

Berlioz, Love, and *Béatrice et Bénédicte*

J. P. E. HARPER-SCOTT

PART I: LOVE IN BERLIOZ AND SHAKESPEARE: A LOVE THAT CANNOT BE SYMBOLIZED

The popular perception of Berlioz's idea of love is perhaps encapsulated by an Internet meme that imagines the composer of the *Symphonie fantastique* addressing a message to his beloved in the manner of a 2012 pop song: "Hey, I just met you, and this is crazy, but here's a symphony about me overdosing on opium and murdering you, so marry me maybe."¹ The intoxicating fancy of that symphony's program is certainly an eye-catching opening to most listeners' acquaintance with Berlioz, as it has been since 1830. It seems to

espouse an attitude toward love utterly at odds with our generally, thankfully, more mundane world. But it is not entirely representative of Berlioz's way of thinking, which instead took his lifelong engagement with Shakespeare—an obsession already driving the *Symphonie fantastique* through the *idée fixe* of the Shakespearean actress, Harriet Smithson²—as the primary source for his concept of romantic love and its essential contribution to the construction of individual human subjects.

This treatment is most clearly perceptible in two expansive works, the "dramatic symphony" *Roméo et Juliette* (1839) and the opera *Béatrice et Bénédicte* (1860–62), the latter of which is the principal focus of this article. In both source plays, casting off words is an abiding concern.

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¹The meme can be seen at <http://www.quickmeme.com/crazy-berlioz/>. The song "Call Me Maybe," by Carly Rae Jepsen, has a chorus with the lyrics: "Hey, I just met you, / And this is crazy, / But here's my number, / So call me, maybe?"

²Shakespeare is brought into the narrative even more strongly in the symphony's "sequel," *Le Retour à la vie*, which ends with a fantasy overture on *The Tempest*.

That is to say that the escape from language, from the symbolic order, is the central goal. In *Romeo and Juliet*, the words to shed are the names “Montague” and “Capulet,” which cause the young lovers pain—and their lives. Plays, however, have a particular problem in evading the symbolic order, since it is in language that they are composed. But a musical treatment can dispense with language, and in the love scene of his score (No. 3), Berlioz explicitly presents the retreat of the symbolic order on stage. The movement opens with revelers leaving the Capulet ball, singing goodnight to each other and exchanging a retreating series of cheerful sounds that, however, signify nothing: “tralalala!” That done, the symbolic order of language disappears. Alone with only music to “speak,” the lovers do not have to do as Shakespeare’s do and attempt to argue their symbolic away. For a moment here, as again in their moment of death, they experience (we are asked to believe) a life and a love beyond its grip.

In his setting of *Much Ado*, too, though in a less direct way, Berlioz dwells on this notion of the escape from language—or more specifically the way that ideas of love are, to put it in Lacanian idiom, “quilted” by the linguistic sign *marriage*. The “quilting point,” which radically reconfigures the symbolic, is like the moment in a mystery novel when a collection of clues which could mean almost anything—“a wisp of rubber and a small object made of wood”—receive their correct interpretation: it was the investigating policeman whodunit! The detective here is as witty, as clever, as Beatrice is when Benedick upbraids her for wordplay: “Thou has frightened the word out of his right sense, so forcible is thy wit.”³ In this moment the floating signifiers are fixed by a new quilting point. The bit of rubber can no longer be thought to be part of a washing-up glove, an elastic band, or a condom, but *can only be* the remnant of a joke balloon used to create a “scream” suggesting that the victim was alive

³*Much Ado about Nothing*, V.2.50–51. All line references in this article are to *Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. Stanley Wells et al., 2nd edn. (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005).

later than he in fact was. The quilting point reveals the identity of the murderer.⁴

In *Roméo et Juliette* the lovers seek an impossible resolution in the constitutive “outside” of the symbolic order they cannot personally escape—a resolution at a point “beyond interpellation,” as Mladen Dolar names the space outside of ideological configurations. “Could one say that love is what we find beyond interpellation?” he asks, and the question resonates widely through Berlioz’s entire output.⁵

LOCATING THE PARTICULAR IN THE UNIVERSAL

It is important to note immediately that a vision of love “beyond interpellation” does not equate to the post-sexual revolution, “anything goes” attitude. The claim of a number of contemporary theorists is that the “anything goes” conception is a product of late capitalism, an insistence that we should be free to choose from a smorgasbord of sexual activities, to which new identities and perversions can be added at any time, without any of them being considered more universal than any other (the choice between options is free, but there is no freedom not to choose). According to what the philosopher Alain Badiou calls “democratic materialist” logic, that is, the ideology of the West since the fall of the Berlin Wall, our sexual universe has in this way dispensed with its tonic key (the musical metaphor is his), leading to “a deep desire for atony”: “To ‘deconstruct’ sexual difference as a binary opposition, to replace it with a quasi-continuous multiple of constructions of gender—this is the ideal of a sexuality finally freed from metaphysics. . . . [But] this infinite gradation . . . does nothing but uphold, in the element of sex, the founding axiom of democratic materialism: there are only

⁴The example here is taken from Agatha Christie’s mystery novel *Hercule Poirot’s Christmas* (1935). My apologies to anyone who might have been planning to read it.

⁵Mladen Dolar, “Beyond Interpellation,” *Qui parle* 6/2 (1993): 87. Dolar’s answer to this question is ultimately affirmative: “love is one of the mechanisms” for achieving the escape from symbolic limitations (*ibid.*, 92). This conviction is also a driving force of the current article.

bodies and languages, there is no truth.”⁶ Badiou explicitly does not dispute the multiplicity of forms of love, but he denies the liberal claim that, in a world of so many voices, none can be universalized: the claim that there are only bodies and languages, only points of view, no “truth,” no totality to be discerned in it. For Badiou, each instance of love is potentially universalizable in the sense that, irrespective of the identity of its participants, its coordinates can map an uncharted world for any of its witnesses. We do not need to share the race, gender, or age of a “Two” (Badiou’s term for a truth-bearing relationship of love) in order to respond directly to the truth that their love presents to us.⁷ His claim is not that *the love of a fictional or real-life Two* is immortal, but that *love itself*, the love we all experience, *qua* truth, has a certain “excess over itself.” Rather than simply providing joy for two people, it amounts to “the creation of a world” that has a universal truth-giving function.⁸

The particularities of *Béatrice et Bénédict*, Berlioz’s setting of Shakespeare’s most conventional representation of the marital model of love, seem unpromising as the basis for the kind of radical, universalizable love of a Two that Badiou has in mind. The opera seems, at first blush, rather a conventional work. Perhaps the lack of critical interest in it stems partly from a sense that it is ultimately trifling. D. Kern Holoman calls it a “bonbon,” being “light and funny, one long essay in triplets and triple meters and guitars and the other joys of Italy, dominated from the opening bars by scherzo-like music.”⁹ Hugh Macdonald concurs: “This short opera is anything but problematical or puzzling.”¹⁰ I want to suggest, by con-

trast, that although *Béatrice et Bénédict* is certainly not as consistently rewarding, musically, as *Les Troyens*, its treatment of the theme of love makes it more serious than it might appear to be.

One clue to this seriousness comes from perhaps the greatest of Berlioz’s many recastings of Shakespeare. To the best of my knowledge, no one has yet considered this change to be worthy of comment. In the opera’s closing moments, *Béatrice* and *Bénédict* effect a resolution to G major by singing together:

So let us adore each other and, whatever they say,
Be mad for a moment!
Let’s love!
I sense that my pride is resigned to this misfortune.
Sure of hating each other, let’s take hands!
Yes, for today the truce is signed;
We’ll return to being enemies tomorrow.¹¹

The assembled crowd echoes the lovers’ “demain, demain!” in five measures of pure G major, and then, after eight more quicksilver measures—and two further G-major cadences—the opera is over. Shakespeare too ends with a note of returning violence “tomorrow.” A messenger enters and announces that the villain Don John has been captured and brought back for judgment, and Benedick replies: “Think not on him till tomorrow, I’ll devise thee brave punishments for him. Strike up, pipers” (V.4.126–27; the stage direction “*Dance, and exeunt*” follows immediately in V.4.128). But the violence here is *external* to the marriage ceremony. It is a narrative necessity, and a social one, since the villain must be seen to be punished within the confines of the play, even if only in the play’s “tomorrow.” By contrast, the promised violence in Berlioz’s opera is *internal* to the marriage, a return to war. The implication is that the dramatic consummation is no more an outbreak of peace than a football match in no-man’s-land was around Christmas 1914.

⁶Alain Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event*, 2, trans. Alberto Toscano (London: Continuum, 2009), 420–21.

⁷Badiou actually gives the privileged position in his exposition of love’s relation to truth to Berlioz’s *Les Troyens* in his “Amorous Example: From Virgil to Berlioz,” *ibid.*, 28–33.

⁸*Ibid.*, 30.

⁹D. Kern Holoman, *Berlioz* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 551 and 540.

¹⁰Hugh Macdonald, *Berlioz* (London: Dent, 1982), 183. The only significant extended scholarship on the opera is still Julian Rushton, “Berlioz’s Swan-Song: Towards a Criticism of *Béatrice et Bénédict*,” *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 109 (1982): 105–18.

¹¹“Adorons-nous donc, et quoi qu’on en dise, / Un instant soyons fous! / Aimons-nous! / Je sens à ce malheur ma fierté résigné. / Sûrs de nous haïr, donnons-nous la main! / Oui, pour aujourd’hui la trêve est signée; / Nous redeviendrons ennemis demain.”

Are these final words simply a joke, or should we take them seriously? It might seem an odd question. Does anyone really believe that marriage will be entirely without fighting? Of course not. But while the conventional notion of marriage can certainly bear the idea that skirmishes will arise from time to time to blight its calm, that antagonism is, crucially, *not celebrated as the principal glory of the relationship*: it is only borne as something which the positive aspects of marriage can ultimately triumph over. So perhaps the line is a joke: Béatrice and Bénédict are just *saying* that they will be back to fighting tomorrow, and the crowd is just *humoring* them. The audience is certainly already in the mood for jokes, since this is a very funny play (though the opera is less so), and it seems natural that we should judge the lovers' earlier scorn for love to have been self-deluding jest. "But what if we do not dismiss their own words?" Stephen Greenblatt asks in another context (to which I shall return).¹² What if there is at least a *small possibility that this is meant seriously*, that this concluding "joke" is an "excess" to their relationship, in the sense in which the truth of love is a universalizing excess to the Two of Badiou's philosophy?

I would like to entertain the possibility that Berlioz's lovers are faking their marital promises today but will genuinely return to their "merry war of words," a rejection of marriage, on a "tomorrow" that, by their own exultant testimony, the crowd is also looking forward to. If this surmise is to underpin a compelling interpretation of love in *Béatrice et Bénédict*, we will require some collateral evidence. But it is not hard to find, unless we are of a mind to ignore some deeply moving, all-too-human psychological suffering expressed in the music. To prepare the ground, it will be necessary (in Part I) to tease out the cultural themes and psychological implications of the play Berlioz chose to adapt. Ultimately, by reflecting on different forms of violence in the play and the opera, the argument will turn to Shakespeare's and

Berlioz's radically different engagements with the "fundamental fantasy"—Lacan's name for the human subject's relation to a fantasized lost object that is supposed to inhere in the sociocultural big Other. The first step will be to examine the extent to which the marriages in *Much Ado* and *Béatrice et Bénédict*, together with critical responses to them, frame the difference between convention and resistance in social relations. Thereafter (in part II) I will turn to an extended analysis of the music.

CONVENTION, RESISTANCE,
AND SURPLUS-JOUISSANCE IN
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Of the two plots in Shakespeare's play, one—concerning the slandering of the virtuous Hero by her fiancé Claudio—is derived from his sources (principally Ariosto and Bandello), and one—concerning two scorners of love who subsequently succumb to its conventional expression in marriage—is original.¹³ Berlioz was not alone in finding the second story, concerning Beatrice and Benedick, the more interesting of the two. Julian Rushton suggests that, because the full scenario Berlioz wrote in 1852 (which bears little relation to the completed opera) also has little space for Hero and Claudio, we may conclude that he never had any interest in what twentieth-century criticism has tended to consider the main plot.¹⁴ Yet Hero, like Beatrice, does have a crucially enhanced role in Berlioz's hands, as an embodiment of the fantasy of marital bliss—unburdened of its traumatic preliminaries—that Beatrice and Benedick are, in Shakespeare, ultimately expected to enjoy. In order to keep Shakespeare's and Berlioz's characters differentiated, I will refer to them respectively as Beatrice and Béatrice, Benedick and Bénédict, Hero and Héro wherever possible.

If *convention* is the watchword for Hero and Claudio, then—at least until they are successfully tricked into desiring marriage—*resistance*

¹²Stephen Greenblatt, "Introduction to *Much Ado about Nothing*," *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York: Norton, 2008), 1412.

¹³See Charles T. Prouty, *The Sources of Much Ado about Nothing: A Critical Study, Together with the Text of Peter Beverley's Ariodanto and Ieneura* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950).

¹⁴Rushton, "Berlioz's Swan-Song," 107.

is the watchword for Beatrice and Benedick. There is never any doubt that they are sexually attracted to each other. From the start they confess, either to others or themselves, precisely that. But despite being attracted to one another, both are passionately committed to remaining legally single. The final victory of convention over them, which all but the most restless sexual revolutionaries in the audience are expected to celebrate, is confirmed by the only explicit instruction in a Shakespeare play for a general dance of the company, the dance being a "symbol of order," and specifically that of marriage, "society's divinely sanctioned means of controlling and directing sexual relations."¹⁵

There are at least two possible accounts of *Much Ado's* transition from the opening tension between convention and rebellion to the unanimous submission to marriage at the end. On the first, relatively conservative account, marriage is beyond question a good thing. From the second, feminist perspective, marriage per se is an efficient tool of patriarchal authority, regulating the exogamous exchange of women (a father sells his goods to a husband, to the general good of community cohesion and the perpetuation of economic and social power for men), but it can be revolutionized so that, the economic element being removed and certain freedoms for women built in, marriage becomes something that even cynics can valorize.¹⁶ For Charles T. Prouty, an example of the first kind of scholar (the "old historicist" or "formalist" kind), what sets the couples apart is not so much a different attitude toward marriage as

the formal hallmark of a loving relationship, but rather their contrary views of the *content* of that marital bond. Significantly, Prouty designates both attitudes as "realistic" precisely because both ultimately fail to question the institution of marriage.

As Hero and Claudio represent one aspect of realism, so Benedick and Beatrice represent another. The former follow the way of the world where marriages are arranged by patrons or parents in contrast with the idyllic unions which literary convention followed exclusively. On the other hand Benedick and Beatrice are interested in an emotion which is real and a relationship based on reality instead of convention. . . . For one couple, love is a business arrangement, for the other, a real emotion.¹⁷

Claire McEachern, an example of the second kind of scholar (the "new historicist"), also draws attention to the conventionality of both couples, but she focuses specifically on the seventeenth-century context rather than assuming (as Prouty does) a universality to the institution of marriage. McEachern suggests that Beatrice and Benedick put on the conventional pose of shrew and misogynist "as a form of disguise or protective camouflage, or as a defence against the greater conventionality of being lovelorn. . . . Overall these gender stereotypes come across as rather archly staged roles; we can sense Shakespeare's nod to the conventional postures, but also his mockery of them."¹⁸

McEachern suggests that even Hero and Claudio represent a feminist revision by Shakespeare of his sources, one that deemphasizes the element of economic exchange between father and husband. The evidence of genuine love between the couple thus suppos-

¹⁵*Much Ado about Nothing*, ed. J. R. Mulryne (Woodbury, NY: Barron's Educational Series, 1965), 24.

¹⁶Marriage was the critical moment of disempowerment for Elizabethan women: "English women were not under the full range of crushing constraints that afflicted women in some countries in Europe. Foreign visitors were struck by their relative freedom, as shown, for example, by the fact that respectable women could venture unchaperoned into the streets and attend the theater. Single women, whether widowed or unmarried, could, if they were of full age, inherit and administer land, make a will, sign a contract, possess property, sue and be sued, without a male guardian or proxy. *But married women had no such rights under the common law*" (Stephen Greenblatt, "General Introduction," in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, 10, my italics).

¹⁷Prouty, *The Sources of Much Ado about Nothing*, 63. For Léonato, the commitment to marriage, by whomever, is not as "realistic" as it is for Prouty. Straight after Hero and Claudio are married, in another of Berlioz's interesting interpolations, here to the spoken dialogue between Nos. 13 and 14 (*New Berlioz Edition* [hereafter *NBE*] 3, 270), the friar tells Léonato that he has been asked to prepare a second contract ("J'ai été requis pour préparer un deuxième contrat; le voici"). Léonato asks who here feels drawn by the fantasy of marriage ("Qui se sentirait ici la fantaisie de se marier?"). I shall return to this point.

¹⁸Claire McEachern, "Introduction," in *Much Ado about Nothing*, ed. Claire McEachern (London: Arden, 2006), 35.

edly demonstrates Shakespeare's gentle critique of his society's conventional views of marriage.¹⁹ But for McEachern Beatrice and Benedick are even more admirable. Instead of seeing them as dupes tricked into marriage by the cunning of their friends, "an alternative vision might find the two in full possession of their own emotions, having united over and beyond the ways in which their community has prompted them."²⁰

In essence, and despite their differences of motivation, these arguments amount to the claim that the two plots trace different routes to same end. Both arguments depend on a fundamental sympathy for the institution of marriage. Even in the carefully nuanced reading of McEachern, the implication is that ultimate capitulation to the social pressure to enter into that institution is fine, *as long as there was some initial resistance*.

What the two positions share, in their affirmations of marital bliss, is what Slavoj Žižek calls the "libidinal profit, the 'surplus-enjoyment,'"²¹ on which both depend. The surplus is generated by converting pain to pleasure—the "hysterical satisfaction of snatching a little piece of *jouissance* away from the Master."²² The particular style of feminist argument adopted by McEachern and others, which demonstrates how Shakespeare articulates and then critiques a patriarchal bias, does not threaten seriously to harm the prevailing ideology. It does not escape the "realism" of its predecessor. Instead, it increases the receiver's appreciation of the artwork by providing surplus-*jouissance*. This effect has nothing to do with the critic's intentions; it is a structural feature of the form of the arguments. My contention in the present article is that in *Béatrice et Bénédict* Berlioz avoids this outcome. To show how this is achieved, the argument must be taken beyond new-historical readings of

Much Ado, useful though they are in bringing Renaissance ideology into focus, for the simple reason that such readings tend to downplay the potency of modes of resistance.

THREE KINDS OF VIOLENCE IN THE STORY

Žižek distinguishes three forms of violence that are useful guides to clarifying the themes of both *Much Ado* and *Béatrice et Bénédict*.²³ The first, *subjective violence*, is the familiar sort of physical violence, represented right at the start of the play and opera by the war from which the principal men have returned victorious (celebration of this victory provides the text for the choral No. 2 in the opera). The second kind, *symbolic violence*, is the violence of language. Although I shall have much more to say about the psychology of this violence, suffice it here to say that, most immediately, symbolic violence becomes manifest as the "merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and [Beatrice]" in Shakespeare (I.1.59), which Berlioz's spoken text calls, rather nicely, a war of epigrams ("une guerre d'épigrammes"; *NBE* 3, 59). Symbolic violence is also evinced by the damage done to Claudio and Hero, and potentially to all of Messinian society, by the slanders of Don John. The third type, *systemic violence*, is the means by which a system of economics, politics, culture, society, and so on enables its own smooth functioning. This is a violence of proxies and purblindness, of centrally taken decisions having powerful effects on remote individuals, or of cultural norms with neither a clear origin nor a single human Master (marriage, for instance) exercising diffuse but massive pressure that punishes lack of conformity with pariahhood or subjective violence.

A. D. Nuttall traces the transition from subjective to symbolic violence in *Much Ado* in a study that returns to the early-twentieth-century humanist tradition of Shakespeare scholarship.²⁴ Nuttall sees the "merry war" as both a

¹⁹See Claire McEachern, "Fathering Herself: A Source Study of Shakespeare's Feminism," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39/3 (1988): 269–90.

²⁰McEachern, "Introduction," *Much Ado about Nothing*, 50.

²¹Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies* (rpt. London: Verso, 2008), 56.

²²*Ibid.*, 57.

²³Slavoj Žižek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections* (New York: Picador, 2008).

²⁴A. D. Nuttall, *Shakespeare the Thinker* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).

significant transformation of Benedick's previous existence and also the kind of relationship that can be expressed, at least initially, only in terms of war. Already by act I, sc. 1, Nuttall writes, "Beatrice is . . . as important as—more important than—the war from which [Benedick] has recently emerged. . . . In the courtly love literature of the Middle Ages the language of knightly service was re-applied in the sphere of courtship. But Benedick's 'I am engag'd' [to Beatrice, when she confirms her belief that Claudio has wronged Hero] is neither Ovidian nor courtly. It is absolute commitment—faith—expressed in the language of a world he has lost forever."²⁵ This sense that the transition is quickly effected is enhanced by Shakespeare's attentive control of bellicose language (closely followed by Berlioz in act I, sc. 3, *NBE* 3, 59).²⁶

In Shakespeare, it is fair to say, the war between Beatrice and Benedick is over as soon as it appears before us. As Nuttall observes, Beatrice's expression of curiosity in the fate of "Signor Mountanto" betrays her interest in his safety, and although she carps "I wonder that you will still be talking, Signor Benedick. Nobody marks you," (I.1.110–11) at least one person is marking him: Beatrice herself. The pair are, then, "electrically aware of each other from the start."²⁷ After comparing their bickering to the verbal abuse flung between teenagers "with much laughter," or the commonplace indication "g.s.o.h." (good sense of humor) in personal ads, as evidence of a symbolically violent

larval stage of courtship, Nuttall finally relates the posturing of Beatrice and Benedick more generally to certain kinds of flirtatious lovers. The way Shakespeare presents his scornful lovers is "shrewd social observation. It is as if baiting and merriment serve a useful purpose in the preliminary phase of courtship but can become counter-productive if they harden into a fixed habit. . . . It has to be possible for the parties to move out of this bantering, this careful sparring at arm's length, if the union it all serves is ever to be attained. It is hard to make complicated jokes and to kiss at the same time."²⁸

This is persuasive, but it is important not to miss the fact that while Nuttall may be right about the tendency of some (though certainly not all) flirtatious behavior to depend on railery, he fails to establish that *marriage* is, specifically, the logical next step. Certainly joking must stop for kissing to begin, but only the most absurdly sententious would insist on marriage as a preliminary to that. The necessity of slipping from an acknowledgement that the baiting "must" come to an end to an unwitting acceptance of the cultural pressure to marry is by no means demonstrated by Nuttall's argument. Rather, in accepting the logic of the kiss there is a risk that we let the more arbitrary normative pressure to marry to slip in by the back door as a "realistic" consequence. To return for a moment to Berlioz's concluding promise that the "truce" is only temporary, it is obvious that this idea, but not the idea of marriage, could sit comfortably with Nuttall's proposition. Kissing—sex—may happen on and off, separated by long periods of antagonism that may even serve to sharpen the desire for the kiss. The fighting, taken as the basis of the relationship, is what makes it edgy and sexy. Indeed, Beatrice and Benedick have been on intimate terms before, and the sexual frisson between them in the course of the play is perhaps a reprise of the foreplay to an unseen earlier trysting truce. But while marriage can "realistically" cope with the occasional squabble, its basic form is peaceful, its basic expression loving. One model therefore gives sym-

²⁵*Ibid.*, 224–25.

²⁶The first and second occurrences of the word "war" are voiced by Beatrice, both in jest: "I pray you, is Signor Montanto returned from the wars, or no?" (I.1.29–30; Berlioz has "Veuillez me dire, je vous prie, si le seigneur Matamore est de retour, ou non, de la guerre") and "how many hath he killed and eaten in these wars?" (I.1.40–41; not in Berlioz). The Messenger replies that "He hath done good service, lady, in these wars" (I.1.46–47; "Lui aussi a, dans cette guerre, rendu d'importants services"), and to make sense of this banter Leonato refers to the "merry war." After that, aside from two mentions by Claudio (in his speech beginning I.1.276, not retained by Berlioz), war is never mentioned again: it has been entirely transmuted into the Beatrice/Benedick relationship, ceased to be military and become amatory (the swift application of the synonyms "skirmish" [I.1.60; "escarmouche"] and "conflict" [I.1.62; "rencontre"]) complete the re-definition, and are never uttered again).

²⁷Nuttall, *Shakespeare the Thinker*, 223.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 225–26.

bolic violence a heightened erotic charge; the other draws social comfort from “realistic” systemic violence.

The difference in the relationship between Beatrice/Benedick and Béatrice/Bénédict rests primarily on the final outcome of a tug-of-war between symbolic and systemic violence, and secondarily on the balance of the three different kinds of violence in the respective artworks. Shakespeare’s presentation is more stable than Berlioz’s, which is to say that the relationship between forms of violence at the beginning is restored at the end. The first scene is full of (mostly) subjective-violent references to “war, plague, betrayal, heresy, burning at the stake, blinding, hanging, spying, poisoning,” and we return to subjective violence at the end, with Benedick’s last words of judgment on the villain Don John: “Think not on him till tomorrow, I’ll devise thee brave punishments for him. Strike up, pipers” (V.4.126–27).²⁹ As Nuttall demonstrates, the main body of the play is dominated by the symbolic violence that Beatrice and Benedick do, and ultimately fail to do, to the conventions of marriage. Far from harming the institution, their pointing out of its flaws is not even enough to prevent them—let alone anyone else—from joining in. Hero and Claudio, meanwhile, are beset by their own symbolic violence, Don John’s linguistic assertion, through false testimony, that Hero has betrayed Claudio. If systemic violence is the guardian angel of the conventional lovers, then it is too, by implication, for Beatrice and Benedick. This is the congenial violence of the police, the English bobby’s rubber truncheon—a violence we support because it protects us from harm. If Beatrice and Benedick use their squabbling to conceal their love for each other, then rather than being tricked out of their resistance to marriage by the systemic violence of social convention, they simply have the veil lifted from their eyes by it.³⁰ *Much Ado’s* forms

of violence are therefore held in an equilibrium that maintains the status quo. Subjective violence is kept to a minimum (this is a comedy, after all), symbolic violence can provide tension (Don John) and delight (Beatrice and Benedick), and systemic violence (the pressure to marry) is benign and to be desired by all.

At this point Berlioz’s conception differs starkly from his source. He changes both the target of the violence that will come “tomorrow” and the form the violence takes. For Shakespeare, it is subjective violence done to the villain, whereas for Berlioz it is symbolic violence done to the institution of marriage, which cannot tolerate continuous war as its essential condition (though, as I shall note once more, it anoints struggle as a temporary blemish within the “normal” bliss). Let us attend to Shakespeare first, to understand what Berlioz transforms. Don John is the aberrant element in Messinian society, the malign force that is, more or less, its only imperfection. *Much Ado* stresses two important elements of his structural function in that society: first, that his opposition to its dominant cultural forms *cannot be tolerated* (he must be expelled or destroyed), and second, that his opposition to those forms, while expressed entirely without humor and with a baleful potential, is *essentially laughable* (which is why the idiot policeman, Dogberry, can uncover his plot). Since Don John’s attempt to ruin the marriage between Hero and Claudio is simply an obscene inversion of the scornful banter of Beatrice and Benedick, the success of the latter’s opposition is likewise doomed.³¹ Though it is laughable here in a very direct way, the symbolic violence of their verbal jousting has implications comparable to those of his verbal assault. As Stephen Greenblatt observes, “What we glimpse in the symbolic murder of Hero is not only the malign power of slander, but also the aggressive potential of even polite or playful speech. The ‘merry war’ between Beatrice and Benedick

²⁹Greenblatt, “Introduction to *Much Ado about Nothing*,” 1410.

³⁰Nuttall again: “Elsewhere in Shakespeare deliberately arranged overheard conversations are designed to deceive, these are done to un-deceive. The players in the charade tell the simple truth. It is ‘everyday life’, as played out by Beatrice and Benedick, that has become a lie, in need of correction” (Nuttall, *Shakespeare the Thinker*, 223).

³¹Kiernan Ryan notes that Don John “finds a strange bed-fellow . . . in Beatrice,” insofar as both characters abjure the temptation “to fashion a carriage to rob love,” i.e., to partake of Messina’s normal amatory business (Ryan, *Shakespeare’s Comedies* [Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009], 173).

leaves scars."³² Don John's fate is also directly related to theirs. Only through their subjection to systemic pressure can they at last be accepted rather than ejected by their society.

Greenblatt observes further that the force of systemic violence in Beatrice and Benedick's speech takes the form of the turning back of the speech upon the speaker:

The force that pushes them towards declarations of love and hence toward marriage vows is as much hearing themselves criticized by their friends as hearing that the other is desperately in love. "Can this be true?" asks Beatrice, her ears burning. "Stand I condemned for pride and scorn so much?" (III.1.108–09). "I hear how I am censured," Benedick declares, resolving that he "must not seem proud" (II.3.214, 218).³³

As so often with new-historical studies, Greenblatt's reading is essentially Foucauldian. The ideological pressure to marry, represented by "scorn" and "censure," is here internalized. It has no need of an external agent. This observation echoes Foucault's famous description of the Panopticon, whose function is "to induce in the [prison] inmate the state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the *automatic* functioning of power."³⁴ On the Foucauldian view, the awareness that one *could* be watched is enough to do the watching. There is no need for a prison guard to be present because the observable subject will do whatever self-policing is required.

But while the internalization of ideology is certainly an important source of its power, this reading should be supplemented by Althusser's concept of the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA).³⁵ It is only through the very real threat of physical violence at the hands of the police, army, etc. that we are all compelled to internalize our ideological injunctions and accept interpellation, in Althusser's sense, as ideologi-

cal subjects. The structural equivalence of Don John and Beatrice and Benedick is therefore a nontrivial fact. The bastard brother stands as an example of what the repressive *material expression* of violence will be when it conjoins systemic and subjective violence to repress the symbolic violence of protest.

In *The Taming of the Shrew*, in many ways an essential background to *Much Ado*, this subjective violence is staged in Petruccio's brutal treatment of Kate. It takes an *excess* of subjective violence to constitute a truly effective critique of "both marriage and government that works to no one's advantage, not the husband's and not, in the end, the tyrant's."³⁶ The material reality should not, then, be overlooked. The institution of marriage can bear a lot of violence as long as the violence is systemic and subjective. It is symbolic violence that poses problems. The capitulation of Beatrice and Benedick in the face of extreme odds—Foucauldian nonmaterial scorn and censure, and with it the implied threat of Althusserian material violence—means that what they seemed to offer at the start of the play, an original vision of how two people can relate intimately without giving in to the generalized pressure to wed, has by the play's conclusion entirely evaporated. Along with those interpreters who put the safety catch on their verbal firearms, Beatrice and Benedick call an amnesty on subjective violence.

Starting with a question I have already quoted, Greenblatt brings the play down to ideological reality by focusing on precisely this disarming of their language. Although, once more, he reads as a new historicist for symbolic rather than material effects, the suppressed material consequences are by now clear:

But what if we do not dismiss their own words? What if we take the conspiracy against them seriously? Beatrice and Benedick would not in that case "love" each other from the start; it would not at all be clear that they love each other at the close. They are tricked into marriage against their hearts; without the pressure that moves them to professions of love, they would have remained unmarried. Beatrice

³²Greenblatt, "Introduction to *Much Ado about Nothing*," 1410.

³³Ibid, 1411.

³⁴Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), 201, my italics.

³⁵Louis Althusser, "Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatus" in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (London: New Left Books, 1971).

³⁶Catherine Belsey, *Shakespeare in Theory and Practice* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 65.

and Benedick constantly tantalize us with the possibility of an identity quite different from that of Claudio and Hero, an identity deliberately fashioned to resist the constant pressure of society. But that pressure finally prevails. Marriage is a social conspiracy.³⁷

McEachern considers this reading “unduly cynical,”³⁸ but Kiernan Ryan’s reading, broadly the same as Greenblatt’s, may be more persuasive for the skeptic because it takes the sting out of Don Pedro’s trickery and stresses its demonstration of a potentially universalizable instance of the repressive reality of falling in love—something that leads the participants to a misapprehension of their own selves:

It would be absurd to overstress the sinister side of the trick played on Beatrice and Benedick, when the spirit in which it’s played is so patently benign, but it would be remiss not to give it due weight too. After all, the net that’s spread for them, the net in which their lives become irrevocably entangled, is a web of fabrication that makes them misconstrue not only each other but also themselves. The gulling of Beatrice and Benedick grants the audience an estranged, disillusioned view of the phenomenon of falling in love. What’s usually viewed as a subjective, authentic, spontaneous experience is dramatically objectified as a culturally enforced fiction.³⁹

Ryan’s reading is important for my own, and I shall return to it shortly. But already one can see how Berlioz’s promise of a return, “tomorrow,” to symbolic violence may effect a transformation of the tale’s relation to this culturally enforced fiction. I have already mentioned that Shakespeare balances the forms of violence in his play by concluding with the subjective violence with which he began, and by allowing the systemic violence of marriage to contain the “good” and “bad” symbolic violence of the comic and villainous characters. Berlioz does not attempt this neat balance, but instead tips the scales to challenge the hegemonic position of the big Other, which is upheld by systemic violence.

Berlioz never introduces Shakespeare’s Machiavellian Don John, and this act of negation achieves two remarkable effects. First, it makes impossible *Much Ado’s* feint of presenting Don John as the excremental element, the wicked obverse of Beatrice’s and Benedick’s resistance, which can distract us from the fact that they too are social outliers for their opposition to marriage. This excision leaves Berlioz’s viewers no option but to locate the split in society within the big Other itself, at the heart of its fantasies of marriage as “the real goal” of love. Berlioz’s violence, like Shakespeare’s, turns back from the systemic violence of the marriage ceremony, but only so far as to the symbolic violence of Béatrice’s and Bénédict’s promise to end their “truce.” Berlioz thus redoubles that symbolic violence, and makes it, in effect, violent enough to pose a realistic threat to the hegemonic balance of violence. The second effect of the removal of Don John is that, by removing the “dark side” of symbolic violence figured in the bastard, Berlioz increases our sympathy for it. We are more free in Berlioz than in Shakespeare to sympathize with Béatrice and Bénédict’s resistance to marriage, *even if we are pro-marriage members of the audience.*

There is still manipulation in the exuberant joy at the end of Berlioz’s opera, but it goes in the opposite direction to that of *Much Ado*. The potential for such an alternative joyful ending is already presented in Beatrice’s warning to Hero that if love is directed through marriage it will lead inevitably to sorrow. Her chosen metaphor is the dance: “For hear me, Hero, wooing, wedding, and repenting is as a Scotch jig, a measure, and a cinquepace. The first suit is hot and hasty, like a Scotch jig—and full as fantastical; the wedding mannerly modest, as a measure, full of state and ancentry. And then comes repentance, and with his bad legs falls into the cinquepace faster and faster till he sink into his grave.”⁴⁰ Why must society insist on moving from the jig to the measure, while denying the inevitability of the cinquepace? Why not just stop with the jig? For Shakespeare’s audiences, the clown’s jig at the end of a play provides a necessary erotic supplement

³⁷Greenblatt, “Introduction to *Much Ado about Nothing*,” 1412.

³⁸McEachern, “Introduction,” *Much Ado about Nothing*, 50.

³⁹Ryan, *Shakespeare’s Comedies*, 188.

⁴⁰*Much Ado about Nothing*, II.1.65–72.

to the relative lack of touching between Shakespeare's lovers onstage: "The jig represents the physical consummation that follows" the marriage that ends his comedies.⁴¹ So, where Shakespeare requires excessive *subjective* violence (as in *Shrew*) to besmirch the ideological function of marriage, Berlioz creates the infinitely more promising prospect that *symbolic* violence can create a new cultural possibility, a love based on the rejection of marriage, a love that sees no reason to stop jiggling. In a sense, Berlioz simply returns us at the end of his opera to the state of flirtatious sexual tension between Béatrice and Bénédict that we witness at the start, and holds out the possibility of a sequel, *More Ado about Nothing*, in which more verbal resistance leads to more sexual tension and more release in the social catharsis of marriage. But this begins to look nothing like marriage as conventionally understood.

THE FUNDAMENTAL FANTASY'S NEW CLOTHES

Kiernan Ryan develops a reading of *Much Ado's* talk of "fashion" from an opening observation that the "ghost" characters of the play—those evidently existing in a previous version and named in the first quarto stage direction but never appearing in the text or action of the play we have—actually "make manifest the covert ghostliness of the play's substantive characters. They betray the immateriality of what passes for existence in the alienated world of *Much Ado about Nothing*."⁴² The essence of Ryan's argument is that clothing, that immateriality, is what gives the characters form, and that "fashion" is the work's crucial image for the process of ideological interpellation:

The word serves in *Much Ado* as a shorthand for the myriad ways in which human beings are formed and deformed, physically, mentally, and emotionally, by the culture in which they find themselves at a particular moment in history. "Fashion" is the ideal

term for this onerous task, because in its routine sartorial sense it's the most obvious, graphic proof of how tightly people are defined by their world and time. By the same token, however, the wider connotations of the word imply that the subtler, unseen ways in which the self is unwittingly fashioned may be just as extraneous and disposable as an ill-fitting, outdated doublet and hose.⁴³

Fashions change, and the tectonic plates of ideology shift. Beatrice and Benedick get ready to slip on their wedding weeds by the end of the play, but in Berlioz's historical moment, the material reality of marriage—the cloth it is cut from as well as its real-world phenomenal contents—is very different. One obvious divergence between late-sixteenth- and nineteenth-century conceptions of marriage, which has a profound effect on their fantasmatic content, is the shift in attitudes toward adultery. *Much Ado* is littered with cuckoldry gags—perhaps only *The Merry Wives of Windsor* has more—starting with Benedick's response to the first mention of marriage and ending with his last piece of advice to Don Pedro: "Prince, thou art sad, get thee a wife, get thee a wife. There is no staff more reverend than one tipped with horn" (V.4.121–23). The first sentence is sweetly put, and the second adds a disarming joke, which covers up the ideological text: "Hurry up and get married, and afterwards, cuckolded!"

Elizabethan audiences clearly found the cuckold riotously funny, largely because he flatters the audience that they are cleverer than the characters on stage: "He provides a spectacle of ignorance that allows omniscience on the part of his audience."⁴⁴ The other ideological benefit of the cuckold is that he sustains the fantasy that marriage offers the only legitimate frame for lifelong sexual pleasure. The cuckold is guilty of both blindness to his wife's infidelity and of the cause of that infidelity—his lack of attentiveness to her sexual needs—and he is punished for both failings. The wife and the second man, meanwhile, are punished for their lasciviousness by losing the respect of the com-

⁴¹David Wiles, *Shakespeare's Clown: Actor and Text in the Elizabethan Playhouse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 56.

⁴²Ryan, *Shakespeare's Comedies*, 165.

⁴³Ibid, 169.

⁴⁴McEachern, "Introduction," *Much Ado about Nothing*, 48.

munity. This trio therefore props up an essential part of the fantasy of marriage.

Berlioz retains one reference to cuckoldry in his opera (in his version of the “That a woman conceived me is true” speech, set in the No. 5 Trio), but it has an old-fashioned feel.⁴⁵ *Béatrice et Bénédict*, written 1860–62, emerged in the immediate aftermath of Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* (1856), which destroyed not only the old figure of the cuckold but, more pertinently, the generalized idea of adultery as it was at that time fantasmatically constructed.⁴⁶ Adultery stood then, as it stands still, as an officially discountenanced form of sexual pleasure. It may appear to be more thrilling than the familiar everydayness of marriage, but its participants are either punished for their wrongdoing (most famously, of course, Anna Karenina) or they come to their senses and abandon it, as in the film *Brief Encounter*, to return to the security and sanctity of marriage. Adultery therefore acts as a psychological guarantee of the rightness of marriage. But *Bovary*’s adultery thoroughly undermines this fantasy, as Žižek perceives:

Flaubert took a crucial step in undermining the coordinates of the transgressive notion of love. That is to say: why was *Madame Bovary* dragged to court? Not, as is usually claimed, because it portrays the irresistible charm of adultery, and thus undermines the basis of bourgeois sexual morality. *Madame Bovary*, rather, inverts the standard formula of the popular novel, in which the adulterous lovers are punished at the end for their transgressive enjoyment. . . . What is so profoundly disturbing and depressing about *Madame Bovary* is that it . . . depicts adultery in all its misery, as a false escape, an inherent moment of the dull and grey bourgeois universe. . . . A passionate extramarital liaison not only poses no threat to conjugal love; rather, it functions as a kind of inherent transgression which pro-

vides the direct fantasmatic support to the conjugal link, and thus participates in what it purports to subvert.⁴⁷

For Berlioz, writing in the shadow of *Bovary*, the cuckold myth, the fashionable covering that gives a kind of substance to the haunted, absent-centered married subject, has been revealed to be as insubstantial as the emperor’s new clothes. The transgressive element which is already caught by the ideological image of marriage—a transgression whose revolutionary force is, in brute reality, a phantom—can no longer be presented as an external limit that guarantees the consistency of marriage. Without it, Béatrice and Bénédict no longer experience the same overwhelming compulsion to capitulate to normative pressures. Their increased symbolic violence is pushing at a door already slightly ajar. It may be Berlioz’s engagement with contemporary literature that enabled him to refashion Shakespeare’s play, or it may just be his radically different historic subjectivity. Either way, the fantasy at the heart of marriage is subjected by Berlioz to even more relentless scrutiny than it is by Shakespeare. I shall argue this point more fully in Part II, but already in the libretto Berlioz’s critique emerges clearly.

In another of the interpolated ideas that Berlioz did not find in Shakespeare, the friar announces, at Héro and Claudio’s wedding, that he has been asked to prepare a second marriage contract. Léonato asks who it is that feels the pull of the *fantasy* of marriage (“Qui se sentirait ici *la fantaisie* de se marier?”, NBE 3, 270, my italics). Is this another joke? Looking at the psychology of the music of Héro and Béatrice will provide an answer.

The eradication of the external location of pain (adultery) means that any pain felt in love and marriage must inhere within the conception of marriage itself. There are two possible psychological responses to this reconfiguration, represented by Héro and Béatrice respectively in the roles of the *masochist* and the *hysteric*. Lacan uses these terms to characterize the personality types behind “conventional” and “un-

⁴⁵For the first twenty-two measures of this section, the orchestra virtually drops out of accompanying Bénédict for this outburst of misogyny—as if it is embarrassed to support him. Only *piano* flutes and clarinets, and an occasional flutter from the first violins, provide meager encouragement. This is an important moment in the opera’s structure, and I return to it in more detail below.

⁴⁶Berlioz corresponded with Flaubert and probably met him, at least as early as 1862. There is no evidence that he read *Madame Bovary*, but it is hard to imagine that he remained ignorant of its scandalous aftershocks.

⁴⁷Lacan: *The Silent Partners*, ed. Slavoj Žižek (London: Verso, 2006), 260.

conventional" responses to cultural pressures. The terms fit these two characters well enough, but the effects of the relevant psychological configurations on an understanding of the general effects of ideology are much more interesting than that.

In the last section I emphasized the role of power in shaping the decisions and character of individuals. To finish our preparation for examining Berlioz's characterizations of Héro and Béatrice, we need to give our understanding of the relationship between the psyche and the power of ideological injunctions one more refinement. Judith Butler argues that we should think of this ideological power not only as a dominating external force that we internalize, in the Foucauldian sense, but rather as something on which "one's very formation as a subject . . . is in some sense dependent."⁴⁸ That is, she suggests that this power is what constructs us as human subjects in the first place. Her reasoning is partly psychological. She observes (like Freud) that children first form "passionate attachments" to their same-sex parents, but that since same-sex love is officially prohibited by the symbolic order of our culture, that primordial attachment is suppressed. This primordial repression, or "foreclosure," as Butler calls it, is then worked into the very fabric of our psyche, at the crucial level of gender, the basic level at which most people understand themselves and others. We repress that same-sex attachment and assume a gendering based on its opposite—heterosexuality. The repression of the first "passionate attachment" means that gender is "a kind of melancholy . . . a mourning for un-lived possibilities."⁴⁹

Lacan's term for such a "passionate attachment" is the *fundamental fantasy*, and, as Žižek observes, the sexual identity of the young subject who participates in this fantasy reads no social ordering into the male-female binary:

⁴⁸Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 2.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 132 and 139. There are inevitable echoes here of Lukács's "transcendental homelessness," a kind of nostalgia for utopia (see György Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*, trans. Anna Bostock [London: Merlin Press, 1971]).

"Sexual difference is not the opposition allocating to each of the two sexes its positive identity defined in opposition to the other sex (so that woman is what man is not, and vice versa), but a common loss on account of which woman is never fully a woman and man is never fully a man—'masculine' and 'feminine' positions are merely two modes of coping with this inherent obstacle/loss."⁵⁰ Sexual identity does not precede the traumatic realization of difference, which is inherent in the fundamental fantasy, but instead proceeds from it. Neither of the two basic biological sexes, and no sexuality, has any positive contents; all identifications depend on a relationship to the *objet a* (the fantasy object that draws the split subject ineluctably to both "little others" and the big Other, the symbolic order), which means that subjectivity is, in formal Hegelian terms, "abstract negativity." But there is good news: "The need of 'passionate attachment' to provide for a minimum of being," i.e., the barest psychological support for coping with life, beyond which there is only despair, "implies that the subject *qua* 'abstract negativity' . . . is already there."⁵¹ The subject is there in the form of the gap which, alone, "is" the subject.

With this understanding in place it is easy to explain the meaning of "masochist" and "hysteric" in the Lacanian senses that will now underpin the music analysis of Part II. Acceptance of the fundamental fantasy leads the masochist to reformulate the Cartesian *cogito, ergo sum* in terms that put the pain of the gap in subjectivity to the service of pleasure: "Look, I suffer, therefore I am, I exist, I participate in the positive order of being."⁵² Existence itself, with the support of some kind of reliable and "whole" personal identity, depends therefore on a relatively straightforward act of "masochistic deception." "Such a strategy of deception," Žižek observes, "in which a scene of pain and suffering is put in the service of the pleasure of deceiving the superego, can function only on the basis of a more fundamental 'sodomasoch-

⁵⁰ Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (London: Verso, 1999), 272.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 289.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 281.

istic' stance in which the subject engages in fantasizing about being exposed to passive painful experiences and is thus ready to accept, outside any deceptive strategy, *pain itself as the source of libidinal satisfaction*.⁵³ As we will see in Part II, Berlioz's Héro is deeply embroiled in this strategy.

Béatrice, in contrast, takes up the hysterical position. In (Lacanian) "hysteria," the subject does not rely on the fundamental fantasy's provision of a minimal positive support for being but rather, by disavowing all "passionate attachments," refuses to accept that there is more to the subject than the uncertainty of the gap at its core. Accepting no identity that culture provides, no gendering fixed by the symbols of marital conjunction, no self-objectification or essentialism of any kind, the "hysteric" allows the subject to emerge as "itself," the void on the basis of which anything is possible. The Two of which Badiou speaks is a coming together of two such hysterics, a Two that does not allow its love to be defined by the world around such flexibly but violently codified identities such as "husband" and "wife," but rather uses its love to reveal the truth of a new world. "What kind of truth?" Badiou asks. "What is the world like when it is experienced, developed, and lived from the point of view of difference and not identity?"⁵⁴ The ways in which Béatrice establishes her subjectivity at a remove from the society represented in Berlioz's opera, inviting Bénédicte to join her there, and how that enables Berlioz, through a radical revision of Shakespeare, to offer possible answers to these questions, will (with Héro's masochism) be the topics of the final section.

PART II: THE MUSIC OF *BÉATRICE ET BÉNÉDICTE*:
THE IDEOLOGICAL AND
PSYCHOLOGICAL STRUCTURE
OF BERLIOZ'S MUSICAL LANGUAGE

The locus of systemic violence in music from the eighteenth century to the present is the system of tonality. By this, I mean simply that

tonality is the dominant ideology of music in the period from Bach to Schoenberg.⁵⁵ Tonality regulates the age-old binary of consonance and dissonance in music, current since at least Pythagoras, in historically distinctive terms; and since such binary oppositions as inside/outside and normal/deviant are the lifeblood of ideological configurations, the regulation of consonance and dissonance ought to be the principal focus of ideological analysis.⁵⁶ Schenkerian analysis, which explains how even the remotest keys in a piece are regulated by their relationship to the composing-out of the tonic triad, is the most sophisticated means we have of understanding how the violence of the system operates. This is the case irrespective of whether one believes that tonality is an essentially patriarchal system whose systemic violence is a reflection and support of real-world patriarchal ideology, or, by contrast, that it is an autonomous and highly structured aesthetic space whose direct connection to human politics and society is an error.⁵⁷

⁵⁵For other detailed treatments of musical narrative as ideology, see Susan McClary, "The Impromptu That Trod on a Loaf: Or How Music Tells Stories," *Narrative* 5, no. 1 (1997): 20–35; and Michael Klein, "Musical Story," in *Music and Narrative since 1900*, ed. Michael Klein and Nicholas Reyland (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 3–28, in which tonality is elevated to a central ideological position throughout the common-practice period. In his *New Grove 2* entry on tonality, Brian Hyer also calls tonality "an ideological as well as a theoretical construct": see "Tonality," www.oxfordmusiconline.com. I offer my own more extended argument along the same lines in J. P. E. Harper-Scott, *The Quilting Points of Musical Modernism: Revolution, Reaction, and William Walton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

⁵⁶Other elements of music are either controlled by tonality or simply exert nothing like a regulatory force. Timbre, for instance, is a vital element of music, but no symphony was brought to a conclusion simply by force of the injunction "we must have strings now." Even serialism can succumb to the tonal pull under the influence of a residual tonality: for instance, Webern insisted for his own symphony that "the original form and pitch of the row occupy a position akin to that of the 'main key' in earlier music; the recapitulation will naturally return to it. We end 'in the same key!'" (Anton Webern, *The Path to the New Music*, trans. Leo Black [Bryn Mawr, PA: T. Presser, 1963], 54.).

⁵⁷These positions are argued most potently in the extensive debate between Susan McClary, Ruth A. Solie, and Pieter van den Toorn: for the essential outlines, see Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991); Ruth A. Solie, "What Do Feminists Want? A Reply to

⁵³Ibid., 281–82.

⁵⁴Alain Badiou, *In Praise of Love*, trans. Peter Bush (London: Serpent's Tail, 2012), 22.

A principled objection to Schenkerian modes of analysis would be that it seems to encourage dismissal of the *nonmusical* or *extramusical* contexts of music. Where, a critic might ask, are the musical actors, the real people who make, perform, and are, in part, culturally constructed by this music? But such an objection would simply hand the tools of Schenkerian analysis over to people who do not want to use them for much beyond note-spotting, when there is potential for so much more. Sometimes, as with Schenker, extensive study of a phenomenon is undertaken because of a strong personal conviction that the subject of study is a good thing: in Schenker's case because it demonstrates the superiority of German *Geist* over both foreign imitations and the disruptions of twentieth-century modernity. At other times, as with Karl Marx's study of capitalism, the study is undertaken in order to understand exactly how a detested system works, and how potential fissures in its operation can be opened up. Despite the intellectual and political commitments of its inventor, Schenkerian analysis can be turned to ideological critique of tonality's symbolic, its violently upheld order. If one wishes to understand just how it is that *this* passage of music has the effect of bringing *that* one to heel in such a way that its force evaporates, Schenkerian analysis is an effective means of proceeding.⁵⁸

One of the difficulties an analyst encounters when trying to understand Berlioz's navigation of the symbolic of tonality is that he tends to minimize the sense of tonality's violence by the simple expedient of avoiding dissonance. Overwhelmingly he favors triadic configurations and major keys. Motion across tonal space is, as common in his period, frequently third-related (although, unlike Schubert, who emphasized the hexatonically related $\flat VI$, Berlioz had a special predilection for $\flat III$).⁵⁹ One of the

means by which he effects hexatonic transformations, which is to "pun" on a note (say, a $D\sharp$ held in common between juxtaposed chords of B major and $D\sharp$ major, which hexatonic theory would term a T_2 shift), can just as easily enable a shift of a semitone (say, from C major to $C\sharp$ minor by punning on the E).⁶⁰ A pun is not merely a pivot: a pivot is located between two positions and eases the motion between them; a pun holds two possibilities together that are normally kept separate because they are considered distinct. A musical pivot—IV/C suddenly acting as V/ $B\flat$, for instance—may effect a swift motion to a new key, but a musical pun like these Berliozian examples holds the two keys together as a dialectical unity, making

bridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), particularly chaps. 3 and 4. Rushton's analysis exposes compositional habits that in a later time would come under the orbit of neo-Riemannian theory.

⁶⁰Although its full explication can lead into more mathematics than is normal in humanities scholarship, neo-Riemannian conceptions of tonality can be very readily grasped by sitting at a keyboard, playing a triad, and moving one finger at a time to create a new chord. There are two "transformations" (T for short) permitted by the system. One can either change the mode (from major to minor, or vice versa) or drop the root of one triad onto the leading tone of another (or vice versa). The result is that six chords—three major, three minor—are produced using only six different tones (hence, the system is "hexachordal"). To see one of these "hexatonic cycles" in practice, first strike a B-major chord, then drop the $D\sharp$ by a semitone to produce B minor. Raise the $F\sharp$ to a G to produce a chord of G major. Flatten the B to $B\flat$ to produce G minor. Raise the D to $E\flat$ to produce a chord of $E\flat$ (enharmonically $D\sharp$). Flatten the G to $G\flat$ to produce $E\flat$ minor (enharmonically $D\sharp$ minor). Finally, raise the $B\flat$ to a $B\sharp$ to produce the B-major chord that started the cycle. This can, of course, be repeated forever in principle. The six chords in this cycle are rooted on tones a major third apart, B, $D\sharp/E\flat$, and G. Three other systems are possible (C, E, $G\sharp/A\flat$, $C\sharp$, F, A; D, $F\sharp$, $A\sharp/B\flat$), and together these four "hexatonic systems" account for the gamut of twenty-four major and minor keys. Since the emphasis here is on chromatic motion by means of "transformation" (two such transformations being labeled a " T_2 shift," three a " T_3 shift") the hexatonic mapping of tonal space avoids the distinctive tonic-dominant polarity of diatonic tonality. And it is this distinctive attitude to musical prose—one that might more likely be experienced as "wandering," like Schubert, than as "purposive," like Beethoven—which makes hexatonic processes of harmony an important alternative aesthetic principle in the nineteenth century. For an extended primer to neo-Riemannian analysis, with a focus on Schubert and some mathematics, see Richard Cohn, "Maximally Smooth Cycles, Hexatonic Systems, and the Analysis of Late-Romantic Triadic Progressions," *Music Analysis* 15/1 (1996): 9–40.

Pieter van den Toorn," *Journal of Musicology* 9/4 (1991): 399–410, and Pieter C. van den Toorn, "Politics, Feminism, and Contemporary Music Theory," *Journal of Musicology* 9/3 (1991): 275–99.

⁵⁸I argue this case for Schenker's role in ideology critique much more extensively in *The Quilting Points of Musical Modernism*.

⁵⁹For an analysis of Berlioz's treatment of tonality, see Julian Rushton, *The Musical Language of Berlioz* (Cam-

each the constitutive negation of the other. Puns reveal the endless deferment of the signifying chain, the motion of floating signifiers that are only momentarily quilted into position. These motions and others like them, such as his fondness for strings of diminished sevenths, therefore have the effect of achieving “the obliteration of the tonic; the new key is established by right of possession, not organically, and can sound remote even if it is not new at all.”⁶¹

By limiting his use of strongly directional, functional dissonances, Berlioz deliberately obscures the functioning of the tonal ideology. But that is not to say that he resists it. By concealing its operation, and so making the ideology transparent, he denies the possibility of encountering that control as problematic. At this point one of the most frequently encountered truisms about Schubert should be turned on its head. Like Berlioz, rather than weakening the grip of the diatonic compulsion of V to resolve to I and so to strengthen the urge of the tonic to gain (patriarchal) mastery over the tonal space, Schubert’s technique of emphasizing third relations and establishing polarities that skirt around the tonic should be seen as part of a desire to provide false reassurance—“It’s OK, tonality is actually a perfectly liberating space to move around in: we might pay lip-service to a tonic resolution by the end, but we do so only on our own terms, as a result of a free choice.” The basic assumption about Schubert should therefore be that he makes the same claim as Beatrice and Benedick: “We have entered into conventional marriage, true, but there is at least *a minimum degree of resistance built in, before the event, which purges it of ideological force*” (i.e., the view I attributed to Claire McEachern above). On this understanding, the violent resolutions of Beethoven, which leave no doubt where dissonance is tending or when it has been resolved, are in their frankness a *thematization* of the violence of tonality, serving the same function as Marx’s close attention to capital. The violence that Beethoven does to

⁶¹Ibid., 39. This type of harmonic maneuver suggests a Schubertian procedure of decentering: see Nicholas Marston, “Schubert’s Homecoming,” *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 125/2 (2000): 248–70.

us is not something he adds to tonality but something he reveals in it, so that we can gauge its strength and the effect that it has on us.

Example 1 is a Schenkerian middleground analysis of the entire opera.⁶² The graph summarizes a structure that is, at best, only partly heard. There is spoken dialogue after almost every number in the opera, which will ensure that many listeners may lose the sense of key. There is also an interval between the acts. So the prolongation of this tonal structure across the opera is not one any listener could plausibly be expected to hear. But the same is true for the tonal structure of, say, *Das Rheingold* or *Elektra*, even though they lack either intervals or dialogue to break up the tonal architecture. Schenker himself believed that the *Ursatz* could be heard, but I think he was probably deluding himself, except in very short pieces. None of this invalidates the Schenkerian approach to examining tonal structure for the important reason that while the actual sounds of music are addressed to the conscious mind, these

⁶²Edward D. Latham produces Schenkerian *Ursätze* for several early-twentieth-century American operas in *Tonality as Drama: Closure and Interruption in Four Twentieth-Century American Operas* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2008). My unorthodox decision to present a single graph for an entire *opéra comique* rather than a series of graphs for its individual numbers is not taken lightly, and I aim to show its utility in the discussion to come. But there is also a theoretical justification. In orthodox Schenkerian analysis, the final important perfect authentic cadence (henceforth “PAC”) achieves the closure of the *Ursatz*. What is so special about the final PAC is that, unlike other PACs in a piece, once we know the piece has ended, we retrospectively mark *this* PAC as the closure of the *Ursatz* (and if we have a sense of how music like this tends to go, we will already have considered it as a *potential* closure of the *Ursatz*). This idea can be taken a stage further. It is evident that composers choose the keys of separate movements in a work with an ear to their suitability to the general tonal context of the work. Just as a listener regards a mid-movement PAC as a putative but not actual closure, its status confirmed by the simple fact that it is followed by more music, so the PAC that ends the first movement retrospectively gains a sense of provisionality when the second movement begins and it becomes clear that there is more music to come within the tonal space of this work. It thus seems fair to consider that until a work is finished the tonal parameters established at its beginning continue to contribute to the exposition of the music, and that any analysis of that unfolding that seeks to examine its controlling effect as symbolic order should read the whole as a totality. Doing so is consistent with the essential logic of Schenkerian conceptions of tonal space.

Example 1: Berlioz, *Béatrice et Bénédict*, middleground sketch of the entire structure.

deeper structures may be said to work on a subconscious level. And as in any other work of art, or any discursive formation whatever, the relation of the ostensible communication and the partly or wholly concealed structure of the statement can be subjected to analysis. With Schenkerian analysis, “the ‘secret’ to be unveiled through analysis is not the content hidden by the form” (as if discovering a $\hat{5}$ -line in an *Ursatz* is a valuable exercise in itself) “but, on the contrary, *the ‘secret’ of this form itself*,”⁶³ i.e., the secret that tonality, the opera’s musical big Other, is establishing an ideological framework within which the music of the opera moves at the conscious level.

The middleground graph shows a strongly composed-out G major spanning the two acts, with two important subsidiary focuses on VI and \flat VI. The overture and numbers 1–8 unfold a strong I–II–V–(VI)–I progression in G, which is prolonged by a lower neighbor F in No. 6. Up to No. 6, Berlioz’s opera has not ventured further than Shakespeare’s act I, sc. 1. Consequently this first unfolding of G major underpins an introduction of the main characters and Héro’s aria of expectation (“Je vais le voir”; “I am going to see him [Claudio]”). The spoken dialogue after No. 6 leaps suddenly to act II, sc. 3, for the tricking of Bénédict. After exclaiming that “the world must be peopled” (il faut que le monde soit peuplé), Bénédict sings his excited

rondo, No. 7, in the opera’s tonic. Tonally, everything seems to be going according to plan. But then in the last number of act I (No. 8), which is the opera’s most beautiful moment, Héro and Ursule sing their Duo–Nocturne on the “tenderness and pain of true love,”⁶⁴ ultimately picking up on the key of No. 4, E major (it is the pain we hear first: E major is prefaced by its relative, C# minor; and pain returns in the form of G# minor for the second duet section, before the music returns to the sweetness of E major at the end). The note E, which had provided an upper neighbor to the dominant in the first unfolding, is now treated to extensive prolongation, reaching to the end of No. 12 in act II. The “entr’acte” decorates the E in the bass with an upper neighbor that falls at the beginning of No. 9, the drinking chorus of the musicians and servants who are preparing for the wedding of Héro and Claudio. The melodic line rises across Nos. 8 and 9 as a third-progression, G#–A–B, and the whole span composes-out modal mixture, moving from VI (E major) in No. 8 to vi (E minor) in No. 9. Nos. 10 and 11, Béatrice’s aria (her rough equivalent to Bénédict’s No. 7) and the women’s trio, decorate this $\hat{6}$ with a strongly projected E \flat (No. 10) that acts as a dominant to the A \flat of No. 11. As the chorus calls on “Hymen’s fortunate victim” (l’hyménée victime fortunée) to come to the wedding in No. 12, we return to E major, and the entire parenthetical prolongation of $\hat{6}$

⁶³Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (rpt. London: Verso, 2008), 3.

⁶⁴Rushton, “Berlioz’s Swan-Song,” 110.

is rounded off (its parenthetical function is marked by brackets in ex. 1). The wedding march (No. 13) returns to the tonic G major; Bénédict “the married man” gets his sign in No. 14, which comically moves from G minor to major; and the work achieves a triumphant close in G major in the finale (No. 15) but with the promise that this “truce” will be ended “tomorrow.”

The opera navigates its tonal space in three broad movements: outer sections in G major, and a central section in two third-related keys, VI and \flat VI. There is a striking association between the chosen keys and the main subject of each of the musical sections; although Wagner’s “associative tonality” is richer and more complex than anything encountered in *Béatrice et Bénédict*, the relative simplicity of Berlioz’s design makes his presentation of the ideological message clearer. I shall give the grounds for deciding on these associations throughout the coming analysis, but it is useful to list them first. G major is consistently associated with the idea of marriage and all the political and economic burden that it carries, along with its insistence that human beings settle on a fixed identity.⁶⁵

This is, as Part I of this article demonstrated, the chief ideological playground for both Shakespeare and Berlioz, but Berlioz’s treatment of it is different. As the master signifier by which, in the context of this story, the big Other quilts reality, it is entirely appropriate that G major should be so stably associated with marriage and should govern the opera as “tonic”—the musical marker, from the eighteenth century onwards, of “normality.”⁶⁶ G

⁶⁵As same-sex marriage moves homosexual forms of union into the center ground of cultural normativity, it too insists on the establishment of identity—as a gay man or woman—as an essential, unshifting component.

⁶⁶In structuralist thought, signifiers are understood to refer to other signifiers. So, in a dictionary entry, the headword is defined by other words, each with their own definitions. Lacan’s “master signifier” differs because instead of referring to other signifiers, the master signifier refers to itself, in a self-reflexive process that establishes the master signifier as the single authoritative point of “truth” in an otherwise spiraling sequence of signification. Thus the master signifier, which might be God (in a universe centered on a religious truth), or money (in a universe centered on commodity exchange), gives the entire system consistency, “quilting” reality in place.

minor, when it appears, is associated with negative attitudes toward marriage. E (major or minor) has an association with the “masochistic” attitude toward marriage. This can be articulated otherwise as the response to the superego’s basic injunction, “Enjoy!”—the call to obey the law in pursuit of an impossible *jouissance*, the pursuit of which will lead to the surplus-*jouissance* that comes from turning pain to pleasure.⁶⁷ $E\flat$ and its subdominant, $A\flat$, are associated with the “hysterical” attitude that refuses to credit the claims of the big Other, and so refuses to “Enjoy!”

Attention to diatonic and hexatonic relations deepens awareness of the balance within the systemic violence of the G-major tonic. E, the “masochistic” response that serves to turn the suffering caused by that violence to enjoyment, is, in the minor mode, diatonically related to G. As a tonicization of $\hat{6}$, the use of E major in Nos. 8 and 12 simply enhances the sense that this masochism is *pleasurable* (as does, in a differently intoxicated way, the E minor of the drinking song, No. 9, its minor mode neither sad nor regretful). Chord VI is a faithful support of the tonic. But the relation between $E\flat$ and G is hexatonic, and at both structural and surface levels the motion between those chords operates according to the long-appreciated Berliozian logic of “the obliteration of the tonic.”⁶⁸ Tonally, then, the projection neatly articulates the chief ideological conflicts between the conventional view of love, which reaches fulfillment in marriage, and the revolutionary view of Béatrice and Bénédict (though, Béatrice is its chief architect and greatest visionary, as will be shown).

The principal exception to this outline appears to be No. 4, the Béatrice and Bénédict duet, in which each dispraises marriage and

⁶⁷Žižek observes that without the Law, the imposition of rules, contrary to expectations there is a universal Prohibition: “*enjoyment itself, which we experience as ‘transgression,’ is in its innermost status something imposed, ordered—when we enjoy, we never do it ‘spontaneously,’ we always follow a certain injunction. The psychoanalytic name for this obscene injunction, for this obscene call, ‘Enjoy!’, is superego*” (Slavoj Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* [New York: Verso, 1991], 9–10).

⁶⁸Rushton, *The Musical Language of Berlioz*, 39.

denies loving the other. Although the duet starts and ends in E major, it does not form an obviously positive response to the superego's "Enjoy!" Yet that injunction still frames their duet. Bénédict explains the "true happiness" (*vrai bonheur*) of his relationship with Béatrice by the fact that, although he is adored by all ladies, he is not loved by her ("Qu'adoré de toutes les femmes, . . . je ne sois point aimé de vous"). In heteronormative discourse, to be loved by a woman completes a man's identity, as is mandatory, by fixing the relationship of the (masculine) subject to the (sexual) drive. Other women offer Bénédict that structure but Béatrice offers to free him from it. It is Héro's masochistic pleasure to accept that offer—the "normative" response—in No. 8. The framing tonality of E major in the No. 4 duet points to the fact that Béatrice and Bénédict both stand at risk of being interpellated as subjects precisely in relation to that fantasy. The desire drawing them to that identification circulates around an *objet a*, represented by the "curious pleasure" that each finds in baiting the other ("qual plaisir étrange trouvé-je à l'irriter!").

It is this powerful but indescribable quantum of desire that brings them together in their "merry war," uniting them to such a degree that they sing the same lines in overlapping phrases (mm. 132ff.). In this duet both expressly enjoy the business of "snatching a little piece of *jouissance* away from the Master." Their relationship is framed by marriage, which acts as the external definition of their "merry war," but which, as Nuttall shows, lays them open to the easy slippage from this surplus-enjoyment to the nonsequent conclusion that it would be perfected—and their identities fixed—in marriage. Yet elements of their eventual resistance to this fantasy projection are present *in nuce* in the way that the two characters are differentiated. The duet opens in E major, but within five measures Béatrice has moved it onto the dominant, where it remains until Bénédict's entrance at m. 29. He picks that chord up and resolves it back in E major at m. 36, holding it there until Béatrice enters again at m. 58, where she proposes an A major that he accepts ("vous avez raison," m. 66) as a means of returning to E at m. 84. Till this point, Béatrice has tended away from E major, Bénédict toward it; but as

he reflects on his potential interpellation by the other women who love him, he wanders off-tonic to tonicize B minor (m. 123). Bénédict seems more obviously open to the possibility of marriage than Béatrice, or at least one based on the "foolish" idea that as long as there was some initial resistance they can construct a marriage that fits them rather than fitting themselves to a cultural requirement. Rushton gives a sound explanation for this difference in temperament between the two: "in the social milieu of this drama the woman is normally the subordinate partner in marriage. . . . To a woman of Beatrice's temper, resistant to assumptions of male superiority, marriage represents a greater sacrifice than it does for a man."⁶⁹ As the opera continues, Béatrice moves increasingly far from the momentary accommodation with masochism that she reaches here.

Most elementally, the way that the fantasy of marriage folds potential challenges (desertion, unfaithfulness) into its own positive content (the cultural insistence that marriage is strong and will endure these challenges) is represented musically by the opposition of G major and minor. The high jinks of the overture can brook only two measures of G minor, curtly brushed aside (mm. 202–03), and we do not hear a tonicization of the chord again until the trio (No. 5), where Bénédict tells Claudio and Don Pedro that he would rather rot in a cloister than marry ("plutôt moisir dans un convent!"; ex. 2). But the tonicization, while it is obviously expressing a pointedly negative attitude toward marriage, lasts barely more than four measures (from m. 77 to the downbeat of m. 82) and can generate no new material to ground the key (the orchestra simply repeats Bénédict's cadential figure twice).

The music returns to G major for Bénédict's misogynistic speech—tellingly, since misogyny is, as Béatrice knows, the prop of conventional marriage as exogamous exchange. Both here and in the overture, and even more powerfully in the "Enseigne" (No. 14), which is a single progression from G minor to G major (to the words "here you may see Benedick, the married man"; "ici l'on voit Bénédict l'homme

⁶⁹Rushton, "Berlioz's Swan-Song," 113.

Example 2: Berlioz, *Béatrice et Bénédic*, No. 5, G-minor moment.

marié”), the minor-mode opposition is given a ridiculous presentation, with marriage the only “realistic” possibility. Articulating a strong G minor requires a feat of symbolic violence far in excess of anything Bénédic can achieve. Already by No. 7 he has decided that “the world must be peopled” (il faut que le monde soit peuplé) and blazes out an unproblematic G major in full support of the script he discounted as his own so bootlessly in the trio. After the G-major wedding march for Héro and Claudio (No. 13) and the “Enseigne,” the opera is set for an ostensibly comfortable resolution into the tonic in Béatrice’s and Bénédic’s final declarations of love. But I shall argue that because of that final “joke” about the “truce” and of the way Béatrice’s music articulates an excessive truth that opens up a new world, the final G major is not the solid ideological fantasy of

marriage that it appears: Béatrice has by this point requited its meaning.⁷⁰ Since the masochistic example of Héro enhances Béatrice’s awareness of the pain caused by the systemic pressure to marry, it is to this music that I now turn.

⁷⁰James Haar avers that “the work is formally symmetrical. . . . Beatrice and Benedick each have a single aria; there is a duet for the two in each act; a male trio in act I is balanced by a female trio in act II; the quicksilver opening of the overture uses the beginning of the duo that closes the work” (James Haar, “The Operas and the Dramatic Legend,” in *Cambridge Companion to Berlioz*, ed. Peter Bloom [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000], 95). This is true as a general observation, but there is no balance here in the sense that these items can be considered emotionally, musically, or above all ideologically equivalent. What may seem to be elements that harmonize or stabilize the whole turn out to create ruptures within it.

Béatrice et Bénédict deviates from *Much Ado* in being clear that Héro loves Claudio before the action begins. In the spoken text of scene 2, during a conversation about the men's return from war, Héro says "and . . . Claudio will be accompanying him [Don Pedro], no doubt?" (Et . . . Claudio le suit, sans doute?). After scene 3, still spoken, establishes the "war of epigrams" between Béatrice and Bénédict, we get confirmation of the depth and psychology of Héro's love in her aria "Je vais le voir" (No. 3). The psychology is not a happy one, but Berlioz had a history of interest in psychological illness. It was evident as early as the *Symphonie fantastique*, which Francesca Brittan shows to have been influenced by a rich array of voguish, ethically stigmatized pathologies in literary and medical writings of its time, a context of which his audience could have been generally aware.⁷¹ As Brittan reminds us, Berlioz was the son of a doctor and himself a quondam medical student who, in this early period of his maturity, might have been "constructing his own erotic disorder and that of his 'fantastic' protagonist according to the detailed descriptions of manic fixation saturating scientific and journalistic writing of the period."⁷² The specific diagnosis that Brittan prefers from the available options for Berlioz and his figure of the artist is that of the "erotomaniac," not only fixated on a beloved but also subject to excesses of passion, loquacity, delirium, and suicidal depression, all of which are strikingly present in the *Symphonie fantastique*. Obvious evidence of a continuing fascination with pathology is in plain view in *Béatrice et Bénédict*, where in the trio (No. 5) Bénédict upbraids Claudio and Don Pedro for their matrimoniomania ("matrimoniomanie"), and they him for his matrimoniophobia ("matrimoniophobie"). Both parties do not just

⁷¹When, in 1830, Berlioz assigned his symphonic hero the symptoms of monomania—a melancholic-frenetic delirium characterized by an *idée fixe*—he was not describing a vague or imaginary nervous disorder, but a *maladie morale* that would have been easily identified by many of those in the concertgoing public" (Francesca Brittan, "Berlioz and the Pathological Fantastic: Melancholy, Monomania, and Romantic Autobiography," this journal 29/3 [2006]: 222).

⁷²Ibid., 222–23.

oppose but actually *psychoanalyze* the opposite position. Berlioz's musical imagining of Héro shows clear signs of a psychoanalytic presentation of a type that bears some relation to the erotomaniac of Brittan's study. But in the framework of Lacanian theory, which highlights the problematics of the unconscious and the inconsistency of the human subject within the social order of which it is also a part, she is not an erotomaniac but a masochist.

To more fully understand the concept of the masochist, it is useful to return to the Foucauldian conception of the internalization of ideology. As Žižek observes, "What this simplistic notion of 'internalization' misses is the reflexive turn by means of which, in the emergence of the subject, external power (the pressure it exerts on the subject) is not simply internalized but vanishes, is lost; and this loss is internalized in the guise of the 'voice of conscience,' the internalization which gives birth to the internal space itself."⁷³ That "internal space" is the subject, which "is" nothing but a gap, a void, and which submits to the fundamental fantasy by forming "passionate attachments" to the Other, though the Other itself has no consistency (it is "lost"); the "voice of conscience" is the superego.

The example of a parent's injunction to a child draws out the distinction between an external, repressive law and the superego's command to achieve surplus-*jouissance*, which superficially seems more liberal.

The parental figure who is simply "repressive" in the mode of symbolic authority tells a child: "You must go to Grandma's birthday party and behave nicely, even if you're bored to death—I don't care how you feel, just do it!" The superego figure, in contrast, tells the child: "Although you know how much Grandma would like to see you, you should visit her only if you really want to—if not, you should stay at home!" The superego trick lies in this false appearance of a free choice, which, as every child knows, is actually a forced choice that involves an even stronger order—not only "You must visit Grandma, however you feel!", but "You must visit Grandma, and, furthermore, you must be glad

⁷³Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 335.

to do it!"—the superego orders you to enjoy doing what you have to do.⁷⁴

In this scenario, the child does not want to visit Grandma; Grandma is boring, and visiting her would be painful. The masochistic child turns that pain to pleasure. He does not enjoy the boredom of the birthday party but enjoys the thought that afterward his parents will feel guilty about having put him through this agony just to keep up appearances. This fantasy allows the child to experience the pain of his actual existence—the tedium of Grandma's party—as surplus-*jouissance*. Héro, Béatrice, Ursule, Claudio, Bénédic, all the characters in the world of *Béatrice et Bénédic*, are given an ostensibly free choice to marry, a choice whose freedom inheres in the idea that they will only be expected to marry if they feel that it is the right thing for them. The tricks that are played on them simply reveal what they already know to be the case about their own desires. Héro must marry Claudio, and she must enjoy it, because not to enjoy it is to denigrate marriage (that being the sin of which Béatrice is guilty). Héro finds ways to do it. Béatrice resists.

Héro is strikingly unhappy for someone who seems to be engaged to be married, particularly in her duet with Ursule (No. 8), throughout which she is in tears. We cannot give the normal feminist solution to this problem and say that she is sad simply because she is about to enter into a social institution that profoundly limits the freedom of women. What that view fails to take into account is that even if marriage were reconfigured to suit her personal needs better, she would feel a redoubling of the force of the superego demand: resistance is surrender. The only persuasive answer is that her sadness is a result of her decision to accept any ideological mandate at all, to cover the void in her own psyche. It is not the content of the identification that is causing her to be sad, but the commitment to identification *tout court*, the "secret" of the form of the identification.

If we interpret the mood of Héro's music as a masquerade of pain that is serving some specific purpose in relation to the superego injunc-

tion, her sadness becomes easier to parse. When she and Ursule are testing whether Béatrice's last resistance to marriage has broken down in the trio No. 11, they imagine a state of affairs in which the marriage between Héro and Claudio has turned, through habit, to boredom, disgust, regret, jealousy, coldness, and eventually adultery. This is precisely the progression from jig to measure and cinqupace that Beatrice warns Hero of in *Much Ado*, and here as there, Béatrice is horrified by the thought. But Héro laughs and says she was only joking: Claudio will remain faithful to her. Yet in her own aria, "Je vais le voir," and in the "Duet-*Nocturne*" with Ursule, we already witnessed her succumbing to something like the same concerns. The prospect of marrying Claudio, who has returned to her from war, delights her, seeming to chime with her essential desires. Yet to submit to him in marriage means to lose a goodly portion of her present freedom by accepting the fullness of her symbolic mandate as woman in a patriarchal society. This is not a prospect that she can enjoy. But by submitting to the superego's command even though she knows that it is painful for her, she can extract pleasure from the thought that this pain does at least give her symbolic consistency. This pain can be borne because it is less terrifying than leaping into the existential abyss of accepting the inconsistency of subjectivity. Like the lover in a courtly love lyric, she can accept the pain because it comes from that which does her good (the Lady; marriage), and which fixes her in an identity for which society will honor her (a noble lover, a faithful wife). In other terms, this masochistic behavior is what Heidegger calls obtaining "tranquility" by submitting to cultural convention, which he calls "the they": "The supposition of the 'they' that one is leading and sustaining a full and genuine 'life', brings Dasein a *tranquility*, for which everything is 'in the best of order' and all doors are open."⁷⁵

The progress of the fantasy is already in train in No. 3, where Héro luxuriates in the painful pleasure of knowing that she is moving from jig to measure, choosing as a free woman to

⁷⁴Ibid., 319–20.

⁷⁵Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), 222.

Example 3: Berlioz, *Béatrice et Bénédict*, “Je vais le voir,” middleground sketch.

submit to the humiliation of taking the subordinate role in a patriarchal relationship for the sake of symbolic consistency. Her masochistic pleasure in this moment of transition, her firm step toward interpellation, is drawn out for as long as possible. The first half of the aria luxuriates in the sweet possibility that her conventional love affords. It opens tenderly with an A-major theme on solo cello, *Larghetto*, which Héro repeats and develops, arpeggiating through C# minor (m. 25) to E (m. 29) before closing back in A (m. 44) for an equally tender recapitulation (ex. 3). The sedate pace of the composing-out of the tonic triad creates a contentedly serene air, enhanced by the subdued orchestration—strings and woodwind, with clarinets and horns used sparingly—as well as the elegant, slow sarabande rhythm of the melody, and the unrushed and uncomplicated completion of the *Ursatz*.⁷⁶ But at m. 75 a sudden change in tempo (*Allegro con fuoco*) and key (D major) generate a sense of rushing forward, of realizing potential. The aria’s opening A major turns out retrospectively to have been a hugely prolonged dominant, a key that points not to its own serene present but to a more fervid future. If this motion builds into a chain of fifths, the next step from D would be G, the key of marriage, which comes in No. 5, the men’s trio.

Héro’s first words in this faster section appear to be a simple expression of confidence in

Claudio’s fidelity: “He is returning faithfully to me” (*Il me revient fidèle*). But since she will articulate this idea in No. 11 as a joke, it is also clear that she is repressing a fear that he might not be faithful—a fear that, naturally, brings her additional masochistic pleasure. It is the physical symbol of her subjection to symbolic order, however—“my hand will be the prize” (*ma main sera le prix*)—from which she wrings the greatest surplus-*jouissance*. She delivers the text of the aria’s second half which culminates in this line, in twenty-one breathless measures, which move purposively to the new dominant, A major (m. 104). But on the next two iterations of the text she attempts to divert the course of events with brief cadential motions, two to B minor (mm. 128 and 174), one to C# minor. These prove to have insufficient symbolic force to disrupt the course of events. The pull of the D-major tonality, the preparation for marriage’s G major in the next number, is much too strong, and the first of these tonicizations is given no credence (one beat of rest is enough to rob it of its position, and the downbeat of m. 131 bluffly reasserts D major), the second is folded neatly into the dominant at m. 154, and the third returns, like an obedient VI chord should, to the dominant at m. 176.⁷⁷

This ideology brooks no opposition, and Héro’s libidinal pleasure in her staged failure to resist is obvious. The thrill of the return of D

⁷⁶A major has been active since the start of the No. 2 chorus and has been projected through the lovely *Sicilienne* before this aria begins, making it a triply “comfortable” key.

⁷⁷Rushton, too, finds these tonicizations remarkable, though he ultimately finds the aria expressive of “the utmost cheerfulness”: Rushton, “Berlioz’s Swan-Song,” 110.

ma main se - ra

le prix.

Example 4: Berlioz, *Béatrice et Bénédict*, “Je vais le voir,” masochistic pleasure in the cadenza.

major at m. 131 produces a wordless high trilling D that terminates in a convulsive little rush to F#, and when her C#-minor cadence is pulled into the dominant, her excited tingle is moved into the first violins, which trill for six and a half measures on an A. Things are moving on fast, but not so fast that Héro cannot check the progress of her interpellation in order to enjoy one last almost orgasmic access of perverse pleasure. At m. 206 she returns to the motives of the opening A-major section and spins them out into an absurdly distended cadenza that avoids a perfect cadence more than a dozen times, in the meantime doing little more than prolonging the dominant chord (ex. 4). The cadenza would sound less absurd if it were more thematic, more harmonically varied—if, that is, it had a *purpose* to exist beyond merely delaying the inevitable—but perverse pleasure is all that the superego allows. Surplus-*jouissance* emerges from the very last syllable, in which the coming events are kept firmly in the future, distinct from the current pleasure she is taking in their deferment—i.e., the last syllable of the word *sera*. She *will* submit to her forced choice. Her hand will be the prize for his valor in war, and her prize for this submission is the joy of obeying the superego

command itself. It is an aria that St. Augustine would have understood: “grant me chastity and continence, but not yet.”⁷⁸

Hugh Macdonald claims that the Duet–Nocturne (No. 8) is “scarcely functional to the action,” but although it can be seen as a return to the ambience of the first part of Héro’s aria, exploring new avenues of the same thought, it adds something more.⁷⁹ Its music is even more beautiful, and the addition of Ursule adds greater encouragement, greater social pressure, for the spectator to rise to its gorgeous bait. In form, it falls into two parts, each beginning with a short C#-minor dialogue in which Ursule asks, first, why Héro is sighing, and second, why she is weeping. The answer in both cases is masochistic, deriving pleasure from suffering, humiliation, and submission to the identity of the fiancée (an identity she considers so essential that she calls it her “soul”): “Happiness oppresses my soul. I can’t think of it without trembling, despite myself” (*Le bonheur oppresse mon âme. Je ne puis y songer, sans trembler*

⁷⁸Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. F. J. Sheed (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2006), 152.

⁷⁹Macdonald, *Berlioz*, 181.

malgré moi); “These tears relieve my soul. You’ll feel yours flow, too, when your own love is crowned” (Ces larmes soulagent mon âme; Tu sentiras couler les tiennes à ton tour, Le jour où tu verras couronner ton amour!). This stirs Ursule, and both women join in the masochistic deception with a bewitching E-major melody that they sing largely in sonorous thirds to the accompaniment of zephyr-soft string arpeggios (starting at m. 13; ex. 5), which encourage an unforced motion to E major. After a perfect authentic cadence establishes a calm tonic closure at m. 56, and they have their brief exchange about weeping, a second duet melody is suspended by similar orchestral breezes in C# minor (starting m. 68), until the addition of a B# to the harmony (m. 86) enables a smooth transition back to the original duet melody with its C#-minor-to-E major motion.

This is seductive music, as capable of concealing its ideological persuasion as the joy of Beatrice’s and Benedick’s wordplay is its own manipulative business in *Much Ado*. But Berlioz goes further, providing two instrumental codas of exquisite beauty—the first a duet between violas and two flutes (from m. 134), the second an astonishing *ppp* susurrations of eight-part divisi violins (echoes of *Lohengrin*) over a gently gurgling clarinet, thrumming cellos, and pizzicato violas and double basses, picking out 1 and 5 of the tonic chord (from m. 151). The cup of surplus-*jouissance* runneth over. As Rushton observes, “the Nocturne is a generalized expression of the tenderness and pain of true love.” This is our invitation, as attractive as Berlioz can make it, to accept the big Other’s offer of “tranquility.”⁸⁰

BÉATRICE, HYSTERIC

It appears by the end of the opera that Béatrice and Bénédict have yielded to this ideological goad, and as the foregoing discussion of his rondo (No. 5) indicates, Bénédict has been on the verge for some time. But Béatrice, the most brilliant character in the opera, has her mind bent on a radical reconfiguring of the tonal space, and with it, of the opera’s final idea of a

love that can create a new world. The existing world is governed by G major and the conventional social scripts for marriage (ex. 1). When the call comes for subjects to accept interpellation in that order, they either do so with unrestrained willingness, blind to any negative effects that may obtain (Bénédict in “Ah! je vais l’aimer,” No. 7) or, while being aware of the negatives, obtaining surplus-*jouissance* by means of masochistic deception (Héro in “Je vais le voir,” No. 3; Héro and Ursule in the Duet–Nocturne, No. 8). Béatrice alone is different. Her aria “Dieu! Que viens-je d’entendre” (No. 10) manages to recognize marriage as *fundamentally and irredeemably* flawed, and so rejects masochistic surplus-*jouissance* while attesting to the fact that although the symbolic order is strong, its strength is arbitrary and without a basis in “truth.”

The first task, the radical assertion of marriage as a flawed thing to be rejected, requires a decisive intervention in a tonal struggle that has been very uneven thus far. Each time that the chord of G minor, the dark side to marriage’s eternally optimistic G major, has been presented, it has been rejected as an unrealistic, cynical intrusion. In the Overture, before textual indications have solidified the tonal associations of the tonic, a brief cadence in G minor (mm. 202–05) is abruptly pulled toward D major and thence G major. The chord is not heard again, except for brief passing motions in No. 1, until the Béatrice/Bénédict duo, “Comment le dédain pourrait-il mourir?” (No. 4)—and even there it is not strictly speaking a G-minor chord at all (ex. 6). Here, a chord of G–A#–D, which contains the pitches of G minor but “is not” that chord, passes directly onto a G-major chord that embellishes part of a #VI–V–i progression onto B minor (minor v in the context of the duet). Conventional tonal theory that is contrapuntal in inclination normalizes such moments within the unfolding of tonal space without most listeners—or analysts—being fully aware of the ideological work being done. Although a jazz or guitar notation, for instance, might notate the first two beats of m. 122 as G minor followed by G major, since that notation would tell a performer to play those notes, a voice-leading analysis would make such a reading “nonsense.” The A# is simply a neigh-

⁸⁰Rushton, “Berlioz’s Swan-Song,” 110.

12 **A** Andantino (♩ = 126)

Fl. *p*

Ob.

Cl. (A) *p*

Hns. (E)

Héro
toi! ————
Nuit ————

Ursule
et se - rei - - - - -
et se - rei - - - - -
ne!

Vln. *pizz.*

Vla. *div.* *pizz.* *um.*

Vc. *pizz.* *p*

Andantino (♩ = 126)

Example 5: Berlioz, *Beatrice et Bénédicte*, "Duo-Nocturne," opening of duet.

Example 6: Berlioz, *Béatrice et Bénédict*, No. 4, mm. 121–23.

bor to the Bs immediately before (in the lower register) and after (in the same register), and part of a slightly decorated $v-i^6-VI-V^7-i$ motion. True enough. But it is essential to be sensitive to the quilting effect that tonality has. The chord in question is genuinely, physically, the same as a G-minor chord (at least on a piano; orchestral musicians and singers may tune the A# a little higher than a Bb), but it must “properly” be understood, in accordance with the master signifier of tonality, as a decoration of G major and not a chord in its own right. It is “wrong” to name this chord G minor because that would be to assert a level of autonomy that it simply does not have within the hegemonic tonal order; but at the same time it is right to note that that concatenation of notes is only understood in this way because of the systemic violence of tonality, and its sure control of all its subservient elements. The progression from G minor (this time, literally G minor) to G major in “Enseigne” (No. 14) is simply making explicit the systemic violence that ensures that this tiny, insignificant chord in m. 122 of No. 4 is brought into proper symbolic order. And it is only because Béatrice has acted so powerfully to countermand tonality’s imposition of the symbolic order that the grandiloquent gestures of No. 14 are necessary at all. They are, comically but seriously, gestures that reveal a system under grave threat.

Before Béatrice’s aria, G minor is presented more openly than in No. 4, but always as an unrealistic possibility, and one that is quickly folded back into the prevailing tonal order. Bénédict’s misogynistic speech in the No. 5 trio is bookended by G-minor articulations, first

in mm. 78–82 and then in m. 257, where the Bb at the start of the measure is converted to an A# at the end, to lead to the “proper” Bb of the G-major chord in m. 258 (violin II). Bb here functions precisely like the A# in No. 4. The fugal “epithalame grotesque” (No. 6), despite being in F, tends to prefer G major, II, to the more normal G minor, ii, for pre-dominant motions (though there are around half a dozen passing G-minor chords in the number). In Bénédict’s G-major aria of interpellation, “Ah! je vais l’aimer,” G minor is predictably and significantly absent, and as in No. 4, reduced from autonomy to subservience by passages such as that in mm. 19–25 (ex. 7), in which, first, two interrupted cadences (onto E minor and F# minor) and then one perfect cadence (into G) are presented in such a way that by the third iteration of the rising semitone figure the A# can *only* be heard as a decoration. Like the F# of m. 21 and G# of m. 23, listeners unquestioningly accept that the sonority it tops on the downbeat of m. 25 is “dissonant,” even though it is a perfectly viable chord, if it were requited. Thus, very subtly the idea of G minor as a realistic possibility for tonal presentation is brushed under the carpet by Bénédict’s euphoric G-major vision of his future married happiness, and we are manipulated to join him in it.

But the same cannot be said for Béatrice, whose response to her own tricking into love, her aria No. 10, which for Haar “balances” Bénédict’s,⁸¹ is a breathtakingly violent rejection not only of this kind of mystified ideologi-

⁸¹Haar, “The Operas and the Dramatic Legend,” 95.

20

Je vais l'ad - mi - rer, Je vais l'ad - or - rer, Je vais l'ad - mi - rer,

Example 7: Berlioz, *Béatrice et Bénédict*, No. 7, mm. 19–25.

cal maneuvering but also of the idea that, for human subjects, identification—specifically for her as a married woman, but also generally—is a positive experience. Example 8 shows a middleground graph of the aria, which is ostensibly in $E\flat$, a key with a hexatonic relation to the key of marriage, G major, and therefore one that, before anything else happens in the music, is able to effect an obliteration of the tonic by avoiding the dialectical relation between tonic and dominant that gives tonality its forceful coherence.⁸² But it is the hexatonic relation between $E\flat$ and G minor that Berlioz fixes at the center of this structure. Little by little *Béatrice* reveals that, far from acquiescing as *Bénédict* does to the prospect of marriage, in the light of the knowledge that he loves her and that she must confess that she loves him, her resolve against marriage (symbolized by her unique sustaining of G minor) is hardened at the very moment that she opens herself to love.

The aria evinces an astonishing disregard for tonal order, in effect presenting an endless flickering between $E\flat$ and G minor that bears comparison to the effect of the famous duck–rabbit image that Wittgenstein used to describe different ways of seeing.⁸³ In a sense, this is Berlioz’s most elaborate and violent harmonic pun, in this case on the opera’s keynote, G. I have already drawn attention to *Béatrice*’s tendency to veer off-key in No. 4, but now she goes to extremes. Although the aria eventually

resolves its Berliozian $\hat{5}$ -line to a satisfactory close in m. 265, and its twice-heard principal lyric melody (beginning at mm. 54 and 125) achieves an unflurried I–III–V–I arpeggiation of the tonic (closing into mm. 73 and 145), such orthodox tonal function is assiduously undermined throughout. From the start, the tonic $E\flat$ is subjected to retrospective redefinition as $\flat VI$, leading to a perfect cadence in G minor (m. 40); but the G-minor chord thus reached is immediately requited as III/ $E\flat$, and a skip of a third to $B\flat$ enables a perfect cadence into $E\flat$ for the first statement of the principal melody at m. 54.

This alternation of perfect cadences, each resolution immediately being reinterpreted as pre-cadential material for the next, is repeated throughout the aria. Arrows in the graph indicate the twelve root-position perfect-cadence resolutions into either $E\flat$ or G minor that come before the final closure of the *Ursatz* in m. 265. So habitual does this bass motion become that even when, as *Béatrice* calls herself to “come” and “embrace [her] slavery” (*Viens, . . . devant de l’esclavage*) at m. 175, the $E\flat$ –D–G motion propulsively continues despite the fact that it is not a cadence in G minor but in $E\flat$ here. Were it not for that cadence—which should have been in G minor according to both the established pattern of the aria and the bass line at this point—and the cadences in the repeated lyrical section and the close, $E\flat$ and G minor would have six root-position perfect cadences apiece. But even given the slight favoring of $E\flat$ here, the sense in which the tonic duck has shaded into the nontonic rabbit is so strong that it is merely force of will that holds the tonic in place at the end. Far from presenting itself as a “natural” order, the very unnatural-

⁸²Rushton, *The Musical Language of Berlioz*, 39.

⁸³See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, P. M. S. Hacker, and Joachim Schulte, ed. P. M. S. Hacker and Joachim Schulte, 4th edn. (Chichester: John Wiley, 2009), 204.

Example 8: Berlioz, *Béatrice et Bénédict*, “Dieu! que viens-je d’entendre,” middleground graph.

ness of tonality, its insistence on violently imposed order without reference to anything but its own great power to resolve difference into unity, is ruthlessly presented here. And in a concluding touch, the inseparability of G minor and E \flat is cemented by a witty little gesture. The final “cadence” is simply a motion from G minor to E \flat (mm. 276–77).

The text reveals the significance of this excessive symbolic violence. Béatrice first presents G minor at m. 40 as she sings of “a hidden fire spreading through [her] breast” (*Je sens un feu secret dans mon sein se répandre*), and she returns to E \flat at m. 54 to sing “it comes

back to me” (*il m’en souvient*)—a dream of Bénédict going away with the army, which made her feel anxious for his well-being.⁸⁴ G minor returns in m. 113 as she sings “when I woke at

⁸⁴The origin for this invention is presumably Berlioz’s close reading of Shakespeare. Leonato says, in an unrelated context, that Beatrice is “never sad but when she sleeps, and not ever sad then; for I have heard my daughter say she hath often dreamt of unhappiness and waked herself with laughing” (II.1.322–25). Perhaps, too, the idea for presenting Béatrice’s most extravagant musical contribution was inspired by Shakespeare’s example. Immediately as she is gulled into confessing love, Beatrice breaks for the first time in the play into poetry (II.1.107).

last I laughed at my turmoil" (en m'éveillant enfin je ris de mon émoi). Bénédicte was not killed in war, as she dreamed, but alive—and she now knows what this means. She loves him and sings so in m. 160, as she returns to G minor after the briefest E \flat tonicization of the aria. "I am no longer myself" (je ne suis plus moi-même), she sings to an E \flat cadence in m. 166, and her new identity is presented to her at the next root-position E \flat cadence in m. 188. She now flies to face a new slavery ("ce cœur sauvage vole au devant de l'esclavage"). Twice more she sings "I love you" to G-minor cadences and bids the key farewell along with happiness and freedom, the losses that every woman must bear in marriage, and the disdain, jests, and savage mockery that specifically characterize her relationship with Bénédicte ("frivole gaieté, . . . liberté, . . . dédains, . . . folies, . . . mordantes railleries"). This latter is the significant privation, since without it their relationship is an empty shell, a sterile and polite copybook version of a generalized kind of marital love. As Rushton observes: "She bids farewell to liberty; the musical language comes close at times to that of the despairing Cassandra ("Non, je ne verrai pas," *Les troyens*, No. 10). . . . The aria, therefore, is far from settling the issue for Beatrice. Her sentiments, mingling love and pain—hastening to slavery, falling victim to love—would, if expressed by the Benedick of the Rondo, be merely a jest, but for Beatrice they are real. If the world must be peopled, the burden falls on the woman."⁸⁵ Shakespeare's Beatrice only bids to "contempt, farewell; and maiden pride, adieu" (III.1.109); in "bind[ing] our loves up in a holy band" (III.1.114) she stands to gain "glory" and "love." In Berlioz the stakes are higher. Beatrice stands to lose negative attributes, Béatrice positive ones; and while Beatrice can happily list items on the credit side, Béatrice never once sings of gaining anything. For her, the effects of interpellation, of accepting a symbolic mandate, are entirely destructive, a symbolic "castration," to use Lacan's term. And so in this aria she will neither accept a mandate nor allow one to present itself as a serious claim on her. The

structure of her aria shows that it is only random systemic violence that holds tonality—and by extension all symbolic identifications—in place at all. The final gesture undermines the victory of E \flat ; her final claim is that any future resolution in this opera will be an auto-critical imposition of a quilting point.

The profound intervention that Béatrice makes into the ideological space of the opera—and of the story, since she goes further than Shakespeare's comic heroine—is brought into sharper focus if she is compared to her friend. Were she Héro, Béatrice would simply turn the painful foreknowledge of the reality of marriage into pleasure by letting the fundamental fantasy provide the minimal support for her being, *patior, ergo sum*, and she would follow the command to "Enjoy!" Instead she takes the radical step of accepting that her subjectivity is founded on a void, and furthermore that the big Other of the symbolic order, the powerfully centered tonal system, is likewise grounded on an abyss of meaninglessness that is merely masquerading as comprehensibility. Shakespeare's Beatrice resists her symbolic mandate until the point that she confesses her love; Berlioz's Béatrice resists it even in and beyond that moment. Her message is "tonality is very strong, but it is arbitrary too. Its rules could be equally well applied in other directions than those it chooses to privilege, with equal arbitrariness. There is no consistency to the outward show of stability. There is no tonal big Other." This aria, therefore, more than anything even in *Tristan*, which relies in each moment on a single tonic goal to which desire can be directed, is an "emancipatory," "revolutionary" tonal design that sets the musical parameters for a love beyond interpellation. Rather than Wagner's unfulfilled dream of a unity of his lovers, Berlioz presents a vision of perpetual war.

In the following trio (No. 11) Béatrice returns to G minor, the oppositional key she alone can successfully wield in this opera, to sing that she would rather see her best days wither in a convent than meekly to drag the chains of (marital) slavery ("de l'esclavage, traîner la chaîne en frémissant? Ah! j'aime mieux dans un couvent voir se flétrir la fleur de mon bel âge"). Once again she links G minor

⁸⁵Rushton, "Berlioz's Swan-Song," 116.

48

Ah! j'ai - me - mieux dans un cou - vent Voir se flé - trir la fleur de mon bel

52

à - ge, Sous le ci - lice et le noir vè - te - ment.

Allegretto

p

f

Example 9: Berlioz, *Béatrice et Bénédict*, Trio, No. 11, mm. 48–56.

and E \flat , but this time she completes their hexatonic relation to marriage's G major, this movement's tonic (ex. 9). If she is to have her way, the symbolic consistency of tonal space is obliterated. As she reminds us of the terms of her hysterical resistance to identification, Héro and Ursule turn to masochistic luxuriation in it, with the fantasy of boredom, jealousy, and betrayal that I mentioned in the discussion of Héro. The "Enseigne" asserts the big Other's verdict on opposition to marriage by mocking the dissident who joked that if he ever turned Winston Smith his friends should hold up a sign to "Benedick, the married man." The joke bites, but it draws blood from the wrong target. Bénédict gave in long ago, but Béatrice is fighting to the end. In the opera's finale, she carries Bénédict and the crowd with her. The crowd immediately universalizes the excessive love of this comic duo—and so potentially does the opera's audience. There is no question of the genuineness of Béatrice's and Bénédict's love. It is massive and unrestrained by their former denial. But it is not a love that is tied to conventional marriage, despite appearances. The

G major we hear for one last time, setting the strains of the overture with which it all began, is not the same G major any more. It has been requited. Béatrice has "frighted the word out of his right sense, so forcible is [her] wit." G major, G minor, E \flat : it's all one, all fake alike, none of it with any power to prevent her traversal of the fundamental fantasy.

Now at last *Béatrice et Bénédict's* final paean to "demain" gives up its meaning, which we can understand as Berlioz's final idea of love. For Berlioz, at least in this opera, the truth of love is the Real of the situation. Everything that features in reality—including traditional and nontraditional forms of marriage—is Symbolic, constructed by language, which can never escape ideology. But beyond the Symbolic, and terrifyingly pressing onto it, is something that can't be symbolized: the Real that is the locus of truth. Berlioz's idea of love is not coherent in the way that either traditional or nontraditional ideas of marriage are coherent—but that is precisely the point, and the source of its value. Coherence belongs to the Symbolic, incoherence—a refusal to cohere, to give in to sym-

bolic efficiency, to graspable understanding—belongs to the Real. The kind of love that can form a new world cannot be accommodated to the rational terms of the existing world, and its interaction with those logical expressions—such as this opera’s G-major associative tonality for marriage—is perpetually, irresolvably antagonistic, destructive, and naggingly irrational.

The truce that Béatrice and Bénédict call is a momentary, faked submission to the fundamental fantasy as embodied musically by the resolution to the work’s tonic, G major, which stands for the symbolic consistency that tonality blithely promises us. Perhaps the faux-submission is made for the sake of their friends Héro and Claudio, who submit so willingly to what Léonato calls the “fantasy” of marriage; or perhaps it is for the post-*Bovary* audience, determined to cherish the very merest sign that the old fantasmatic order has been restored. But ultimately the truce will fail and the pair will return to war. They reject the big Other’s promise of a life of symbolic fullness in favor of an unscripted but emancipated life beyond interpellation. They know that love is not a submission to society: it is a struggle to escape it. Already in *Roméo et Juliette* Berlioz had enabled Shakespeare’s lovers to achieve their escape from the symbolic order, albeit briefly, simply by dispensing with words; here, with words restored—albeit Berlioz’s own—the victory is the greater. But the struggle is unending. Unpicking the military metaphors of *Much Ado*, Nuttall reminds us that “Ovid wrote, *Militiae*

species amor est, ‘Love is a kind of military service’ (*Ars amatoria*, ii.233), and *Militat omnis amans*, ‘Every lover is a soldier’ (*Amores*, I.ix.1), but those were jokes.”⁸⁶ Berlioz’s idea of love began in the realm of the fantastic, was projected onto the universal, and maintained a potential to be bigger than any world that tried to rein it in. In the culminating moments of his last work, Berlioz made a glorious final statement on the issue: he radicalized Ovid’s jokes to make them true. 

Abstract.

Berlioz’s final opera, *Béatrice et Bénédict* (1860–62) has generally been considered a light-hearted work, revelling in the simple joys of love. Yet his final development of the theme of love, which had preoccupied him at least since the *Symphonie fantastique* (1830), makes this *opéra comique* more serious than it might appear to be. Drawing on theories of the human subject by Badiou, Žižek, and Lacan, as well as on the resources of Schenkerian theory, this article invites a new attention on the ideological violence done both by conventional models of love (in this case, on the main characters in the opera) and by the language of tonality. Evaluation of the musical means by which Berlioz psychoanalyzes the characters of a masochist, Héro, and a hysteric, Béatrice, ultimately reveals a surprisingly provocative work of vivid psychological drama.

Keywords: Berlioz, Shakespeare, love, psychoanalysis, ideology

⁸⁶Nuttall, *Shakespeare the Thinker*, 224.