human nature.

reincarnated was in vain. Just like Heine's set of poems promises a „new spring' and leaves the promise unfulfilled, so also Wilde's story ends not with a standard fairy tale ending, but with a note of despair and hopelessness.

The similarities between Heine's *Neuer Frühling* and Wilde's „The Nightingale and the Rose' may be coincidental or purposeful, yet either way they are remarkable. Heine's story is not simple, it alludes to symbols and metaphors akin to those employed by Wilde. Nevertheless, Wilde's narrative encompasses many more facets than Heine's and contains a complex system of reference, so intricate that a number of dissimilar interpretations of his story exist, none of them forming any hierarchy of general pertinence or importance.

#### **4.2.4 Chaucer's *The Romaunt of the Rose***

A far earlier possible inspiration for Wilde's story is Chaucer's *The Romaunt of the Rose*. This work forms part of the Chaucerian apocryphal writings, the authorship being uncertain and the date unknown. What is certain is that Chaucer (c.1340-1400) translated at least a considerable portion of the poem into English – deleting, changing and adding with the freedom of poetic license – and was himself considerably influenced by the work. *The Romaunt of the Rose* is a translation of a voluminous French poem called the *Roman de la Rose*, which was begun in about 1237 by Guillaume de Lorris, who died leaving the poem uncompleted. Forty years later Jean de Meun completed the Romance, transforming the work into a complex, often satirical commentary on the era in which Meun lived. (Robinson 1957: 564-565.)

*The Romaunt of the Rose* contains many symbols and imagery that is found in Wilde's story. The partnership of the nightingale and the rose is set forth from the beginning of the poem, when the young protagonist walks through a garden, sees a rose, and hears a nightingale sing (Chaucer 1969: 1-2). Christian mysticism, an iconic characteristic of Wilde, is a notable motif in the Romance. The Garden of Eden is symbolised, as it is in

Wilde's story, and the pomegranate, an image of sexual desire, is mentioned (Chaucer 1969: 15):

Ther were, and that wot I ful wel,  
Of pomgarnettes a ful gret del;  
That is a fruyt ful wel to lyke,  
Namely to folk whan they ben syke.

The oak tree, a tradition representation of the crucifix, is also referred to, again similar to Wilde's fairy tale (Chaucer 1969: 15). An interesting aspect of *The Romaunt of the Rose* is the prolonged attention paid to Narcissus, who is one of the few Classical mythological figures named directly in the first part of the poem. Narcissus, a figure important to Wilde as a representation of homosexual love, is in Chaucer's work a person of tragic significance, one who suffers, not the arrogant egoist that some writers portray him to be. Chaucer makes it clear that Narcissus is different, trapped, someone whom 'Love had caught in his daungere' and who had no option but to die from his ill-fated lot. Chaucer (1969: 17) warns women to be careful of the Narcissus type and to take example from his misled love; his warning is not critical of Narcissus, but instead quite pitiful:

Ladyes, I preye ensample taketh,  
Ye that ayeins your love mistaketh:  
For if hir deeth be yow to wyte,  
God can ful wel your whyle quyte.

The most direct connection between Chaucer's poem and Wilde's fairy tale is the symbolic union between love and pain, Chaucer depicting this by describing how the protagonist, while walking in a garden filled with red roses, is shot by an arrow from the 'God of Love'. The pallor of this rather unripe reference to Cupid is soon forgiven due to the lyric power which follows when the protagonist withdraws the hooked head of the arrow from his chest, but cannot remove the wound which Beauty had etched deep into his heart (Chaucer 1969: 19):

So at the last the shaft of tree  
I drough out, with the feathers three.  
But yet the hooked heed, y-wis,  
The wiche Beautee callid is,  
Gan so depe in myn herte passe,  
That I it might nought arace;  
But in my herte stille it stood,  
Al bledde I not a drope of blood.

The likelihood that Wilde's „The Nightingale and the Rose' was influenced by *The Romaunce of the Rose* is rather slim, since the *Romaunce* is a lesser-known work in Chaucer's oeuvre. However, the purpose of the comparison with Blake, Heine and the forthcoming connection with Thomas Chatterton is not intended to proffer source material that could have inspired Wilde. Rather, these comparisons intend to show the symbol topoi upon which Wilde succoured, thus proving that „The Nightingale and the Rose' amalgamates an astonishing amount of mythological intricacies and portrays a web of veiled symbols.

#### 4.2.5 Connections with Chatterton

In March 1888 Wilde gave his last reported lecture; it was on the poet Thomas Chatterton (Ellmann 1988: 284). Chatterton (1752-1770) was a precociously gifted boy-poet who wrote elaborate poetic forgeries in Jacobean style and committed ostensible suicide at the age of seventeen. (Barzun 2000: 409; Oliver et al 2006: 84). Chatterton became an iconic effigy for the martyred artist, with poets such as Coleridge, Keats and Wordsworth eulogising him and the Pre-Raphaelite painter Henry Wallis (1830-1916) depicting his death in his *Chatterton* (Figure 1) (Oliver et al 2006: 84; Rose 1992: 78; Wilson 2006: 15).



Figure 1 Henry Wallis, *Chatterton* (1855-1856) (Oliver et al 2006: 85)

Wilde was well-acquainted with the Pre-Raphaelites since his student days at Oxford, even posing as one himself for a while; in his essay „The English Renaissance of Art’ (1882) he dedicates a large section to the Pre-Raphaelites and praises their virtues profusely (Ellmann 1988: 156-157, 297; Wilde 2005a: 366). Wallis’s painting of Chatterton caused a stir when it was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1856 (Oliver et al 2006: 84). Considering Wilde’s interest in the Pre-Raphaelites, his knowledge of Chatterton and the fame of Wallis’s painting, it is likely that Wilde was familiar with Wallis’s painting of Chatterton.

Wilde’s interest in Chatterton lay in the similarities he noted between his own life and that of Chatterton; Ellmann (1988: 285) states succinctly, „Wilde could share with Chatterton Hamlet’s doubt and Satan’s pride, a sense of forging a life as Chatterton did, as well as a sense that he might one day be his own victim, a sacrifice to himself’.



Chatterton possibly also shared with Wilde the burden of venereal disease<sup>14</sup> (King 1972: 85). Furthermore, Wilde, until his conviction on charges of sodomy in 1895, enjoyed depicting himself as an artist-criminal, perpetuating this image in his unconventional dress, his socialist sympathies, his thinly-veiled homosexuality and his anti-moralist stance (Ellmann 1969: 278; Joyce 1969: 57). Chatterton, the gifted teenager who blatantly forged most of his prodigious output,<sup>15</sup> was the archetype of the artist-criminal to whom Wilde was attracted.<sup>16</sup>

During the same time that Wilde was preparing his lecture on Chatterton, he wrote „The Nightingale and the Rose’ (Ellmann 1988: 284-285). Like Chatterton, the child prodigy, burning himself out and dying lonely and forsaken, Wilde’s nightingale presses her breast against a rose thorn in order to change the rose’s colour from white to red with her blood. It is the archetype of the martyred artist, dying unappreciated for a noble cause:

If you want a red rose, said the Tree, you must build it out of music by moonlight, and stain it with your own heart’s-blood. You must sing to me with your breast against a thorn. All night long you must sing to me, and the thorn must pierce your heart, and your lifeblood must flow into my veins, and become mine. (Wilde 2005: 114.)

Wilde presents a startling image: a nightingale singing while a thorn pierces her heart. In essence, Wallis’s painting of Chatterton is a portrait of the nightingale and the rose: Chatterton is the lifeless nightingale and the solitary rose stands red and wasted in the window sill. So also are both Chatterton and the nightingale messianic figures: both choose their fate of death themselves, even though the choice of life is in their hands – just like Christ chose to be crucified.

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<sup>14</sup> It has been speculated that Chatterton’s death was not a suicide but rather an overdose of arsenic with which he had been trying to cure his venereal disease (King 1972: 85; Oliver et al 2006: 84).

<sup>15</sup> Chatterton’s collected works amount to over 1 300 pages, all written during a period of three years, 1768-1770 (King 1972: 84).

<sup>16</sup> Benvenuto Cellini was another artist-criminal to whom Wilde was attracted (Wilde 2005: 327).

### 4.3 A list of symbols in ‘The Nightingale and the Rose’

Wilde’s fairy tale simmers with references to mythology, folklore and the Bible. These references, often created by symbolism, are important in the understanding of the underlying dissidence of the story.

Although ‘The Nightingale and the Rose’ is not a Symbolist work, it does show a notable influence from the group, as do many of the fairy tales in *The Happy Prince and Other Stories* and, even to a greater extent, *A House of Pomegranates*. Bullock and Trombley’s definition of Symbolism – ‘complex interplays of a subjective, magical poetic vision and the idea of a timeless, epiphanic image which art pursues and releases by its rhythmic, metaphoric or linguistic action’ – finds resonance in ‘The Nightingale and the Rose’ (Bullock & Trombley 2000: 851). Wilde was influenced by Blake, Poe and Baudelaire, early forerunners of the Symbolist movement, and was a friend and admirer of the Symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé, calling him ‘cher maître’ (Ellmann 1988: 335). Nevertheless, it would not be either appropriate or necessary to categorise Wilde’s story as a Symbolist work, even though the story shows notable influence from Symbolism.

Here follows a list of important symbols in ‘The Nightingale and the Rose’.

#### 4.3.1 Mythological figures

##### 4.3.1.1 Androgynous beings

One of the oldest classical symbolisms of the rose was its connection with androgynous deities (De Vries 1974: 391). Narcissus was a favourite homoerotic metaphor used by Wilde (see 4.3.1.5). One of the varying myths of Narcissus likens him, according to Pellizer (1987: 108, 114-115), to Plato’s myth of the *androgynos*. The myth states that Narcissus had a twin sister and that after her youthful death he looked into a pool of water and saw the image of his sister reflected back; it was this image that Narcissus fell in love with. Pellizer (1987: 115) states the platonic myth of the *androgynos* ‘provides an

extremely vivid picture of how it is possible, via the figures of the *imaginaire*, to reconcile somehow the unity, the identity, the totality of the individual with complementariness, “specularity”, or duplicity – with, in a word, “otherness”. Interestingly, Wilde, with his long hair, silk clothing and aesthetic appearance, was on occasion also alluded to as having androgynous qualities: „this individual of doubtful sex’ (Ellman 1988: 351).

#### **4.3.1.2 Dionysus**

Dionysus, also known as Bacchus, is the god of, amongst other things, wine and the rose. Dionysus is often linked to Pan (see 4.3.1.6) in their shared proclivity for revelry and sexual exploits; Dionysus knew Pan when the latter was a child. The rose is not the only connection of Dionysus to Wilde’s story: Dionysus draws his followers to self-annihilation; this conscious death-wish is similar to the Nightingale’s self-martyrdom. There is an analogy between Dionysus and Christ, due to Christ’s self-martyrdom. (De Vries 1974: 136; March 1998: 136-137, 295.)

#### **4.3.1.3 Echo**

Wilde refers ambiguously to Echo, both as an auditory occurrence and as a mythological figure: „Then [the Nightingale] gave one last burst of music [...]. Echo bore it to her purple cavern in the hills’. Echo was a female wood nymph who fell in love with Narcissus. Spurned by him, she kept on repeating the last words he had said. Her love for Narcissus was never reciprocated by the cold youth, and Echo died of love. Only her echoing voice was left. Wilde’s reference to Echo, unambiguous enough, strengthens the image of Narcissus in the fairy tale. (March 1998: 142; Pellizer 1987: 113-114; Wilde 2005: 115.)

#### **4.3.1.4 Hyacinth**

„His hair is dark as the hyacinth-blossom, and his lips are as red as the rose of his desire’, Wilde writes about the student in „The Nightingale and the Rose’. Like Narcissus and Ganymede, the hyacinth flower (and by implication Hyacinth) is one of Wilde’s most notable symbols for homosexual love. Hyacinth was a beautiful youth loved by the bard Thamyras and the gods Zephyrus and Apollo. Hyacinth favoured Apollo but tragically died of his love: while Apollo and Hyacinth were throwing a discus to one another, Apollo’s jealous rival Zephyrus deflected the discus, which then mortally wounded Hyacinth. Apollo transformed the blood from Hyacinth’s head-wound into a dark-blue flower, the hyacinth, in his commemoration. (March 1998: 206; Wilde 2005: 114.)

#### **4.3.1.5 Narcissus**

Both as a flower and as a mythological figure, Narcissus appears frequently in Wilde’s oeuvre, often in connection with homosexual love. In „The Nightingale and the Rose’, Narcissus’s name is not mentioned, but, after mentioning Echo, Wilde writes how the Nightingale’s song „floated through the reeds of the river’. Narcissus is often likened to reeds, bending like him with their heads over the water; also, Narcissus’s spring is in Donacon, which means reed-bed. Narcissus fell fatally in love with his own reflection and died, like Echo, of love. Narcissus and Echo illustrate three kinds of reflexivity: the optical reflexivity of the water Narcissus saw his reflection in, the auditory reflexivity of Echo repeating Narcissus’s words, and the situational reflexivity of both Echo and Narcissus dying of love. (March 1998: 264; Pellizer 1987: 108-109; 114; Wilde 2005: 115.)

#### **4.3.1.6 Pan**

There is a fleeting reference to Pan when Wilde writes about shepherds sleeping in the hills. Pan was a god of shepherds and flocks and lived in the hills. Wilde refers to Echo’s „purple cavern in the hills’ in the same sentence in which the allusion to Pan occurs. Pan,

who had a strong sexual appetite for both the male and the female, desired Echo, who rejected him. Furthermore, Pan lived in a cave in the hills of Attica. (March 1998: 295-296; Wilde 2005: 115.)

### 4.3.2 Allusions to the Bible

#### 4.3.2.1 Christ

„For she sang of the Love that is perfected in Death, of the Love that dies not in the tomb’ (Wilde 2005: 115). Together with *De Profundis* (1897), the fairy tales contain the most succinct comparisons to Christ of all Wilde’s writings (Willoughby 1993: 16). „The Nightingale and the Rose’ is no exception – the links between the Nightingale and Christ, the Nightingale and the Artist, Christ as the Artist, and Wilde and Christ form an elaborate maze within the fairy tale.

Christ is not merely a recurring figure in „The Nightingale and the Rose’; he is a symbol of Wilde himself. In his essay „Christ and Wilde’, G. Wilson Knight maintains that Wilde was drawn to the artistic necessity of tragedy and found Christ to be the perfect model of this tragedy (Knight 1969: 143). In *De Profundis* Wilde hints at an author-as-protagonist connection between himself and Christ and states that the tragedy of his own life was prefigured and foreshadowed in his oeuvre (Wilde 2005: 349):

Some of it is in *The Happy Prince*, some of it in *The Young King*, [...] a great deal of it is hidden away in the note of doom that runs through the texture of *Dorian Gray*; in *The Critic as Artist* it is set forth in many colours; in *The Soul of Man* it is written down, and in letters too easy to read; it is one of the refrains whose recurring motifs make *Salome* so like a piece of music [...].

The ‘it’ Wilde writes about above is the „other half of the garden’ of pleasure, that is, suffering and sorrow (Wilde 2005: 349). If the tragedy of Wilde’s downfall was foreshadowed in his works, he not only implied an analogy but also merited one (Ellmann 1969: 6). Knight notes that Wilde was deeply moved by the story of the young

martyr St. Sebastian, and that both Sebastian and Wilde „may appear to embrace their martyrdom, [...] but it remains a martyrdom, a crucifixion, a self-exhibition in agony and shame’ (Knight 1969: 144-145). Wilde likened Keats to Christ in his „Somnet on the Sale of Keat’s Love Letters’ of 1885 (Shewan 1977: 197). In *De Profundis* Wilde hints at an association between Shakespeare and Christ (Wilde 2005: 350-351). This is especially interesting considering that, earlier, Wilde had compared *himself* with Shakespeare in *The Portrait of Mr W.H.* (1889): Shakespeare, like Wilde, was married and had two children when he became infatuated with a young man (Ellmann 1988: 297-298).

Knight’s aforementioned „Christ and Wilde’ goes to the extreme, comparing even Wilde’s character and personality to that of Christ: „Resemblances to Christ are clear in Wilde’s Byronic love of children, his egotism blended with humility, his repartee, his utter lack of malice, his forgiveness and Timon-like generosity, his magnanimity, his refusal to save himself, and patient endurance of shame’ (Knight 1969: 147). Knight attempts to elevate Wilde to the level of sainthood, at one stage ludicrously calling him a „homosexual-seraphic’ (Knight 1969: 147).

The most applicable comparison between Christ and Wilde is to be found in the authorial intent of the writings of Wilde himself, most implicitly in his fairy tales and most explicitly in *De Profundis*, his elegy to sorrow and suffering. The mythologizing (or perhaps canonisation) of Wilde after his death has more to do with Wilde’s criminal conviction, imprisonment and early death than with his self-allusions to a comparison between himself and Christ (Ellmann 1969: 6).

#### **4.3.2.2 The Crucifixion**

„You must sing to me with your breast against a thorn. All night long you must sing to me, and the thorn must pierce your heart, and your life-blood must flow into my veins, and become mine’ (Wilde 2005: 114). Wilde depicts the crucifixion of Christ in the symbolism of, firstly, the Oak-tree and the Rose-tree as images of the crucifix, and

secondly, the thorn that pierces the Nightingale's heart as an image of Christ's crown of thorns and nail-pierced hands and feet.

However, it is the subterranean implications that Wilde makes which are of the most significance. The rose thorn, which is linked to the crucifixion of Christ and his 'crown of thorns', symbolises martyrdom and the pain of beauty; this is importantly similar to Wilde's association of love with suffering. The counterpoise between pain and beauty is furthered by the counterpoise between existence and non-existence and ecstasy and anguish. These non-polar opposites have a distinct connection with this deconstructive reading's proposed dichotomy between redemption and defeat. (Cirlot 1971: 341; De Vries 1974: 463.)

#### **4.3.2.3 The Garden of Eden**

„In the centre of the garden was standing a beautiful Rose-tree' (Wilde 2005: 114). The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is in the centre of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2: 16-17; Genesis 3: 3). If Eden is Wilde's garden and the Rose-tree is Christ's cross, a complex analogy can be made: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil brought sin into the world, while Christ's crucifixion brought forgiveness of sin. If Eden's fateful tree and Christ's cross are one and the same thing, Wilde is making an anarchic statement regarding the absurdity and redundancy of the concept of sin in Christianity. This could be very possible, considering Wilde's stance as an anti-moralist (Ellmann 1969: 51).

#### **4.3.2.4 The Song of Solomon**

Not only in 'The Nightingale and the Rose', but also in the entire collection *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*, Wilde directly mimics the ornate language, syntax and style of the King James Version Bible's Song of Solomon (Killeen 2007: 42). An example of this is Wilde's repetition of words and clauses: „As the shadow of a rose in a mirror of silver, as the shadow of a rose in a water-pool, so was the rose that blossomed on the topmost spray of the Tree' (Wilde 2005: 115). Similar unusual repetitions are to be found in the

Song of Solomon: ‚I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh’ (Song of Solomon 5: 5).

The peculiar metaphors in ‚The Nightingale and the Rose’ also find their origin in the metaphors of the Song of Solomon. Herewith follows a list of notable examples:

Wilde (2005: 114): ‚His lips are red as the rose of his desire’.

Song of Solomon (4: 3): ‚Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet’.

Wilde (2005: 114): ‚His face [is] like pale ivory’.

Song of Solomon (5: 14): ‚His body is as bright ivory’.

Wilde (2005: 114): ‚his lips are sweet as honey’

Song of Solomon (4: 11): ‚Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb’.

Wilde (2005: 114): ‚His hair is dark as the hyacinth-blossom’.

Song of Solomon (5: 11) ‚His locks are bushy, and black as a raven’.

Wilde (2005: 115): ‚For she sang of the Love that is perfected by Death, of the Love that dies not in the tomb’.

Song of Solomon (8: 6-7): ‚For love is strong as death [...]. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it’.

It is clear that the Song of Solomon was an inspiration for ‚The Nightingale and the Rose’. Why was Wilde attracted to the Song of Solomon and why did he make reference to it in this particular story? The Bible’s most sensuously depicted love story, the Song of Solomon tells the story of a shepherd and his love, a Shulamite girl (Gaster 1975: 808). Wilde was probably attracted to the story due to its juxtaposition of love and suffering: a large part of the Song of Solomon details the shepherd’s laments stemming from the abduction of his love by the king.



Knight describes an additional reason for Wilde's love of the Song of Solomon. According to Knight, Wilde saw the allegorical implications of the Song of Solomon and „knew both the fascination and the danger of the transcendent housed in the material'. In the Song of Solomon, the imagery associated with the female are related with fertility – fruit, trees, spices and the seasons; imagery associated with the male are related to precious metals and stones such as diamonds, gold, marble, sapphire, silver and topaz. The perfection, endurance and eternity of such metals and stones was a perfection that Wilde saw in young male beauty. Knight holds that Wilde therefore viewed homosexual desire as transcendental to heterosexual desire, since homosexual „lust was transcendence; or rather the lust aroused was a *lust for the transcendent*'. The fact that certain homosexual acts were illegal in Victorian England would have probably only added to the transcendence of homosexual desire for Wilde, considering both his fascination with the link between love and suffering, and his stance as a self-proclaimed artist-criminal. (Ellmann 1969: 278, 409; Knight 1969: 139-140.)

### **4.3.3 Other references**

#### **4.3.3.1 The Moon**

„And when the Moon shone in the heavens the Nightingale flew to the Rose-tree, and set her breast against the thorn. All night long she sang with her breast against the thorn, and the cold crystal Moon leaned down and listened'. The moon plays an important role in Wilde's story, almost to the point of being a character. Like the rose, the moon has an ancient and multifarious symbolic association. The moon is seen as being feminine, due to its regenerative capabilities and its mysterious connection with the female menstrual cycle. In keeping with this, the moon was symbolically linked to goddesses such as Ishtar, Hathor and Artemis. A mythic tradition held that the moon was the Land of the Dead, that it was the place to which the dead went, and from which they returned in reincarnated form. Due to its association with the night (similar to that of the nightingale), the moon has an ambivalence in that it is both a protection and a token of danger and horror. The moon has some masculine qualities, yet is predominantly

feminine. This led to the moon being associated with bisexuality and the androgynous. (Cirlot 1971: 215-216; De Vries 1974: 326; Wilde 2005: 114-115.)

#### **4.3.3.2 Nightingales**

The image of the nightingale is rich in symbolic meaning. The nightingale has been the harbinger of unrequited love and a symbol for a love-death (German *Liebestod*) from the time of Greek and Roman antiquity, with Sappho, Virgil and Ovid alluding to this symbolism. In more recent times, Milton, Keats, T.S. Eliot and Dylan Thomas have used the nightingale as a symbol for unrequited love and death from love. (De Vries 1974: 341.)

#### **4.3.3.3 The Oak tree**

„But the Oak-tree understood, and felt sad, for he was very fond of the little Nightingale who had built her nest in his branches’. The Oak-tree is the only acquaintance of the Nightingale that understands her actions and the greatness of the sacrifice she makes. Before sacrificing herself, the Nightingale sings her *chant de cygne* to the old Oak-tree. The oak tree is an emblem of the crucifixion of Christ, since the crucifix is traditionally made from oak. The fact that both the oak tree and the rose tree are metaphors of Christ’s cross could mean that the sacrifice (crucifixion) of the Nightingale was always already inevitable, since she had „built her nest in [the Oak-tree’s] branches’. (De Vries 1974: 347-348; Wilde 2005: 114.)

#### **4.3.3.4 Pomegranates**

„Surely Love is a wonderful thing [...]. Pearls and pomegranates cannot buy it, nor is it set forth in the marketplace’ (Wilde 2005: 114). The Greeks held a belief that the pomegranate was created from the blood of Dionysus (Cirlot 1971: 261). In classical mythology the pomegranate is a symbol of death and resurrection (De Vries 1974: 371). Amongst the Mesopotamians and Hebrews, pomegranates were thought to give sexual

potency (Gaster 1975: 812). The Song of Solomon, which has been shown (see 4.3.2.4) to have exerted influence on Wilde's story, refers to pomegranates numerous times, often alluding to it in thinly veiled terms: „I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me: I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate' (Song of Solomon 7: 2).

#### **4.3.3.5        Roses**

The rose has complex and multifaceted symbolic associations. Most important of these are its symbolism for the female generative process, divine love, and the aspiration towards transcendence. The association of the rose with the female, often frankly sexual in nature, is reminiscent of the femininity of the moon (see 4.3.3.1). A red rose symbolises passion, desire, shame, embarrassment, death and martyrdom. Mysticism connected to the rose is found in Greek mythology, the Song of Solomon and in the works of Dante, Spenser, Blake, Yeats and Lorca. In Wilde's *Salome*, the roses, like the moon, change from virginal white at the beginning of the play to red at the end, symbolising lust, blood and death. (De Vries 1974: 391-393; Willoughby 1993: 27.)

#### **4.3.3.6        Shadows**

„She swept over the garden like a shadow, and like a shadow she sailed through the grove' (Wilde 2005: 114). The word „shadow' appears six times in Wilde's story. The shadow is an alter ego, a being's proof of its own existence. This is similar to seeing a face reflected in a mirror, or (like Narcissus) in water. (Cirlot 1971: 290.)

#### **4.3.3.7        Oscar Wilde**

An interesting example of a direct word-play on his own name is found in „The Nightingale and the Rose': „Bitter, bitter was the pain, and wilder and wilder grew her song, for she sang of the Love that is perfected by Death, of the Love that dies not in the tomb' (Wilde 2005: 115). It is unlikely that Wilde, who as a keen epigrammatist was very

sensitive to onomatopoeic inflection, did not intentionally play on his own name („wilder and wilder’). The topic of Wilde’s biographical references and the possibility that he is the nightingale/Christ is discussed in detail in 4.3.2.1.

#### **4.4 Representations of alterity in the symbols**

##### **4.4.1 Alterity in mythological symbolism**

The subversive connotations inherent to a large proportion of mythological figures – Ganymede, Dionysus and Oedipus spring to mind – have the effect that the incorporation of mythological elements and allusions in a literary work is not as strikingly dissident as, for instance, the subversive allusions to the Bible. However, another dimension of alterity is reached when symbols of Classical mythology entwine with symbols of the Bible, as occurs in Wilde’s „The Nightingale and the Rose’. Additionally, the naivety of the genre in which all of this happens, the fairy tale, adds not only another stratum of intrinsic connotations to the story, but also intensifies the extremity of the dissidence. The shock of the realisation of the dissidence is greater because it is so unexpected: in Wilde’s fairy tale the toad does not become a prince, the prince becomes a toad.

The pervasiveness of Wilde’s homosexuality in his life and work is inevitably a major part of both the image of Wilde and of Wilde studies. Criticism of his oeuvre suffers from an overly sexual approach, even though a level of homoeroticism akin to Wilde’s is found in the works of other writers of his time and before him. Wilde practiced considerable caution in hiding his homosexuality in his work. His homoerotic allusions are often cryptic; this is one of the reasons why mythology plays such an important role in his work. Mythological references to figures such as Narcissus and Hyacinth, two of Wilde’s favourite homosexual insinuations, are both meek and ambiguous, the latter due to the fact that both references could allude to either mythological figures or merely to innocent flowers. Wilde’s incorporation of Pan and Dionysus, symbols of sexual decadence and desire, at a moment in the fairy tale where the nightingale is singing her

final song and where some of the most touching prose appears, creates an unsettling sense of literary necrophilia.

Wilde's story's fleeting mentioning of Echo, the lamentable wood-nymph, strengthens the allusion to Narcissus and makes his mythological nature unequivocal. As has been stated, Wilde liked to compare himself with great people he admired, such as Chatterton and Shakespeare (Ellmann 1988: 285, 297-298). A comparison between Wilde and Narcissus could have been deliberate, since *The Portrait of Dorian Gray*, an unashamed reworking of the myth of Narcissus, has often been said to be autobiographical on Wilde's part (Wilde 2005: 7). If Dorian is Narcissus and Wilde, then Wilde is by implication Narcissus. Why would Wilde portray himself as Narcissus? Perhaps Wilde did it not only because of his self-proclaimed egotism, but also because of his own purposefully androgynous appearance (Ellmann 1988: 351).

#### **4.4.2 Alterity in Biblical symbolism**

The logic of alterity is a logic of difference, a difference more significant in the shadow between the two furthestmost points of the alterity than in the alterity itself. Alterity does not need the subservience of being viewed as the Other in an Other/Self juxtaposition: alterity alone exhibits its own duplicity. Alterity's duplicity is one of good and evil, ego and alter ego, sensible Self and *Doppelgänger*. Christ and Dionysus stand face to face, but Dionysus is Christ's 'spectacular double' (Derrida 1998: 189, 194).

Yet, alterity breathes life upon the Other. Wilde's nightingale is at the same time a symbol of Christ, the Artist, Love and Wilde himself. The hierarchy is not clear, but a hierarchy is not necessary to be constructed: the nightingale is the Other and the Other signifies alterity, which is the main focus of this study.

Wilde's strong admiration for Christ, exhibited in much of his work, is in „The Nightingale and the Rose' seen to be not an admiration for a Christ who was a moralist and religious icon, but for a Christ who was the outcast – an outcast who offered

redemption but did not redeem himself even though he could, thus exemplifying the turbulent middle ground between redemption and defeat. Wilde's alterity is represented by this *différance*; redemption and defeat also encompasses Wilde's favourite interplay between love and pain. The two collections of fairy tales, which, as had been said, depict a Wilde stripped of his (often encountered) epigrammatic trifling, almost without exception blend concepts of both redemption and defeat. Ellmann (1988: 299) states, „the incidents often begin with disfigurement and ends [...] in transfiguration'. In „The Nightingale and the Rose' the linear shift from disfigurement to transfiguration is knotted into an inextricable orb and the two become one: disfigured transfiguration.

The gnarled roughness of Wilde's rose-tree crucifix succinctly portrays his image of Christ. For Wilde, Christ has a homoerotic connotation; he is possibly the ultimate figure of masculinity and yet, utterly devoid of virility, is also a representation of feminine alterity. According to Lash (1995: 6) the saviour/redeemer, who has the power to perform acts of redemption on a massive scale, is „a motif quite alien to the calling of the hero'. Christ was not a hero, even though he had heroic capabilities. Lash comments, „the distinction is crucial because the entire complex of redemptive theology in the West, derived from the saviour mythos of Indo-Iranian dualism, distracts and detracts from the true ancestry of the hero'. Likewise, Wilde's nightingale (notably feminine) is heroic, but not a heroine: she could never have been a heroine since she was a redeemer. As a nightingale, Christ, Wilde, Love, the Artist, she was always doomed from the beginning. The impossibility of redemption, of climax, is inevitable. The femininity of the passivity which Christ displayed by his self-martyrdom is made explicit – in a compassionate portrayal – in Wilde's fairy tale.

For all the virtuousness of Christ's crucifixion and the innocence of the nightingale, Wilde's story never ceases to subtly display pictures of decadence, dissidence and desire. The sensuality of Solomon's poem of love, the Song of Solomon, creates a hair-splitting poise between the sexual and the sacred. Solomon's love story runs subliminally parallel to the student's love story, which, like Solomon's, contains imagery of physical lust: roses and pomegranates symbolise reproductive organs while the sun and moon have

long represented cosmic copulation and fertility. As in the Song of Solomon, the sexual metaphors in Wilde's story are sometimes not very hidden: „And a delicate flush of pink came into the leaves of the rose, like the flush in the face of the bridegroom when he kisses the lips of the bride' (Wilde 2005: 115).

The juxtaposition of Biblical decadence with the image of Christ heightens the sense of alterity, since Christ is the ultimate Other, yet alterity needs an element of subversion in order to exist, and what better subversion to sow around Christ than Biblical decadence. Wilde was well known for the paradoxes in his writing; he stated that the Bible was full of paradoxes and was a source of inspiration for him in this matter: „What greater enormity could there be than “Blessed are the poor”?” (Ellmann 1988: 349).

The redemption/defeat duality is also portrayed in Christ. Christ offered redemption *through* defeat, and the victor in the inevitable hierarchy between the two concepts is blurred in Christ's case, since his „defeat' on the cross was in itself an act of redemption. Wilde's portrayal of Christ shows that defeat wins the battle, but it is a defeat that is unknown to the nightingale (Christ), making his suffering all the more noble and his defeat all the more acute.

#### **4.4.3 Alterity in other symbols**

Much of the symbolism in „The Nightingale and the Rose' is allusive, referring to mythological and Christian figures and themes which in turn designate symbolic significance. But a considerable amount of the symbolism in the fairy tale has a direct symbolic significance. This significance is then transcendental by default: in other words, a symbol such as the moon has a meaning that is almost intrinsic and instinctive to anyone raised in the Western cultural tradition, if not the whole world. The potency and depth of the meaning varies, but, for example, associating the moon with regeneration can be said to be a social trope, similar (although on a more specific plane) to Chomsky's theory of universal linguistic „deep structures' (Lyon 1977: 96).

Does the commonness and ordinariness of the meanings of many of the symbols found in Wilde's fairy tale (such as the oak tree, the moon and roses) negate the Otherness of these symbols? No, because when the context in which they appear is taken into consideration, the symbols take on an alterity by their place within the story.

It is very important to note that Wilde was very well read and was highly perceptive and sensitive to the use of words. Therefore, if something is alluded to in his writing, it is likely that the allusion is meaningful and intentional. Wilde wrote, „all art is at once surface and symbol. Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril. Those who read the symbol do so at their peril' (Wilde 2005: 7).

After discussing the representation of alterity in Schubert's *Moment musical* no. 2 in Chapter 3 and Wilde's „The Nightingale and the Rose' in the current chapter, Chapter 5 will proceed to examine similarities and analogies in Schubert and Wilde's representations of alterity.



## Chapter 5

### Wilde's representation of alterity in relation to Schubert's

#### 5.1 Pleasure and martyrdom

As has been mentioned, Wilde felt that love and pain were intrinsically linked. A thing of beauty was for Wilde something that has passed through the smithy's furnace; he called Romantic art 'a flower of suffering' (Ellmann 1988: 298). The particular bittersweet quality of Schubert's music, music which even at its happiest moments is never far from tragedy, is expressed well by Graham Johnson (2000: 104-105) in his discussion of Schubert's last song, *Die Taubenpost*:

This is a song in the major key that should be happy – at least on paper. But like that similar masterpiece *Frühlingsglaube*, the singer's radiant optimism only serves to remind the listener of the sadness that lies behind the bravery. The determination to believe that a milder spring is just around the corner is admirable, but the music tells us that this optimism is misplaced. The combination of self-delusion and gentle rapture engenders our compassion. [...] Like the nightingale in Wilde's fairy story, there are those who press their hearts to the rose-thorn and sing with exultant happiness, and Schubert is one of them. [...] Thus Schubert seems to engage our pity without asking for it; and the radiance of the music draws us even closer to the hidden suffering.

Like *Die Taubenpost*, Schubert's *Moment musical* no. 2 is a late work, portraying glimpses into Schubert's soul. The realisation of the imminence of death does different things to the music of different composers. Some, like Beethoven and Wagner, become more radical in their music; others, like Schubert, Brahms and Saint-Saëns, become mellower. The peculiarities of late style (*Spätstil*) have been analysed by, amongst others, Theodor Adorno and Edward Said. Schubert's late style has been discussed in 3.2.1.

Kramer and McClary's earlier mentioned association of Schubert's music with sensual pleasure makes the sadness of his later works all the more potent (Kramer 1998: 27; McClary 2007: 187). Wilde's fairy tale is not a late work, nor was Wilde particularly

interested in the concept of death, but ‘The Nightingale and the Rose’ does exhibit a sensual pleasure which is connected to death. Sensuality is important in all of Wilde’s fairy tales; however, in ‘The Nightingale and the Rose’ it is connected to the mysticism of love and suffering so fascinating to Wilde, who states that ‘there is no Mystery so great as Misery’ (Wilde 2005: 112). The overstatement with which the nightingale’s martyrdom is described and the immediate frank understatement of the student’s callousness creates a sense of the bittersweet ‘combination of self-delusion and gentle rapture’ that Johnson ascribes to Schubert’s music.

Martyrdom is seen in both Schubert’s *Moment musical* and Wilde’s fairy tale as an inevitability. The promissory situations created by Schubert and then eternally deferred demonstrate a lacuna that runs through the *Moment musical* and create an eerie sense of displacement. Promissory situations are moments of messianic assurance which are found to be empty and false; the horror of the possibility that the promise can be fulfilled makes the realisation that it will never be kept more terrible. Defeat is so certain that it is shrugged away. Wilde’s nightingale was also a messianic figure, promising redemption to a world (the student) that she mistakenly thought would accept it, not defer it. The nightingale’s martyrdom and death by crucifixion on the rose-tree is transcendental in its nobility, but it is still martyrdom; there is no resurrection for the nightingale and likewise no promise of redemption for the sins of the world. Gauguin saw his artistic predicament in similar terms, noting the following in his journal (Oliver et al 2006: 142-143):

You spend yourself, you spend yourself again; things only have value if you suffer...You climb your Calvary laughing – legs shaking under the weight of the cross – having arrived you grit your teeth and then smiling again you avenge yourself – you spend again.

Gauguin’s words are sarcastic and bitter, and clearly show the irony of the endless cycle endured and perpetuated by the artistic martyr. The very way in which Gauguin (or the artist) chooses to ‘avenge’ himself is indicative of the inevitability of the situation in which he finds himself. It is a tragic paradox: the artist suffers for his art and yet realises that this suffering is nurturing his art, so he accepts and even welcomes the suffering,

thus disqualifying its being termed ‘suffering’. Wilde’s nightingale welcomes death with ‘one last burst of music’, a willing martyr for his cause.

## 5.2 Duplicity and alter ego

Duplicity has been found to be an important concept in Schubert’s second *Moment musical* and Wilde’s ‘The Nightingale and the Rose’. The most important duplicity is that of the redemption-defeat *différance* which has been singled out in this study. In these works by Schubert and Wilde, redemption and defeat are closely related and on occasion the parameters of the two words melt into each other, creating a fascinating counterpoise.

In addition to the redemption-defeat *différance*, Schubert also demonstrates duplicity with his portrayal of the seditious double, the *Doppelgänger* (alter ego), which is linked to enharmonic duplicity (see 3.4.2) in the second *Moment musical*. Wilde’s fairy tale juxtaposes the pagan and the sacred, creating a duplicity which is personified in the ‘spectacular double’ between Dionysus and Christ (Derrida 1998: 189, 194).

Schubert and Wilde exhibited duplicity in their personalities as well: Schubert was described by a friend as having ‘two natures, foreign to each other’; while Wilde was purposefully ambiguous in his dress and appearance, even being described as having androgynous qualities (Ellman 1988: 351; Youens 1992: 12).

## 5.3 Disfigured transfiguration

Schubert’s use of enharmonic tonalities has been shown to be an important aspect of the representation of alterity in the *Moment musical* no. 2. Enharmonic shifts and modulations in the *Moment musical* do not serve the purpose of mere convenience, for example that a key such as E major is easier to work with than is its enharmonic equivalent F<sub>b</sub> major. Rather, the shifts and modulations demonstrate Schubert’s distinct musical deviation from the norm, since they form a seemingly incongruous relation to the keys around them and do not fit with the stylistic norms of Schubert’s time.

The harmonic transfiguration found in the second *Moment musical*, discussed in 3.3.1, is a disfigured transformation, a lift to the shattered sublimity. The concept of disfigured transformation or – even more spectacular – disfigured transfiguration is portrayed symbolically by Pierre Louÿs (1870-1925), who was a close friend of Wilde and to whom Wilde dedicated *Salome* (Ellmann 1988: 393):

Le long du bois couvert de givre, je marchais;  
mes cheveux, devant ma bouche,  
se fleurissaient de petits glaçons,  
et mes sandales étaient lourdes  
de neige fangeuse et tassée.  
Il me dit : ‘Que cherches-tu ?’  
– ‘Je suis la trace du satyre.  
Ses petits pas fourchus alternent  
comme des trous dans un manteau blanc.’

[...] Et avec le fer de sa houe  
il cassa la glace de la source où jadis riaient les naïads.  
Il prenait de grands morceaux froids,  
et les soulevant vers le ciel pâle  
il regardait au travers.<sup>17</sup>

Louÿs’s poem, *Le tombeau des naïads*, was set to music by Debussy in his *Chansons de Bilitis* of 1897 (Bernac 1976: 199-200). The astonishing image of the man looking at the sky through a slate of ice is remarkable: the sky that he sees through the ice is a distortion of the real picture, but yet it is an image of beauty, of transcendence. Likewise, the disfigured enharmonic alterity of Schubert is not a deformation, although it is subversive. Deformation signifies regression, but Schubert’s enharmonic alterity is not regression, only digression. The disfigured transfiguration encountered in Schubert’s oeuvre is mirrored in Wilde’s story when the nightingale enters the highest plane of love and offers her life for the student. The transcendence of her death is disfigured by its uselessness, a

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<sup>17</sup> Along the forest hidden in frost I walked; / my hair hanging in front of my mouth / was glistening with little icicles / and my sandals were heavy / with muddy, pressed snow. / He said to me, ‘For what are you searching?’ / ‘I seek the track of the satyr. / His small, cloven hooves alternate like the holes in a white mantle.’ / [...] And with the iron of his spade / he broke the ice of the spring where the naiads had formerly laughed. / He took some big, cold slates, / and lifting them towards the pale sky / he looked through them.

uselessness more acute because the nightingale did not know about it. The most perfect example of Wilde's disfigured transfiguration is found in his fairy tale 'The Happy Prince', where both disfigurement and transfiguration are portrayed. The Happy Prince offers himself to be deglorified and stripped of all his beauty in order to achieve good; while the Swallow, who helps the Happy Prince, also sacrifices himself in the process. Yet both achieve transcendence (Wilde 2005: 113):

'What a strange thing!' said the overseer of the workmen at the foundry. 'This broken lead heart [of the Happy Prince] will not melt in the furnace. We must throw it away.' So they threw it on a dust-heap where the dead Swallow was also lying.

'Bring me the two most precious things in the city,' said God to one of His Angels; and the Angel brought Him the leaden heart and the dead bird.

'You have rightly chosen,' said God, 'for in my garden of Paradise this little bird shall sing for evermore, and in my city of gold the Happy Prince shall praise me.'

On the surface, the fairy tale is innocent enough to be enjoyed by children, but the disfigured transfiguration, encountered in many of Wilde's fairy tales, suggests a deviation from tradition. It is debatable whether 'The Happy Prince' really concludes with the stereotypical 'happy ever after' ending and whether or not the eternal life at the end of the story is only a delusion. Similarly: is the supreme bravery of the nightingale's self-sacrifice the message of 'The Nightingale and the Rose', or does the selfishness of the brushing away of her martyrdom get the final victory in terms of significance? This question could have multiple answers, but it is certain that the redemption/defeat dichotomy, considering both Wilde's disfigured transfiguration and Schubert's enharmonic deviation, is balanced very precariously, leaning towards defeat.

#### **5.4 Homoerotic representation**

As has been mentioned before, Wilde's sexuality pervades much of his work and is a very important aspect in Wilde studies. Similarly, since Schubert was 'outed' by the new musicology of the 1980s, Schubert studies have been faced with issues regarding his

sexuality and its representation in his music. Problems which arise when researching representation have been discussed in 1.2, 3.1.1 and 4.4.

Homoerotic representation is more difficult to pinpoint unequivocally in Schubert's second *Moment musical* than it is in Wilde's fairy tale, because extrageneric representation is far easier to find and interpret in word-text than it is in music-text. Even though Schubert's music is remarkably feminine in its characteristics, and even though it displays aspects of dissidence and other types of alterity, it is not possible to deduce that these features allude to homosexuality. The possibility that Schubert was homosexual has been construed by his personal life, with the alterity in his music used to back up the theory. The femininity of the fairy tale genre which Wilde chose is reflected in the femininity of Schubert's *Moments musicaux*, since both are naïve, small and fragile and both shun heroic and climactic moments.

It could be argued that certain representations of alterity in the second *Moment musical* cannot merely be described as being feminine in nature. For instance, the deferral of promissory requirements in the work is such an unusual musical feature that it surpasses being branded feminine and requires a name which better indicates its subversive alterity.

In the selected works of Schubert and Wilde, notable aspects of alterity and dissidence have been found within the extrageneric meaning of the texts. Homoerotic allusion abounds in 'The Nightingale and the Rose', and although this in itself is no revelation, the way in which it is hidden and the specifications of the fairy tale genre wherein it is concealed are interesting. Wilde hid his homosexuality – for understandable reasons – to a certain extent, but his works exhibit a complex system of symbols and metaphors with which Wilde conveys homoerotic meaning. These symbols and metaphors, which have been discussed in 4.3 and 4.4, include personae that Wilde often associates with homosexual desire, including Hyacinth, Narcissus, Pan and controversially, Christ.

## 5.5 The embrace of anticlimax

As has been discussed in 3.3.1 and 3.3.2, Schubert avoids climactic moments in the second *Moment musical*. Instead, the promised climax is often deferred, an aspect of the work that is similar to Schubert's deferral of promissory requirements. Both Schubert's deferral of promissory requirements and his refusal of climactic moments have similarities with 'The Nightingale and the Rose'. The Wilde story becomes gradually more soaring and expressive, culminating in the nightingale's death and transfiguration into a red rose. However, immediately thereafter, when the ignoble student returns to the story, the style of the writing changes and becomes deliberately mundane and matter of fact.

The splendour which the tale seems to promise is shattered at the conclusion by the harsh reality of existence, the ultimate triviality of death and the uselessness of sacrifice. The ending of the story comes not only as a surprise, but also as a disappointment. Furthermore, the ending goes against the standard fairy tale's conclusion, which is either that the good person lives happily ever after or that the bad person is somehow punished. Fairy tales, being children's literature, generally illustrate a moral principal in their conclusion: good is rewarded and evil is punished. However, Wilde's fairy tale does not subscribe to this. In 'The Nightingale and the Rose', good is not rewarded nor is evil punished. The fact that the professor's daughter does not accept the student's offer of the rose cannot be viewed as a punishment for the student, since his reaction to the rejection demonstrates that his 'love' of the girl was insignificant even to him. It would have been a reward for the nightingale had the girl accepted the rose, but this does not happen.

This aspect of Wilde's story, the disobedience to the standard prescriptions of the fairy tale genre, makes the fairy tale balance precariously on the edge of dissidence, since the unsympathetic realism of the ending does not fit within the realm of a fairy tale. Likewise, Schubert's promissory deferrals also suggest something distinctly subversive, as Cone (1982: 239-240) states with regard to Schubert's *Moment musical* no. 6:

As I apprehend the work, it dramatizes the injection of a strange, unsettling element into an otherwise peaceful situation. At first ignored or suppressed, that element persistently returns. It not only makes itself at home but even takes over the direction of events in order to reveal unsuspected possibilities. When the normal state of affairs eventually returns, the originally foreign element seems to have been completely assimilated. But that appearance is deceptive. The element has not been tamed; it bursts out with even greater force, revealing itself as basically inimical to its surroundings, which it proceeds to demolish.

The ‘unsettling element’ that Cone writes about is a promissory note in Schubert’s sixth *Moment musical* (discussed in 3.3.1). Cone’s words might seem rather harsh when considering that he is describing a purely musical occurrence, and furthermore, with a seemingly innocent early Romantic piano miniature. However, the strength of his argument demonstrates that palpable extrageneric meaning can be extracted from a music-text. Similar to Schubert’s *Moments musicaux*, Wilde’s fairy tales have an apparent simplicity which an archaeological investigation reveals to be the mere surface of a labyrinthine system of subversive, sexual and mystic symbolism.



## Chapter 6

### Conclusions

#### 6.1 Answering the secondary research questions

Before the main research question is answered, attention will be paid to the four secondary questions.

##### 6.1.1 Is there a representation of alterity to be found in Schubert's *Moment musical* no. 2 and Wilde's 'The Nightingale and the Rose', and if so, does it stem from their homosexual inclinations, their syphilitic infections, both, or neither?

Chapters 3 and 4 show that Schubert and Wilde distinctly represent alterity in the *Moment musical* no. 2 and 'The Nightingale and the Rose'. This alterity is formed by various types of dissidence.

It is entirely possible to represent dissidence in music without a word-text, but the meaning of this dissidence is far easier to interpret if a word-text is present. The incidents of Schubert's alterity in the *Moment musical* no. 2 are thus difficult to pinpoint. Cone (1982: 240-241) theorises that the cause of Schubert's alterity was his syphilis; also, Schubert's music's feminine qualities have been noted since 1838, when Schumann commented on it in a review (see 3.1.4) (Gramit 1993: 72). This study has deduced that, in his *Moment musical* no. 2, Schubert's musical alterity seems to stem from both his possible homosexuality and his syphilitic infection, as the dissidence he portrays in the second *Moment musical* might result from both his sexual difference and from the alienation he experienced by having syphilis.

Considering the cultural milieu of the Victorian era in which Wilde lived, much of the symbolism in 'The Nightingale and the Rose' was dissident at the time of its creation.

Wilde's alterity was predominantly a representation of his homosexuality and of various ideals associated with his sexuality, such as references to homoerotic icons from mythology (such as Ganymede and Hyacinth), to anti-morality, and to Wilde's self-made Christian heresies. In 'The Nightingale and the Rose' these dissidences are all the more acute, since the genre is apparently that of a children's fairy tale.

Although admittedly a controversial theory, it could be hypothesised that Schubert's alterity was caused by active syphilis and latent homosexuality, while Wilde's alterity was caused by latent syphilis and active homosexuality. Alterity does not need a cause or reason for its existence, but possible triggers should be considered.

### **6.1.2 How are the concepts of defeat, dissidence and redemption represented in Schubert's *Moment musical no. 2* and Wilde's 'The Nightingale and the Rose'?**

Schubert and Wilde have been shown to portray defeat most importantly by their embrace of anticlimax. Their works demonstrate a shunning away from climactic moments, even at times when there has been a buildup of intensity and a climax is expected or required (see 5.3). Schubert also illustrates defeat by major to minor shifts, the deferral of promissory situations and modulatory captivity; while Wilde has been found to depict defeat by disfigured transfiguration, the metaphor of the Garden of Eden, and the futility of heroism.

Dissidence is one of the key pointers towards alterity. Both Schubert and Wilde had notable aspects of dissidence in their lives, most importantly for this study their syphilitic infection and homosexuality (possible homosexuality in the case of Schubert). Both Schubert and Wilde have been shown to have reflected their dissidence in their art. Schubert's melodic subversion, ambiguous versification, and rhythmic and metric peculiarities are examples, as are Wilde's subversive symbolic agenda (which incorporates considerable homosexual symbolism) and his formation of a self-made Christian heresy.

The portrayal of defeat is closely connected to the way in which Schubert and Wilde represent redemption, which is one of the reasons why the deconstructive readings of this study are based on a redemption-defeat *différance*. Schubert and Wilde's quest for redemption was a longing for the unattainable and since their redemption was unattainable, defeat was inevitable. Schubert's use of major to minor shifts, deferral of promissory situations and modulatory captivity – aspects of his representation of defeat – are all related to his depiction of redemption, as is the proclivity towards weak modulations and his rejection of heroism and musical masculinity. The figure of Christ is Wilde's choice symbol or redemption. However, Wilde saw Christ as having been defeated on the cross and thus displaying a longing for the unattainable similar to what Wilde depicts in 'The Nightingale and the Rose' (see 4.4.2). Wilde's portrayal of redemption is also linked to his favourite interplay between love and pain, as can be seen in the numerous associations between love and pain (and similarly, beauty and suffering) to be found in 'The Nightingale and the Rose'.

### **6.1.3 Do Schubert and Wilde present the idea of 'Artist as Martyr' and/or 'Artist as Messiah', and if so, how?**

This study has found that Wilde presents both the idea of 'Artist as Martyr' and that of 'Artist as Messiah'. However, Schubert does not categorically demonstrate either idea in the second *Moment musical*, although he speaks of himself as a martyr in *Mein Traum*, a prose work he wrote in 1822 and which is discussed in 3.1.2.<sup>18</sup>

The image of the artist as a martyr and messianic figure is a distinctly 19<sup>th</sup>-century concept, although similar concepts existed from the time of the Gnostic apocrypha (Kris & Kurz 1979: 53; Oliver et al 2006: 139). The idea of the artist as martyr and messiah was well formed in Wilde's time and Wilde clearly illustrated the concept in 'The Nightingale and the Rose'; it is perhaps the most important message of the story. This

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<sup>18</sup> 'Sieh, vernichtet liegt in Staube / Unerhörtem Gram zum Raube, / Meines Lebens Martergang / Nahend ew'gem Untergang'. Schubert, from *Mein Gebet* (Einstein 1951: 247.) See, destroyed lies in dust, / Robbed by unimaginable grief, / The martyr's path of my life / Nearing eternal defeat.

fairytale is not the only place where Wilde portrays the idea of the artist as martyr and messiah; the concept saturates his writings, from *The Portrait of Dorian Gray* through his late masterpiece, *De Profundis*, in which Wilde explicitly depicts himself as an incarnation of Christ.

Although Schubert endured great tragedy and personal hardships and saw himself as an artist martyred by society, he did not musically suggest any connection with the idea of the artist as martyr and messiah in his second *Moment musical*.

## 6.2 Answering the main research question

This mini-dissertation attempts to answer the following main research question:

How is Schubert's alterity represented in his second *Moment musical*, how is Wilde's alterity represented in 'The Nightingale and the Rose', and in which ways are these representations analogous?

This question consists of three parts, each of which will be considered in the answer.

In the hermeneutic analysis of Schubert's second *Moment musical* the representation of alterity has been shown to include the following:

- ambiguous versification;
- deferral of promissory requirements;
- enharmonic duplicity;
- formal, harmonic and rhythmic idiosyncrasy;
- melodic subversion;
- modulatory captivity;
- a proclivity towards weak modulations; and
- a rejection of heroism and musical masculinity.

The cultural milieu in which Schubert lived, the musical tradition into which he was born and the overwhelming shadow of Beethoven would have imbued Schubert with a specific kind of musical influence. However, the alterity in Schubert's work is far more than the result of a unique compositional voice. The above list of musical representations of alterity clearly show a deviation from the norm, not in an insignificant and unintended way, but to an extent that the deviation requires a more sinister term: dissidence. Dissidence signifies opposition to authority, while deviation is the road less taken. In short, this study has found that Schubert represents alterity in the second *Moment musical* by the use of purposefully dissident musical procedures.

In Wilde's 'The Nightingale and the Rose' the representation of alterity has been shown to include the following:

- an anti-moralist agenda;
- decadence in Biblical subversion;
- disfigured transfiguration;
- disobedience to a traditional fairy tale ending;
- homoerotic symbolisation, most importantly including Hyacinth, Narcissus and Pan;
- the juxtaposing of the pagan and the sacred;
- the portrayal of Wilde's self-made Christian heresy;
- the union between love and suffering; and
- Wilde's choice of the fairy tale genre, with its femininity, naivety and restrictions to heroism; and
- Wilde/Artist as martyr and Christ/Messiah.

The particularities of the Victorian fairy tale genre, together with the fact that Wilde wrote his stories perhaps primarily for children, lend a sinister aftertaste to 'The Nightingale and the Rose'. This mysterious aspect is enhanced when it is considered that the basic narrative of the story has been shown to lie at the nexus of a broad variety of similar narratives – from medieval myths and Persian legends to Chaucer, Keats and

Heine. Many of the symbols in Wilde's fairy tale, such as the narcissus, the pomegranate, and the persona of Christ feature in much of Wilde's writings, and Wilde's friends and admirers could have been aware of the hidden meanings and allusions the author lent to these symbols.

The comparison between the representations of alterity in Schubert's second *Moment musical* and Wilde's 'The Nightingale and the Rose' has been shown to include the following similarities:

- duplicity (enharmonic ambiguity in Schubert, and a Self/Other juxtaposition in Wilde);
- homoerotic representation (a proclivity towards weak modulations and a rejection of heroism and musical masculinity in Schubert, and homosexual symbolism in Wilde);
- the juxtaposition of opposites (the bittersweet combination of self-delusion and gentle rapture in Schubert, and the union between love and pain, beauty and suffering, and creation and martyrdom in Wilde);
- a refusal of climactic moments, showing an unrequited longing for the unattainable (the deferral of promissory requirements and modulatory captivity in Schubert, and disfigured transfiguration in Wilde); and
- stylistic dissidence (formal, harmonic, melodic and rhythmic dissidence in Schubert, and disobedience to the fairy tale genre's requirements in Wilde).

In keeping with Lyotard (2003: 259), who defines postmodernism as 'incredulity toward metanarratives', the answering of the main research question remains fragmented, since it is not necessary to answer the question with a definitive sentence, or even with a conclusive answer. As has been stated in 1.2, this study is of a speculative and exploratory nature: the journey is perhaps of more importance than the destination.

### 6.3 Recommendations for further research

The most obvious connection between Wilde and music is *Salome*. Wilde completed the play in 1892 and since then a large amount of music has been based or inspired by the work. Strauss based his opera *Salome* (1905) on Hedwig Lachmann's German translation of Wilde's play. Other notable settings have been an opera of the same name by Antoine Mariotte (1908), a drama without words entitled *La tragédie de Salomé* by Aloys Schmitt (1907), and a ballet by Peter Maxwell Davies (1978). At the time of its creation, Wilde's play was seen as being the epitome of decadence. Much has been written about the representation of decadence and eroticism in Strauss's opera. However, research into the representation of alterity and dissidence in Wilde's *Salome* and in early musical settings of *Salome* would lead to fascinating results (Ellmann 1988: 363; Kennedy 1999: 759).

'The Nightingale and the Rose' is not the only fairy tale by Wilde which shows considerable affinity with the music of Schubert, or in which Wilde's alterity is represented. *A House of Pomegranates*, Wilde's second set of fairy tales, has long been a source of controversy amongst critics, due to its obscure symbolism and message. However, it offers a notable critique on Wilde's concept of the affinity between beauty and suffering, happiness and sorrow, and love and pain. As mentioned previously, Graham Johnson (2000: 104-105) writes that Schubert 'seems to engage our pity without asking for it; and the radiance of the music draws us even closer to the hidden suffering'. Schubert, stout and dwarfish, reminds one of the Dwarf in Wilde's 'The Birthday of the Infanta', from *A House of Pomegranates* (Wilde 2005: 97): '*Mi bella Princesca*, your funny little dwarf will never dance again. It is a pity, for he is so ugly that he might have made the King smile'. The juxtaposition of beauty and suffering in the works of Schubert and Wilde is a topic which deserves further research.

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