

Berlioz, Love, and *Béatrice et Bénédict*

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Part I: Love in Berlioz and Shakespeare¹

A love that cannot be symbolized

The popular perception of Berlioz's idea of love is perhaps encapsulated by an Internet meme which imagines the author 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 towards love that is utterly at odds with the way our generally, thankfully, more mundane world goes. But it is not necessarily entirely representative of his way of thinking, and it is arguably rather through his lifelong engagement with Shakespeare—an obsession already driving the *Symphonie fantastique* through the *idée fixe* of the Shakespearean actress, Harriet Smithson²—that Berlioz developed his most fascinating thoughts on the nature of romantic love and its essential contribution to the construction of individual human subjects.

Although themes of love feature in some way in much of his music, Berlioz's engagement with Shakespeare—and the development of his most distinctive thoughts on love—can be seen most clearly in his more expansive treatments, the "dramatic symphony" *Roméo et Juliette* (1839) and the opera *Béatrice et Bénédict* (1860–62), which is the principal focus of this essay. In both plays, casting off words is an abiding concern. That is to say that the escape from language, from the symbolic order, is the central goal. In the case of *Romeo and Juliet*, the words to shed are the names "Montague" and "Capulet," which cause the young lovers pain. Plays have a particular problem in evading the symbolic order, since it is in language that they are expressed, but a musical setting can dispense with them, and in his No. 3, the love scene, Berlioz presents the retreat of the symbolic order literally on stage: the movement opens with revelers leaving the Capulet ball, singing goodnight to each other and exchanging a retreating series of cheerful sounds which, however, signify nothing: "tralalala!" That done, the symbolic order of language disappears. Alone, 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 do genuinely experience 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:

1 The 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?"

2 Shakespeare 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*.

“Thou has frighted 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 which was used to create a “scream” that would suggest that the victim was alive later than he in fact was, and so reveal the identity of the murderer.⁴

In *Roméo et Juliette*, then, the lovers seek an impossible resolution in the constitutive “outside” of the symbolic order which they cannot personally escape: it is a resolution in 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 although it is this question which *Roméo et Juliette* first clarifies in a direct sense, it resonates much more 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, which is to say the ideology of the West since the fall of the Berlin Wall, our sexual universe has in this way dispensed with its “tonic” key, so to speak (the musical metaphor is his), leading to “a deep desire for atony.”

One of the orientations of Anglo-American gender studies advocates the abolition of the woman/man polarity, considered as one of the instances—if not the very source—of the major metaphysical dualisms (being and appearing, one and multiple, same and other, etc.). 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 bodies and languages, there is no truth.⁶

Badiou explicitly does not dispute the multiplicity of forms of love (same-sex, opposite-sex, intergenerational, etc.), 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, however it is presented, 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

3 *Much Ado About Nothing*, 5.2.50–1. All line references in this article are to Stanley Wells et al., eds., *The Complete Works*, 2 ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005).

4 The 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.

5 Mladen Dolar, “Beyond interpellation,” *Qui parle* 6, no. 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 essay.

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

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” which has a universal truth-giving function.⁸

The particularities of *Béatrice et Bénédict*, Berlioz’s setting of Shakespeare’s greatest paean to the conventional marital model of love, seem unpromising as the basis for the kind of radical, universalizable love of a Two that Badiou has in mind. It seems, at first blush, rather a conventional work, and perhaps the lack of critical interest in the opera is partly a result of a sense that it is ultimately trifling stuff—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 is much of the same mind: “this short opera is anything but problematical or puzzling.”¹⁰ I want to suggest, by contrast, that although it 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. One clue to this seriousness is indicated by perhaps the greatest of his many recastings of Shakespeare. To the best of my knowledge, nobody has yet considered this change to be worthy of comment, but 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 echo their “demain, demain!” in five measures of pure G major, and then in eight 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 judgement, and Benedick replies: “Think not on him till tomorrow, I’ll devise thee brave punishments for him. Strike up, pipers” (5.4.126–7; the stage direction “*Dance, and exeunt*” follows immediately in 5.4.128). But the violence here is *external* to the marriage ceremony, a narrative necessity, and a social one too, since the villain must be seen to be punished within the confines of the play, even if that is only to be 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 of all this is that this dramatic consummation is no more an outbreaking of peace than a football match in Norman’s-land was around Christmas 1914.

7 Badiou 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,” in *ibid.*, 28–33.

8 *ibid.*, 30.

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

10 Hugh 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).

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? Is it not commonplace for ministers and friends to advise bride and groom to expect this, sagely and humorously, on their wedding day? Yes, of course. 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, to ensure a lifelong, overwhelmingly pacific and comforting union. So perhaps it is a joke: Béatrice and Bénédict are just *saying* that they will be back to fighting tomorrow, and the crowd are 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 in due course return).¹² Putting the matter in the most skeptical terms, suppose that there is at the very 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. Proceeding from this skeptical beginning, I should 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" which, by their own exultant testimony, the crowd is also looking forward to. If this surmise is to underpin a compelling interpretation of Berlioz's idea of love in *Béatrice et Bénédict*, we shall require some collateral evidence. But it is not hard to find, unless we are of a mind to altogether ignore some deeply moving, all-too-human psychological suffering expressed in the music along the way. To prepare the ground for a judgement on Berlioz's conclusion, it is necessary (in Part I) to tease out the cultural themes and psychological implications of the play he chose to adapt. Ultimately, by reflecting on different forms of violence in the play and opera, the argument will turn to Shakespeare's and Berlioz's radically different engagements with the "fundamental fantasy," Lacan's theory of the human subject's relation to a fantasized lost object which is supposed to inhere in the socio-cultural big Other, before turning to an extended analysis of the music (in Part II); but as an initial step, I shall examine the extent to which the marriages in *Much Ado* and *Béatrice et Bénédict*, and critical responses to them, frame the difference between convention and resistance in social relations.

Convention, resistance, and surplus-jouissance in Much Ado About Nothing

Of the two plots in Shakespeare's play, one—that concerning the slandering of a virtuous lady—is derived from his sources (principally Ariosto and Bandello), and one—that concerning two scorners of love who subsequently succumb to its conventional expression in marriage—is original (although, if we exclude the breathless comic expression of it in Shakespeare, which is a big exclusion, Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* may be counted a source).¹³ Berlioz was not alone in finding the second story, that concerning Beatrice and Benedick, the more interesting of the two, and the fact that it was more "authentically Shakespearean" doubtless added to its Romantic attraction. Julian Rushton suggests that, since 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 Superficially this is certainly true: the tale of the chaste woman wrongly accused did not

12 Stephen Greenblatt, "Introduction to 'Much Ado About Nothing,'" ed. Stephen Greenblatt, et al. (New York: Norton, 2008), 1412.

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

14 Rushton, "Berlioz's swan-song," 107.

suggest itself to Berlioz as an interesting idea for dramatic realization. Yet Hero, like Beatrice, has 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 importantly different characters differentiated in the following discussion in the simplest way, I shall refer to them respectively as Beatrice and Béatrice, Benedick and Bénédicte, Hero and Héro wherever possible.

If *convention* is the watchword of the Hero and Claudio relationship, then—at least until they are successfully tricked into desiring marriage—*resistance* 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.¹⁵ But despite being attracted to one another, both are passionately committed to remaining legally single (or, in other words, they may not wish to remain chaste, but they certainly wish to remain celibate). The final victory of convention, which all but the most restless sexual revolutionaries in the audience are happy 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.”¹⁶ Benedick finally silences Beatrice with a kiss, after her insistence—softened by a joke—that “I yield upon great persuasion, and partly to save your life, for I was told you were in a consumption” (5.4.94–6). Except that he does not: as the third Arden edition makes clear, the line “(kissing her) Peace, I will stop your mouth” (5.4.97) does not belong to Benedick. The magic of Shakespeare's comedy is at work even on “objective” scholarship.

The speech prefix and the stage direction [...] are another instance of gratuitous emendation by Shakespeare's editors, who for centuries have agreed that the line must belong to Benedick and be accompanied by a kiss, despite the fact that both the Quarto and the Folio editions of the play assign the line to Leonato and make no mention of a kiss. [...] The original attribution of the line to Leonato could hardly be more appropriate, given the comedy's consistent concern with estrangement and dispossession. The restoration of that attribution and the loss of Benedick's kiss make the line more disturbing, but not as disturbing as the compulsion to twist the original text to fit the sentimental assumptions the comedy is bent on contesting.¹⁷

15 When Claudio asks him for his opinion of Hero's beauty, Benedick replies that her cousin, Beatrice, “exceeds her as much in beauty as the first of May doth the last of December” (1.1.181–2); at the costume ball Beatrice quips to Benedick, whom she affects not to recognize, “I am sure he [Benedick] is in the fleet. I would he had boarded me” (2.1.132–3), with “boarded” meaning both attacked, as if she were a ship, as well as sexually penetrated. She expresses to Don Pedro a dislike the thought of sex with Benedick, but only because it could lead to pregnancy: when Don Pedro says that in her abuse she has “put him down,” she turns his innocent remark smutty by quipping: “So I would not he should do me, my lord, lest I should prove the mother of fools” (2.1.266–7). Physical attraction, for Benedick, and sexual desire, for Beatrice, are at the core of their sparring relationship.

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

17 Kiernan Ryan, *Shakespeare's Comedies* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 192. Claire McEachern, the Arden editor, takes a very different view: the restoration of the line to Leonato “provides for a more egalitarian accommodation between the lovers than would Benedick's own declaration of intent to silence Beatrice, an egalitarianism which is in keeping with the tenor of their relationship throughout” (Claire McEachern, ed. *Much Ado About Nothing* (London: Arden, 2006), 316.). The misattribution to Benedick is carried over into Larouche's

By this stage, any readers, members of the audience, or even editors who consider themselves to be deeply critical of the institution of marriage will probably experience a pleasantly discomfiting sensation familiar to viewers of Hitchcock's *Psycho*. In that film, when the car containing the murdered body of Marion Crane stops for a moment as it is sinking into the bog, a flash of fear crosses Norman Bates's face. He looks nervously behind him. Without thinking, the audience feels an access of tension. "Sink, for goodness sake!" The car obligingly sinks fully into the bog. The tension is released, and we realize that just for a moment we have sympathized with someone who is covering up a murder (even if we do not yet know that it is his). For naive receivers of Shakespeare's play who suspend their opposition to marriage in order to enjoy the blissful conclusion of his play, as for viewers of *Psycho* who (presumably, in the main) do not approve of murder, this suspension of a habitual ideological or moral commitment is easy to perform: this is "just art," not ideology, and the way that it can encourage us to step outside of ourselves and reach a more informed view of our own prejudices is one of its more valuable qualities. Yet in such cases, the receiver is the victim of manipulation: we should not be blind to the ideological work being done.

But there are other 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 account, relatively socially conservative, 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 in such a way that, this economic element being removed and certain freedoms for women being built in, it becomes something that even cynics can valorize.¹⁸ For Charles T. Prouty, an example of the first kind of scholar (the "old historicist" or "formalist" kind), what marks the couples apart is not so much a different attitude towards the attraction of marriage as a formal hallmark of a loving relationship, but rather their contrary views of the *content* of that marital bond. Significantly, he designates both attitudes, since both ultimately fail to question the institution of marriage, "realistic."

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. But the play is not a *drame à thèse*, it is essentially high comedy wherein the frailty of human pretensions is humorously revealed.¹⁹

translation, which Berlioz used.

18 Marriage 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, et al. (New York: Norton, 2008), 10., my italics).

19 Prouty, *The Sources of 'Much Ado about Nothing'. A Critical Study, Together with the Text of Peter Beverley's 'Ariodanto' and 'Ieneura'*. 63. For Léonato, the commitment to marriage, by whomever, is not as "realistic" as it is for Prouty. Straight after Héro and Claudio are married, in

Claire McEachern, an example of the second kind of scholar (the “new historicist” kind), also draws attention to the conventionality of both couples, but focuses specifically on the seventeenth-century context in which it should be understood, 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.”²⁰ McEachern elaborates the view that even the Hero and Claudio relationship is a putatively feminist revision by Shakespeare of his sources. In Ariosto’s presentation of the equivalent marriage there is a clear sense of economic exchange between the father and prospective husband—an element which Prouty sees retained in the reshaping by Shakespeare—but McEachern suggests that the equivalence of Leonato’s and Claudio’s social status invalidates a purely economic reading of the union, and that the evidence of genuine love between the couple demonstrates Shakespeare’s gentle critique of his society’s conventional views of marriage.²¹ For her, the Beatrice and Benedick relationship is even more admirable: rather than being 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.”²²

In essence, and despite their differences of motivation, these arguments amount to the claim that the two plots trace two different routes to similar ends, with marriage either being beyond question a good thing (Prouty) or good even for feminist critics like McEachern on account of its redefinition by Shakespeare (the idea that the radical comic redrawing makes possible a marriage model entirely freed from patriarchal exogamous exchange, and thus a positive feminist prospect). Both arguments depend on a fundamental sympathy for the institution of marriage, but again the skeptic will point out that 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*.

The two positions I have been discussing can be given the Lacanian terms “fool” and “knave.”²³ The “knave” has no problem with the existing order of things, and uses its mere existence as an argument in its favor—or, more usually, as sufficient grounds to avoid bringing the existing order into question at all. The category of knaves includes scholars, or members of the public with an interest in art, who express a distaste for theory. Terry Eagleton’s rejoinder exposes the unreasonable nature of this objection: “No layperson opens a botany textbook and shuts it with an irascible bang if they do not understand it straight away. Since art and culture are at least as complex as the life of plants, it would be strange if talk

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.

20 Claire McEachern, “Introduction,” in *Much Ado About Nothing*, ed. Claire McEachern (London: Arden, 2006), 35.

21 See Claire McEachern, “Fathering herself: a source study of Shakespeare’s feminism,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39, no. 3 (1988).

22 McEachern, McEachern, “Introduction,” 50.

23 Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959–60*, trans. Dennis Porter, vol. 7, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan* (New York: Norton, 1992), 179–90.

about them were any more instantly comprehensible.”²⁴ But the knavish position is a socially and politically conservative as well as an intellectually insufficient one: knaves quickly mock any Leftist critique of prevailing practices or conditions as “utopian,” and cheerfully play up their knavishness by appealing, in the final analysis, to simple or brute “reality” (in the same way that they appeal to “plain English” rather than the “jargon” of theory). When he witnessed millions marching against war in Iraq on a visit to London, President George W. Bush demonstrated exemplary knavish credentials by collapsing that “utopianism” into “reality” by saying (in Slavoj Žižek’s paraphrase): “You see, this is what we are fighting for: so that what people are doing here—protesting against their government policy—will be possible also in Iraq!”²⁵ In a very limited sense, insofar as he does not question marriage as a cultural form, Prouty occupies the position of the “knave.”²⁶ The “fool,” by contrast, kicks up a public fuss about the faults or deliberate deceptions of the existing social, cultural, economic, and political forms, but in a self-undermining way. An example of what I mean is the satirist, whose apparently aggressive denunciations of the status quo are enfeebled by their comic delivery. One of the most prominent of late-twentieth-century satirists in Britain, Peter Cook, encapsulated this sardonically when he opened his Establishment Club in Soho in 1961: he was modeling it, he said, on “those wonderful Berlin cabarets which did so much to stop the rise of Hitler and prevent the outbreak of the Second World War.”²⁷

The crucial difference to bear in mind here is that between the *content* and the *position* of an enunciation. So, when the graffiti artist Banksy produced the opening titles to an episode of *The Simpsons*, aired on Rupert Murdoch’s Fox TV, the content of his enunciation was clearly an acerbically anti-corporate message: we cut away from the normal title sequence to a dark factory environment where masses of dispirited workers paint the cartoon’s colorful images and make clothing, cuddly toys, and other Simpsons memorabilia, amid skeletons of child workers who have died at their work. But the position of enunciation is, first, in the opening title sequence of a comedy show that is shortly going to make the viewer feel good, and second, on Rupert Murdoch’s own television network. Even without the exaggerations in his critique, which have the effect of implying that the whole thing is just a joke (cuddly toys are stuffed with the feathers of birds killed for the purpose; a sorrowful unicorn punches out the holes in the center of CDs with his horn), the position of enunciation translates the message into something like: “I’m not such a bad guy after all: see, I can take even the most obscene criticism like this on the chin. I might seem like a monstrosity but I’m really just your cuddly uncle Rupert.”²⁸

What “fool” and “knave” share is what Žižek calls a “libidinal profit, the ‘surplus-enjoyment’, which sustains the two positions.”²⁹ The surplus is generated by converting pain to pleasure, for instance by President Bush converting a million voices raised in anger and opposition into a self-serving vision of friendly support, or by Banksy converting the grim knowledge, which we all share, of the real means by which Western consumer goods are made, into a finger-

24 Terry Eagleton, *After Theory* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), 78.

25 Slavoj Žižek, *Living in the End Times* (London and New York: Verso, 2010), 326.

26 The very title of a recent book indicates that the world’s most famous musicologist is a knave too (Richard Taruskin, *The Danger of Music and Other Anti-Utopian Essays* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).).

27 Quoted in an interview with Tom Lehrer, conducted by Tony Davis, “Stop clapping, this is serious,” *Sydney Morning Herald* 2003.

28 The title sequence can be seen at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DX1iplQQJTo>.

29 Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies* (reprint, London and New York: Verso, 2008), 56.

wagging critique. It makes the sympathetic receiver feel both that they are on the moral high ground and that somebody is “sticking it to the man,” without actually achieving any change at all; in other words, it provides the “hysterical satisfaction of snatching a little piece of *jouissance* away from the Master.”³⁰ The particular style of feminist argument adopted by McEachern and others, which has the effect of demonstrating how Shakespeare articulates and then critiques a patriarchal bias, does not threaten seriously to harm the prevailing ideology; by contrast, it increases the receiver’s appreciation of the artwork, by providing surplus-*jouissance*. This is why both knave and fool ultimately support the prevailing cultural form. It is a contention of this essay that in *Béatrice et Bénédicte* Berlioz avoids this, but in order to see how this is achieved the argument must be taken beyond new-historical readings of *Much Ado*, as useful as 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 which are useful guides to clarifying the themes of both *Much Ado* and *Béatrice et Bénédicte*.³¹ 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 to say that most immediately, symbolic violence manifests as the “merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and [Beatrice]” in Shakespeare (1.1.59), which Berlioz’s spoken text calls, rather nicely, a war of epigrams (“une guerre d’*épigrammes*”; *NBE* 3, 59). It is, importantly, also evinced by the violence done to Claudio and Hero, and potentially all of Messinan society, by the slanders of Don John. The third, *systemic violence*, is the means by which a system of economics, politics, culture, society, and so on, enables its own smooth function. It is a violence of proxies and purblindness, of centrally taken decisions having powerful effects on remote individuals, or of cultural norms without a clear origin and no single human Master (the cultural investment in marriage, for instance) exercising diffuse but massive and ubiquitous pressure that punishes lack of conformity with the threat of at least making the miscreant a pariah, and at most doing subjective violence to them.

The transition from the first to the second form of violence in *Much Ado* is superbly traced by A. D. Nuttall, in a study which returns to the early twentieth-century humanist tradition of Shakespeare scholarship.³² Nuttall sees the “merry war” as both a significant transformation of Benedick’s existence heretofore and also the kind of relationship that can only be expressed, at least in what we might call its pupate form, in terms of war. Already by Act 1 scene i, Nuttall claims that “Beatrice is now 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.”³³ This is perceptive, and the sense that the transition is quickly effected is enhanced by Shakespeare’s attentive control of bellicose

30 *ibid.*, 57.

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

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

33 *ibid.*, 224–5.

language (here closely followed by Berlioz in Act 1 scene iii, *NBE* 3, 59).³⁴ In Shakespeare, it is in fact fair to say that 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," (1.1.110–11) at least one person is marking (noticing) him: Beatrice herself. The pair are, then, "electrically aware of each other from the start,"³⁵ and their bickering reflects a universal quality in most humans (here, we verge on knavish "realism"). Comparing the bickering between Beatrice and Benedick 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 pupal stage of courtship, Nuttall finally relates their posturing more generally to certain kinds of flirtatious lovers in a winning image. 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."³⁶

This is persuasive, but in being swept up by the charming nature of his argument 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 raillery, he fails to establish that *marriage* is, specifically, the logical next stage. Certainly joking must stop for kissing to begin, but only the most absurdly sententious would insist on marriage as a preliminary to that. Yet this easy slippage, 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—to be understood synechdochically for sex—may happen on and off, being separated by long periods of antagonism which may even serve to sharpen the desire for the kiss: the fighting, being 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 bunfight, its basic form is peaceful, its basic expression loving. One model therefore gives symbolic violence a heightened erotic charge; the other draws social comfort from "realistic" systemic violence.

34 The 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?" (1.1.29–30; 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?" (1.1.40–41; not in Berlioz). The Messenger replies that "He hath done good service, lady, in these wars" (1.1.46–7; "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 1.1.276, 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" (1.1.60; "escarmouche") and "conflict" (1.1.62; "rencontre") complete the re-definition, and again, are never uttered again).

35 Nuttall, *Shakespeare the Thinker*, 223.

36 *ibid.*, 225–6.

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 artwork. Shakespeare's presentation is more stable than Berlioz's, which is to say that the relation 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 judgement on the villain Don John: "Think not on him till tomorrow, I'll devise thee brave punishments for him. Strike up, pipers" (5.4.126–7).³⁷ As Nuttall demonstrates, the main body of the play is dominated by the symbolic violence that Beatrice and Benedick do, ultimately only as Lacanian "fools," 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.³⁸ *Much Ado's* forms of violence are therefore held in an equilibrium which 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 evinces a stark differentiation from his source. First there is the target of the violence that will come "tomorrow," and the form it takes. For Shakespeare, it is subjective violence 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 makes good use of the idea of 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 Messinan 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 their opposition is likewise doomed:³⁹ though it is laughable here in a very direct way, the implications of their symbolic violence are comparable to his: "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

37 Greenblatt, "Introduction to 'Much Ado About Nothing'," 1410.

38 Nuttall 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.).

39 Kiernan Ryan notes that Don John "finds a strange bedfellow [...] 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*, 173.).

leaves scars.”⁴⁰ Don John’s fate is also directly related to theirs, and their subjection to systemic pressure means that they can at last be accepted rather than ejected by their society.

The figure that Don John represents is found in every society, and in analyzing its ideological function as a kind of social glue that works in the moment that it is identified and picked off, Giorgio Agamben calls it *homo sacer*.⁴¹ Contemporary examples include caricatures like the banker who does not pay his taxes or the benefits “scrounger” who lives luxuriously on taxpayer handouts (these being caricatures of Left and Right respectively). *Homo sacer* is any one of a number of monstrous elements whose presumed character delimits the “proper,” “natural” function of society, and whose erasure from the public space is the mechanism which guarantees the smooth function of the social order. Sometimes *homo sacer* is put to death in reality, but at other times a symbolic death will do: it is enough to effect an exclusion from accepted public, political space, a monsterring, a rejection of the validity of any of the individual’s claims. Beatrice and Benedick certainly do not face death if they reject marriage, but it is the threat of symbolic death, which would throw them “between the two deaths,” which spurs them to accept it:

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?” (3.1.108–09). “I hear how I am censured,” Benedick declares, resolving that he “must not seem proud” [2.3.214, 218].⁴²

As so often with new-historical studies, Greenblatt’s reading here is essentially Foucauldian. The ideological pressure to marry, represented by “scorn” and “censure,” is here *internalized*, and has no need of an external agent. This echoes Foucault’s famous description of the Panopticon, whose function is “to induce in the inmate the state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the *automatic* functioning of power.”⁴³ On the Foucauldian view, the awareness that they *could* be watched is enough to do the watching: there is no need for a prison guard to actually be present because the subject will do the repression by him- or herself. 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).⁴⁴ 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 interpellate, in Althusser’s sense, as ideological subjects. These RSAs are our own local Don Pedros and Benedicks, which we have recently seen active in putting down student protests against rising tuition fees in the UK. Far from the amiable constable on the beat with his truncheon, helping old ladies to cross roads, the modern reality of ideological policing is made plain by its tendency to “kettle” protestors into a restricted space and then charge at them with horses. 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

40 Greenblatt, “Introduction to ‘Much Ado About Nothing,’” 1410.

41 Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer. Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

42 Greenblatt, “Introduction to ‘Much Ado About Nothing,’” 1411.

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

44 Louis Althusser, “Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatus,” (London: New Left Books, 1971).

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 actually staged in the brutal treatment of Kate. It takes an *excess* of subjective violence, such as Shakespeare provides in the rape of Lucrece, 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.”⁴⁵ The material reality should not, then, be overlooked. The institution of marriage can bear a lot of violence, as long as it is systemic and subjective. It is symbolic violence that poses problems. Their capitulation in the face of extreme odds—Foucauldian nonmaterial scorn and censure, and with it the implied threat of Althusserian material violence—means that what Beatrice and Benedick seemed, at the start of the play, to offer by way of 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, because they, along with interpreters who put the safety catch on their verbal firearms, call an amnesty on subjective violence. Starting with a question that I have already quoted, Stephen 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 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.⁴⁶

McEachern considers this “unduly cynical,”⁴⁷ but Kiernan Ryan’s reading, broadly the same as Greenblatt’s, is probably more immediately persuasive for the skeptic, because it takes the sting out of Don Pedro’s trickery and stresses instead the fact that this relationship is a potentially universalizable instance of the repressed reality of the nature of falling in love—and one which tends to lead individuals 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.⁴⁸

Ryan’s reading, the most fully worked-out of recent studies, is also the most psychologically

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

46 Greenblatt, “Introduction to ‘Much Ado About Nothing,’” 1412.

47 McEachern, “Introduction,” 50.

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

suggestive and consequently very important for my own reading. 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.⁴⁹ 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 allowing the systemic violence of marriage to contain (literally, in the central 90-odd percent of the play) 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 *homo sacer*, Don John, and in so doing achieves two remarkable effects. First, he 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 *homines sacri* 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 "the real goal" of love, marriage. 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." In so doing he 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,⁵⁰ 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* (which is a neat reversal of Shakespeare). There is still manipulation in the exuberant joy at the end of Berlioz's opera—only it is in the opposite direction to that in *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 ancientry. And then comes repentance, and with his bad legs falls into the cinquepace faster and faster till he sink into his grave.⁵¹

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 to the relative lack of tactility of Shakespeare's lovers on-stage: "the jig represents the physical consummation that follows" the marriage which ends his comedies.⁵² So, where Shakespeare requires the excessive *subjective* violence of rape (in *The Rape of Lucrece*) to besmirch the ideological

49 Although, of course, proof of this hypothesis will ultimately only come from the analysis of the music in Part II of this essay, it is worth pushing this single interesting interpolation in Berlioz's libretto to its logical conclusion at this point.

50 The fact of his bastardy is "ideologically significant because it locates the 'natural' origins of social disruption in those who do not legitimately occupy a place in the traditional social order" (Jean E. Howard, "Renaissance anti-theatricality and the politics of gender and rank in *Much Ado About Nothing*," in *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology*, ed. Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor (London and New York: Routledge, 1987), 175.).

51 2.1.65–72.

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

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 Bénédicte 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.⁵³

The fundamental fantasy's new clothes

A frequently encountered criticism of new historicism and cultural materialism, now the intellectual orthodoxies of Renaissance literary criticism, is that they seem to reduce Shakespeare to the status of a mere mirror of Elizabethan ideology, or else a tool for exposing ideological fault-lines in our own world, with the aim of trying to effect discursive change today. But already George Bernard Shaw explained, in hilariously antibardolatrous terms, why this criticism entirely misses the point.⁵⁴ He takes critics to task who fall for “the main pretension in *Much Ado* [...] that Benedick and Beatrice are exquisitely witty and amusing persons.”⁵⁵ What such critics fail to realize is the burden of the eleventh item in Shaw’s twelve-point credo on Shakespeare, namely “that Shakespear’s [*sic*] power lies in his enormous command of word-music, which gives fascination to his most blackguardly repartees and sublimity to his hollowest platitudes.”⁵⁶ In his review of *Much Ado*, Shaw suggests that, starved of this “word-music,” the play “becomes what Don Giovanni or Die Zauberflöte would become if Mozart’s music were burnt and the libretto alone preserved.”⁵⁷ He proves his point by acting-out the creation of word-music of his own.

When a flower-girl tells a coster to hold his jaw, for nobody is listening to him, and he retorts, “Oh, youre [*sic*] there, are you, you beauty?” they reproduce the wit of Beatrice and Benedick exactly. But put it this way. “I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick: nobody marks you.” “What! my dear Lady Disdain, are you yet living?” You are miles away from coster-land at once. When I tell you that Benedick and the coster are equally poor in thought, Beatrice and the flower-girl equally vulgar in repartee, you reply that I might as well tell you that a nightingale’s love is no higher than a cat’s. Which is exactly what I do tell you, though the nightingale is the better musician.⁵⁸

53 It does, however, bear some similarity to G. K. Chesterton’s novel *Manalive* (1912), in which, among other things, Innocent Smith repeatedly travels the world with his wife, Mary, who adopts a new spinsterish identity in each new location in order that they can many times over reenact their courtship.

54 The observation holds, by the way, *mutatis mutandis*, for any other artistic output whatever, since it hinges on the manner in which art makes its “meanings” come to presence.

55 George Bernard Shaw, *Shaw on Shakespeare; An Anthology of Bernard Shaw’s Writings on the Plays and Production of Shakespeare* (New York: Dutton, 1961), 141.

56 *ibid.*, 26.

57 *ibid.*, 166.

58 *ibid.*, 157. He ends with a marvelous swipe at the English, a favorite target: “we all, no matter how stupid we are, can understand his jokes and platitudes, and are flattered when we are told of the subtlety of the wit we have relished, and the profundity of the thought we have fathomed. The English are specially susceptible to this sort of flattery, because intellectual subtlety is not their strong point.”

The strong implication is that Shakespeare's "word-music" does little more than speciously beautify banal communication; it is both brilliant and disingenuous.⁵⁹ Disingenuous, because what Shaw conceals here, of course, is that if you remove the music of Shakespeare, you do not end up with *Don Giovanni's* libretto; you end up with Shakespeare's sources (and in the case of Beatrice and Benedick, who are original creations, that means silence). In praising his skill as a "musician," Shaw is praising Shakespeare's skill as the thing we take him to be: an alchemical playwright who turned the rubbish of his day to pure gold. But his observation is brilliant too, because he puts a finger on Shakespeare's ability to clothe the commonplaces of his day—which are just as often ideological as they are "witty"—in a verbal costume that makes us forget, if we are not careful, what is being covered over. Shaw's own nightingale and cat image itself attempts to cover over what it points to: Aesop's fable of the hawk and nightingale (perhaps coming to Shaw by way of the Russian fabulist Ivan Krylov, who like him substitutes a cat for the hawk).⁶⁰ In that fable, the nightingale offers to sing to the hawk to save its life, but the hawk—lacking artistic ability but exercising far greater subjectively violent power as big Other—decides that it can do without the music but not without its food. Shakespeare the nightingale might well be a better musician than the costermongers of his day, hawking their ideological moonshine, but their vacuity ultimately has a greater force and therefore arbitrary authority than his word-music, and will swallow it whole—as we see it does to Beatrice and Benedick. For that reason, attending to the style of the clothing that Shakespeare chooses, as Shaw invites us to do by example, is a highly revealing activity. Shakespeare neither mirrors nor entirely resists Elizabethan ideology in such a way that we can access the "meaning" that his word-music presents. Like Freud's analysis of dreams or Marx's of commodities, "the 'secret' to be unveiled through analysis is not the content hidden by the form (the form of commodities, the form of dreams) but, on the contrary, *the 'secret' of this form itself,*" the mere fact that his word-music refashions costermonger chatter.⁶¹

Ryan spins a virtuoso reading of *Much Ado's* talk of "fashion" from an opening observation that the famous "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—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.*"⁶² The essence of Ryan's argument is that clothing that immateriality is what gives the characters form, and "fashion" is the work's crucial image for the process of ideological interpellation.⁶³

59 It is, incidentally, in essence the accusation that Abbate levels at musical hermeneutics (in Carolyn Abbate, "Music—Drastic Or Gnostic?," *Critical Inquiry* 30, no. 3 (2004)): she claims that hermeneutics says something banal that "sticks" to music, which, through its transcendent beauty, makes the utterance seem more significant. Abbate disapproves, but is this not one of the points of music, and a reason why some of us write about it? At its deepest, music says things we can scarcely imagine; but even at its least original it utters truisms, which we mere critics can decode, and it does so beautifully. The problem is not at all with the banality of the "meaning" glimpsed by the hermeneutist (ideological messages are often extremely banal); the problem is with the ideology, and the more banal the decoded "message," the more easily the significance of it is downplayed.

60 The fable is no. 4 in the Perry Index of Aesop. See *Aesop's Fables* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). For the Krylov, see Ivan Andreevich Krylov, *Russian Fables of Ivan Krylov*, trans. Bernard Pares (Harmondsworth and New York: Penguin, 1942).

61 Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (reprint, London and New York: Verso, 2008), 3.

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

63 Jean E. Howard argues for a connection between Shakespeare's presentation of excess or

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.⁶⁴

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 towards 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. To channel Shaw for a moment, it is clear that nobody would be charmed if he said “Time for you to get married now, Don Pedro: come on, we’re all doing it,” but he has better words: “Prince, thou art sad, get thee a wife, get thee a wife. There is no staff more reverend than one tipped with horn” (5.4.121–3). 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!” (this connection between marriage and cuckoldry is of course established by the first cuckold joke of the play).

Elizabethan audiences clearly found the figure of the cuckold a riotously funny one, 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.”⁶⁵ 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 is punished for both failings; the wife and the second man, meanwhile, are punished for their lasciviousness by losing the respect of the community. 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 a period feel.⁶⁶ *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.⁶⁷ Adultery stood then, as it stands still, as an officially

mutability in dress and contemporary anti-theatrical tracts which link this both to social subversiveness and to the perceived flaws in women: see Howard, “Renaissance anti-theatricality and the politics of gender and rank in *Much Ado About Nothing*.”

64 Ryan, *Shakespeare’s Comedies*, 169.

65 McEachern, “Introduction,” 48.

66 For the first 22 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 meagre encouragement. This is an important moment in the opera’s structure, and I return to it in more detail below.

67 Berlioz corresponded with Flaubert, and probably met him, at least as early as 1862, and while there is no evidence that he read *Madame Bovary*, it seems likely that he did—or at least that he

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 or 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 undermines this fantasy quite brilliantly, as Žižek perceives.

Flaubert took a crucial step in undermining the co-ordinates 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: in this kind of novel, of course, the final punishment (mortal illness, exclusion from society) only enhances the fatal attraction of the adulterous affair, at the same time allowing the reader to indulge in this attraction without penalty. What is so profoundly disturbing and depressing about *Madame Bovary* is that it takes even this last refuge away from us—it depicts adultery in all its misery, as a false escape, an inherent moment of the dull and grey bourgeois universe. This is why *Madame Bovary* had to be brought to trial: it deprives the bourgeois individual of the last hope that an escape from the constraints of meaningless everyday life is possible. A passionate extramarital liaison not only poses no threat to conjugal love; rather, it functions as a kind of inherent transgression which provides the direct fantasmatic support to the conjugal link, and thus participates in what it purports to subvert. It is this very belief that, outside the constraints of marriage, in the adulterous transgression, we can really obtain “that,” full satisfaction, which is questioned by the hysterical attitude: hysteria involves the apprehension that the “real thing” behind the mask of the social etiquette is itself void, a mere mirage.⁶⁸

For Berlioz, writing under 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 which guarantees the consistency of marriage, and 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 that was the proximate cause of the

read about its scandalous aftershocks in the papers. And the influence may have been mutual: it is possible to suppose that part of the characterization of Frédéric's first sight of Mme Arnoux, and his suicidal episode, in Bovary's *Sentimental Education* might have been suggested by the extremely well-known story of the beginnings of Berlioz's infatuation with Smithson. The following might easily have come from Berlioz's program note to *Symphonie fantastique*: “She looked exactly like the women in romantic novels. He wouldn't have wanted to add to or take away one single detail of her; the universe had suddenly become more spacious and *She* was the glittering focus of it all. So, lulled by the motion of the carriage and gazing up at the clouds with half-closed eyes, he surrendered to his dreams of never-ending bliss” (Gustave Flaubert, *A Sentimental Education: The Story of a Young Man*, trans. Douglas Parmée, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 11.). I am grateful to Julian Rushton for suggesting this link to me.

68 Slavoj Žižek, ed. *Lacan: The Silent Partners* (London and New York: Verso, 2006), 260.

change. But either way, the fantasy at the heart of marriage is subjected by Berlioz to even more relentless scrutiny, I suggest, than it is by Shakespeare. I shall argue this more fully in Part II, but already in the libretto I think that Berlioz's intentions emerge very clearly. In another of his interpolations of ideas that he 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 which is 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: the *masochist* and the *hysteric*. In their most immediate meanings, these are Lacan's clinical terms for what might naturally be conceived as "conventional" and "unconventional" responses to cultural pressures, terms which might more obviously seem to fit with the those two characters: but the effects of these 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, and as a final preparation for examining Berlioz's characterizations of Héro and Béatrice the relation between the psyche and the power of ideological injunctions needs 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."⁶⁹ 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 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 level at which most people most basically understand themselves and other people. We repress that same-sex attachment, and assume a gendering that is based on its opposite—heterosexuality. The repression of this first "passionate attachment" means that gender is "a kind of melancholy, [...] a mourning for un-lived possibilities."⁷⁰

Lacan's term for these "passionate attachments" is the *fundamental fantasy*, and as Žižek points out in a very extended critique of Butler, Lacan's conception avoids the logical error that both Butler and her starting point, Freud, fall into.⁷¹ In short, the logical problem is that Butler's theory attempts to account for the traumatic first experience of difference—i.e., the recognition that there are others as well as me—from a starting point which already presupposes a world split into two different genders: the human subject who forms a "passionate attachment" to the same-sex parent has already, logically, determined that gender identifications exist. What Lacan insists is that the split which constitutes the psyche is not a split between an identifiable male and female, Self and Other, but actually a split *within the*

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

70 *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)).

71 See Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (reprint, London and New York: Verso, 2008), 291–373.

subject itself. To put it simply, humans are social beings, and depend on others for psychological comfort and security. This need for others locates a part of the subject in the Other, specifically in the *objet a*, the fantasy object that draws the split subject ineluctably both to “little others” (people, money, pints of beer...) and to the big Other, the symbolic order itself, in a perpetually unrealizable circuit of desire. Sexual identity does not precede this traumatic realization of difference, but proceeds from it, as a universal coping strategy.

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.⁷²

Žižek’s argument neatly avoids another problem with Butler’s view, namely the implication that, since what makes us uncertain in our gender is that we have all repressed a forbidden same-sex “passionate attachment,” then if we were all gay we should all be more or less as happy as Larry. The existence of a single non-euphoric gay person would have the effect of calling her theory into question. From Žižek’s Lacanian perspective, however, the split is fundamental to all, and not dependent on sexuality: on the contrary, the split is *constitutive* of sexuality. Neither of the two basic biological sexes, and no sexuality, have any positive contents; all identifications depend on a fantasy relationship to the *objet a* 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.”⁷³ The subject is there in the form of the gap which, alone, “is” the subject.

With that understanding in place it is simple to explain the meaning of “masochist” and “hysteric” in the Lacanian sense that will now underpin the music analysis of Part II. The masochist’s acceptance of the fundamental fantasy leads it to radically reformulate the Cartesian *cogito, ergo sum* in terms which 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.”⁷⁴ Existence itself, with the support of some kind of reliable and “whole” personal identity, depends therefore on a relatively straightforward act of “masochistic deception.” Žižek imagines

the citizen of a country in which one’s head is cut off if one says publicly that the king is stupid; if this subject dreams that his head is to be cut off, this dream has nothing whatsoever to do with any kind of death wish, etc., it simply means that the subject thinks his king is stupid—that is, the predicament of suffering masks the pleasure of attacking the dignity of the king.⁷⁵

Similarly, in a society in which it is unacceptable symbolic violence to suggest that marriage

72 *ibid.*, 324.

73 *ibid.*, 348.

74 *ibid.*, 337.

75 *ibid.*, 338. He observes further that “Such a strategy of deception, however, 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 ‘sadomasochistic’ 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*” (*ibid.*).

is a false image of happiness, which leads to certain pain (the Beatrice and Benedick view), a subject who makes a great show of the “suffering of love,” as Héro does in her duet with Ursule, No. 8, is likewise performing a masquerade in the service of pleasure, criticizing painful reality without superego censorship—in other words, succumbing to the fundamental fantasy. Play-acting suffering masks the pleasure of submitting to the ideological injunction to marry. In “hysteria,” by contrast, 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 such as that 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 which does not allow its love to be defined by the world, being formed 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?”⁷⁶ 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 be the topic of the final section. But before that, the masochistic deceptions of Héro should be examined in detail.

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, so to speak, the dominant ideology of music in the period from Bach to Schoenberg. 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 of “inside” and “outside,” “normal” and “deviant,” are the lifeblood of ideological configurations, the regulation of consonance and dissonance ought to be the principal focus of ideological analysis.⁷⁷ Schenkerian analysis, which explains how even the remotest keys in a piece are ultimately 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 (or any stance in between or outside these extremes).⁷⁸

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

77 Other elements of music are either controlled by tonality (melody, harmony) or simply do not exert anything 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 kind of residual tonality in handed-down forms: 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.).

78 These positions are most potently argued in the extensive debate between Susan McClary, Ruth A. Solie, and Pieter van den Toorn: see Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1991)., Ruth A. Solie, “What

A large part of the objection to Schenkerian modes of analysis since the 1980s has come from scholars who view its tendency to encourage dismissal of what it brands the *nonmusical* or (only slightly better) *extramusical* contexts of music as politically offensive: where, they ask, are the musical actors, the real people who make, perform, and are, in part, culturally constructed by this music? But it seems to me that such objections 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, famously, because it demonstrates the superiority of German *Geist* over both foreign imitations and the disruptions of twentieth-century modernity. But at other times, as with one of the most extensive studies of capitalism, which was the life work of Karl Marx, the study is undertaken in order to understand exactly how a detested system works, and how potential fissures in its operation can be seen to open up. The motivations of the author are less important here than opponents of Schenker often seem to imagine, and I suggest that, 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, it may be that Schenkerian analysis is an effective means of proceeding.⁷⁹

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.⁸⁰ 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 $\flat III$). 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, 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). 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 which 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 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

do feminists want? A reply to Pieter van den Toorn," *The Journal of Musicology* 9, no. 4 (1991), and Pieter C. van den Toorn, "Politics, feminism, and contemporary music theory," *ibid.*, no. 3 for the essential outlines.

79 I argue this case for Schenker's role in ideology critique much more extensively in J. P. E. Harper-Scott, *The Quilting Points of Musical Modernism: Revolution, Reaction, and William Walton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

80 For an analysis of Berlioz's treatment of tonality, see Julian Rushton, *The Musical Language of Berlioz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), particularly chapters 3 and 4. Rushton's analysis throws up time and again compositional habits which, in a later theoretical context than that of 1983, would come under the orbit of neo-Riemannian theory. This is just one sense in which the book is ahead of its time, its insights by no means properly digested by the broader theoretical community. It still needs to be said that if some of the current analytical attention being paid to Schubert were directed towards Berlioz, there would be a useful injection of new blood into music theory.

is not new at all.”⁸¹ By limiting his use of strongly directional, functional dissonances, Berlioz deliberately obscures the functioning of the tonal ideology. But that is not at all to say that he resists it. Indeed by concealing its operation, and so making the ideology transparent, he could be said to be denying 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: rather than weakening the grip of the diatonic compulsion of V to resolve to I and so strengthen the urge of the tonic to gain (patriarchal) mastery over the tonal space, his technique of emphasizing third relations and establishing polarities which 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—for those minded to perform an ideology critique of tonal music—approximately the same function as Marx’s close attention to Capital. The violence that Beethoven does to 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.

**** Insert “ex1.pdf” around here. Caption: “Example 1: Berlioz, *Béatrice et Bénédict*, middleground sketch of the entire structure.” ****

Example 1 is a Schenkerian middleground analysis of the entire opera.⁸² It summarizes a structure that is, at best, only partly heard. There is spoken dialog—sometimes quite a lot of it—after almost every number in the opera, which will ensure that many listeners may lose the sense of key (the exceptions are 2b, 8, and 9; No. 14 is followed by only a single line,

81 *ibid.*, 39. Again, this suggests a Schubertian procedure of decentering: see Nicholas Marston, “Schubert’s homecoming,” *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 125, no. 2 (2000).

82 The 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; it has a strong theoretical justification. In orthodox Schenkerian analysis, the final important perfect authentic cadence (henceforth “PAC,” a cadence in which the tonic chord is reached with the melody coming to rest on $\hat{1}$) achieves the closure of the *Ursatz*. I find that students studying Schenker often wonder what is so special about this cadence that it can achieve what no other PAC in the piece can do, and my answer is always that, unlike the others, this one is the last: 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*, to be confirmed shortly). This idea can be taken a stage further. It is evident that composers choose the keys of separate movements in a work with an eye to their suitability to the general tonal context of the work. In a B \flat Viennese string quartet it would be quite normal to have the slow movement in E \flat , highly surprising to have it in B minor. 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 which 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. Since it is no offense to the essential logic of Schenkerian conceptions of tonal space, and it makes better sense of the way that a sequence of movements continues to explore a process of discourse begun at the start of the piece, it seems fair to consider that, until a work is finished, in a very real sense the tonal parameters established at its beginning continue to contribute to the exposition of the music, and consequently that any analysis of that unfolding which seeks to examine its controlling effect as symbolic order should read the whole as a unity.

which might not be long enough to eradicate the sense of key for many listeners). There is also an interval between the acts. So the prolongation of this tonal structure across the opera is not one that any listener could plausibly be expected to hear.⁸³ But the same is true for the tonal structure of, say, *Das Rheingold* or *Elektra*, even though they lack either intervals or dialog to break up the tonal architecture. Schenker himself believed that his *Ursatz* could be heard, but I think he was probably deluding himself, except in very short pieces. Yet none of this invalidates the Schenkerian approach to examining tonal structure for the very important reason that while the actual sounds of music are addressed to the conscious mind, these deeper structures work on the subconscious level. And like 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, to enable something like the reading that Shaw proposes of Shakespeare's "word music": with Schenkerian analysis, once again, "the 'secret' to be unveiled through analysis is not the content hidden by the form," e.g., the mere existence of the *Ursatz* (as if discovering that it is a ^5-line is a valuable exercise in itself), "but, on the contrary, *the 'secret' of this form itself*," 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.⁸⁴

The middleground graph shows a strongly composed-out G major spanning the two acts, with two important subsidiary focuses on chords VI and \flat VI. The overture and numbers 1–8 unfold a strong I–II–V–(VI)–I progression in G, which is further prolonged by a lower neighbor F in No. 6. Up till No. 6, Berlioz's opera has not ventured further than Shakespeare's Act 1 scene 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 dialog after No. 6 leaps suddenly to Act 2 scene 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. Everything seems to be going according to plan. But then in the last number of Act 1, No. 8, which is the opera's most beautiful number, Héro and Ursule sing their Duo–Nocturne on the "tenderness and pain of true love,"⁸⁵ picking up ultimately 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 we are returned to the sweetness of E major at the end). The note E, which had merely provided an upper neighbor to the dominant in the first unfolding, is now treated to extensive prolongation, reaching till the end of No. 12 in Act 2. The "entr'acte" decorates it 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 a 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)

83 It is possible to imagine an exceptional case in which the opera is heard in a recording that lacks the spoken dialog, in a single sitting, in which an extraordinarily attentive structural listener might hear this structure—but that seems such a fantastically remote contingency that it is just as well to discount it.

84 Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 3. The following analysis of the ideological structures of the opera is, additionally, no different from a historical, sociological, ethnographic, or critical study of any music's composition, performance, or reception: analysis is one of the non-temporal ways of responding to music outside of the moment of performance, not categorically different from what more or less everybody does when they talk about why a song means something to them, or why they think a particular new album is rubbish. The only difference is that, sometimes, scholars like to pretend that it is more problematic, simply because they do not like to do it themselves. It is odd that this objection has ever been given any credence.

85 Rushton, "Berlioz's swan-song," 110.

and the women's trio, decorate this $\wedge 6$ with a strongly projected $E\flat$ (No. 10) that acts as a dominant to the $A\flat$ of No. 11. As the chorus call 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 $\wedge 6$ is rounded off (its parenthetical function is marked by brackets in Example 1). The wedding march, No. 13, returns us 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 therefore 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," like his use of leitmotif, is richer and more complex than anything encountered in *Béatrice et Bénédict*, the relative simplicity of Berlioz's design, if anything, 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, without support. G major is consistently associated with the idea of marriage, and all the political and economic burden that carries, along with its insistence that human beings settle on a fixed "identity."⁸⁶ This is, as Part I of this essay 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." G minor, when it appears, is associated with negative attitudes towards marriage. E (major or minor) has an association with what I call the "masochistic" attitude towards marriage. This can otherwise be articulated 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.⁸⁷ $E\flat$ and its subdominant, $A\flat$, are associated with the "hysterical" attitude which refuses to credit the claims of the big Other, and so refuses to "Enjoy!". Attention to diatonic and hexatonic relations here deepens awareness of the balance within the systemic violence of the G-major tonic. E, the "masochistic" response which serves to turn the suffering caused by that violence to enjoyment, is, in the minor mode, diatonically related to G. As a tonicization of $\wedge 6$, the use of E major in Nos. 8 and 12 simply enhances the sense that this masochism is *pleasurable* (as, in a differently intoxicated way, does the E minor of the drinking song, No. 9, its minor mode by no means sad or regretful). Chord VI is, then, 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."⁸⁸ Tonally, then, the projection very 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, as will be shown, Béatrice is its

86 As 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.

87 Developing for the first time his connection between psychoanalysis and ideology critique, Žižek 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* (London and New York: Verso, 1991), 9–10.).

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

chief architect and greatest visionary).

The principal exception to the outline I have just given appears to be No. 4, the Béatrice and Bénédicte duet in which both dispraise marriage and deny loving each other: although starting and ending in E major, it does not seem to have an obviously positive response to the superego's "Enjoy!". Yet that injunction does still frame their duet. Bénédicte explains the "true happiness" ("vrai bonheur") of his relationship with Béatrice by the fact that, although he is adored of all ladies, he is not loved by her ("Qu'adoré de de toutes les femmes, [...] je ne sois point aimé de vous"). To be loved by a woman is, in heteronormative discourse, the necessary "completion" of the identity of a man, by means of fixing the relation of the subject to the (sexual) drive. Other women offer him 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. Indeed, the framing tonality of E major in the No. 4 duet points to the fact that Béatrice and Bénédicte both stand at risk of being interpellated as subjects precisely in relation to that fantasy. The desire drawing the subject to that identification circulates around an *objet a*, and this is 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 they are therefore both "fools," expressly enjoying 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 entirely open to the easy slippage from this surplus-enjoyment to the non-sequent 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 Bénédicte'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, Bénédicte towards 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). Bénédicte 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."⁸⁹ As the opera continues, Béatrice will move increasingly far from the momentary accommodation with masochism that she reaches here.

**** Insert "ex2.pdf" around here. Caption: "Example 2: Berlioz, *Béatrice et Bénédicte*, No. 5, G-minor moment." ****

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. 202–3), and we do not hear a tonicization of the chord again until Bénédicte tells Claudio and Don Pedro, in the trio, No. 5, that he would rather rot in a cloister than marry ("plutôt moisir dans un convent!": see Example 2). But the tonicization, while it is obviously expressing a pointedly negative attitude towards marriage, lasts barely more than

89 Rushton, "Berlioz's swan-song," 113.

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, perhaps, 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 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 Bénédict 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 Bénédict's final declarations of love. But I shall argue that, not only because of that final “joke” about the “truce,” but also because of the way that Béatrice's music articulates an excessive truth that opens up a new world, that final G major is by no means the solid ideological fantasy of marriage that it appears: Béatrice has by this point requilted its meaning.⁹⁰ Since Béatrice's awareness of the pain that the systemic pressure to marry causes is enhanced by the masochistic example of Héro, it is to this music that I now turn.

Héro, masochist

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?”), and after scene 3, still spoken, establishes the “war of epigrams” between Béatrice and Bénédict, we get confirmation of the depth—and the 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 expected to be at least generally aware.⁹¹ Berlioz was, as Brittan reminds us, the son of a doctor and himself a quondam medical student who, at least 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.”⁹² The specific diagnosis that Brittan prefers from the available options—for both Berlioz and his figure of the artist—is that of the “erotomaniac,” not only fixated on a

90 James 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,” 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 on a cursory examination to be elements that harmonize or stabilize the whole turn out, on closer inspection, to create ruptures within it.

91 “When, 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,” *19th-Century Music* 29, no. 3 (2006): 222).

92 *ibid.*, 222–3.

beloved but also subject to excesses of passion, of loquacity, delirium, and suicidal depression—all of which are strikingly present in the *Symphonie fantastique*. And 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 do not just oppose but actually *psychoanalyze* the opposite position. I suggest that Berlioz’s musical imagining of Héro shows clear signs of a psychoanalytic presentation of a type which bears some relation to the erotomaniac of Brittan’s study. But in the frame of Lacan’s theory, which highlights, as early nineteenth-century psychiatry did not (could not, before Freud and Marx), the problematics of the subconscious and the inconsistency of the human subject and the social order of which it is part, she is not an erotomaniac but a masochist.

To more fully understand the concept of the masochist, which I have already partly introduced, it is useful to return to the Foucauldian conception of the internalization of ideology. As Žižek remarks in the involved critique of Butler from which I have already quoted, “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.”⁹³ 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 to do it!”—the superego orders you to enjoy doing what you have to do.⁹⁴

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 instead enjoys the thought that afterwards, 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, Bénédict, all the characters in the world of *Béatrice et Bénédict*, 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.⁹⁵ Héro must marry Claudio, and she must

93 Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 335.

94 *ibid.*, 319–20.

95 This is the cultural logic of today’s changes to marriage law throughout the West, where same-sex marriages are gradually being legalized. The apparent offer is: “look, you can even marry someone of your own sex, so you don’t need to force yourself into a sexuality that doesn’t suit,” but the real

enjoy it, because not to enjoy it is to denigrate marriage (that being the sin of which Béatrice is guilty). She finds ways to do it. Béatrice, by contrast, 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. What is the cause of this unhappiness? We cannot make the normal feminist answer 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 that institution were reconfigured so that it better suited her personal needs, she would feel a redoubling of the force of the superego demand: resistance is, in this case, 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, then, we interpret her music’s mood as a masquerade of pain that is serving some specific purpose in relation to the superego injunction, her sadness becomes easier to parse. When she and Ursule are testing that 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 cinquepace 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 had 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 “tranquillity” 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 *tranquillity*, for which everything is ‘in the best of order’ and all doors are open.”⁹⁶

**** Insert “ex3.pdf” around here. Caption: “Example 3: Berlioz, *Béatrice et Bénédicte*, “Je vais le voir,” middleground sketch.” ****

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 submit to the humiliation of taking the subordinate role in a patriarchal relationship for the sake of symbolic consistency. Her masochist pleasure in this moment of transition, in her firm step towards 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

message is: “you now have even less of an excuse not to marry: you must still submit to this social norm, because we’ve bent over backwards to make it pleasant for you, and so you must enjoy it, or be horribly ungrateful to your society, which will repay you in appropriate fashion.”

96 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), 222. The sense in which this “tranquillizing” submission is a means of medicating against pain resonates too with Marx’s potent and familiar image of the “opiate,” which can be extended here from religion to the totality of social commitments.

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 into A (m. 44) for an equally tender recapitulation (see Example 3). The sedate pace of the composing-out of the tonic triad creates a contentedly serene air which the subdued orchestration—strings and woodwind, with clarinets and horns sparingly used—as well as the elegant, slow sarabande rhythm of the melody, and the unrushed and uncomplicated completion of the *Ursatz* enhance.⁹⁷ But at m. 75 a sudden change in tempo (*Allegro con fuoco*) and key (D major) generate a sense of rushing forwards, 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 to G, the key of marriage—which eventually comes in No. 5, the men's trio.)

Her 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 here 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 in each case 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 chord VI should, to the dominant at m. 176.⁹⁸ 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 major at m. 131 produces a wordless high trilling D which 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, now 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 which avoids a perfect cadence more than a dozen times, in the meantime doing little more than prolonging the dominant chord (see Example 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."

**** Insert "ex4.pdf" around here. Caption: "Example 4: Berlioz, *Béatrice et Bénédicte*, "Je vais le voir," masochistic pleasure in the cadenza." ****

97 The key has been active since the start of the No. 2 chorus, and has already been projected through the lovely *Sicilienne* before this aria begins, so it is a triply "comfortable" key.

98 Rushton, too finds these tonicizations remarkable, though ultimately finds the aria expressive of "the utmost cheerfulness": Rushton, "Berlioz's swan-song," 110.

**** Insert “ex5.pdf” round here. Caption: “Example 5: Berlioz, *Béatrice et Bénédict*, “Duo–Nocturne,” opening of duet.” ****

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.⁹⁹ 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 dialog 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 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 which they sing largely in sonorous thirds to the accompaniment of zephyr-soft string arpeggios (starting at m. 13; see Example 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 G# 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 still 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 “tranquillity.”¹⁰⁰

Béatrice, hysteric

It appears by the end of the opera that Béatrice and Bénédict have yielded to this ideological goad, and indeed—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, as Example 1 shows, governed by G major and the conventional social scripts for marriage. When the call comes for subjects to interpellate in that order, they either do so with unrestrained willingness, seemingly blind to any negative effects that may obtain (Bénédict in “Ah! je vais l’aimer,” No. 7) or, while being aware of the negatives, nevertheless 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, and 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*) and also attests to the fact that though the symbolic order is strong, its strength is arbitrary and without a basis in “truth.”

**** Insert “ex6.pdf” around here. Caption: “Example 6: Berlioz, *Béatrice et Bénédict*, No. 4,

99 Macdonald, *Berlioz*, 181.

100 Rushton, “Berlioz’s swan-song,” 110.

mm. 121–3.” ****

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 so far in the opera. Each time that the chord of G minor, the dark side to marriage’s eternally optimistic G major, has been presented so far, 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. 202–5) is abruptly pulled towards 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, No. 4, “Comment le dédain pourrait-il mourir?”—and even there it is not, strictly speaking, a G minor chord at all (see Example 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 it is decorating as part of a #VI–V–i progression onto B minor (minor v in the context of the duet). It is worth drawing to attention here the way that normal tonal theory, or at least theory that is contrapuntal in inclination, normalizes such moments within the unfolding of tonal space without, perhaps, most listeners—or analysts—being fully aware of the ideological work that is 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 neighbor to the Bs immediately before (in the lower register) and after (in the same register), and part of a very slightly decorated v–i⁶–♯VI–V⁷–i motion. True enough. But it is nevertheless theoretically 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 B♭ would be), 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 this need not be so, and 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. In essence, the progression from G minor (this time, literally G minor) to G major in the “Enseigne,” No. 14, is simply making explicit the systemic violence which 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 symbolic order that the grandiloquent gestures of No. 14 are necessary at all: they are, comically of course, but also seriously, gestures which reveal a system under grave threat.

**** Insert “ex7.pdf” around here. Caption: “Example 7: Berlioz, *Béatrice et Bénédict*, No. 7, mm. 19–25.” ****

Before Béatrice’s aria, G minor is presented more openly than in No. 4, but always as an “unrealistic” possibility, and one which 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 B♭ at the start of the bar is converted to an A# at the end, to lead to the “proper” B♮ of the G major chord in m. 258 (violin II). B♭ here therefore 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 predominant 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 (see Example 7), in which first two interrupted cadences (onto E minor and F sharp 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 re-quilted—and so, 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, perhaps, to join him in it. (To ensure that the effect is successful, this passage is repeated in mm. 93–9.)

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,¹⁰¹ is a breathtakingly violent rejection not only of this kind of mystified ideological maneuvering but also of the idea that, for human subjects, identification—specifically, for her, as a married woman, but true also in a general sense—is a positive experience. Example 8 shows a middleground graph of the aria, which is ostensibly in E♭, a key with a hexatonic relation to the key of marriage, G major, and therefore one which, 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 which gives tonality its forceful coherence.¹⁰² But it is the hexatonic relation between E♭ and G minor that Berlioz fixes at the center of this structure, as 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.

**** Insert “ex8.pdf” around here. Caption: “Example 8: Berlioz, *Béatrice et Bénédict*, “Dieu! que viens-je d’entendre,” middleground graph.” ****

**** Insert “fig1.png” around here. Caption: “Figure 1: Rabbit–duck illusion, *Fliegende Blätter*, 23 October, 1892, p. 147. The caption reads “Which animals resemble each other the most? Rabbit and duck.” ****

The aria evinces an astonishing disregard for tonal order, in effect presenting an endless flickering between E♭ and G minor that bears comparison to the effect of the famous duck–rabbit image that Wittgenstein used to describe different ways of seeing (see Figure 1). In a sense, this is Berlioz’s most elaborate and violent “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 very Berliozian ^5-line to a satisfactory close in m. 265, and its twice-heard principal lyric melody (that 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. Right from the start, the tonic E♭ is subjected to retrospective redefinition as ♭VI, leading to a perfect cadence in G minor (m. 40); but the G-minor chord thus reached is immediately requilted as III/E♭, and a skip of a third to B♭ enables a root-position perfect cadence into E♭ for the first statement of the principal melody at m. 54. This alternation of perfect cadences, each resolution being immediately reinterpreted as pre-cadential material for the next, is repeated throughout the entire aria. Arrows in the graph indicate the twelve root-position perfect-cadence resolutions into either E♭ 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♭–D–G motion is propulsively continued despite the fact that it is not a cadence into G minor but into E♭ that is effected here. Were it not for that cadence—which “should” have been G minor according both to 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♭ and G minor would have six root-position perfect cadences apiece; but even given the slight favoring of E♭ here,

101 Haar, “The operas and the dramatic legend,” 95.

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

the sense in which the tonic duck has shaded into the nontonic rabbit is so strong that, at the end, it is merely force of will that holds the tonic in place. Far from presenting itself as a “natural” order, the very unnaturalness 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♭ is cemented by a witty little gesture: the final “cadence” is simply a motion from G minor to E♭ (mm. 276–7).

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♭ 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 wellbeing.¹⁰³ G minor returns, m. 113, as she sings “when I woke at last I laughed at my turmoil” (“en m’ éveillant enfin je ris de mon émoi”): he was not, as she had dreamed, killed in war, 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♭ tonicization of the aria. “I am no longer myself” (“je ne suis plus moi-même”), she sings to an E♭ cadence in m. 166, and her new identity is presented to her at the next root-position E♭ cadence, 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 Bénédict (“frivole gaieté, [...] liberté, [...] dédains, [...] folies, [...] mordantes railleries”). This latter is the really significant privation, since without it their relationship is an empty shell, a sterile and polite copybook version of a generalized kind of marital love. Rushton is eloquent here:

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.¹⁰⁴

Shakespeare’s Beatrice only bids to “contempt, farewell; and maiden pride, adieu” (3.1.109), and in “bind[ing] our loves up in a holy band” (3.1.114) 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♭; her final claim is that any future resolution in this opera will be an autocratic 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

¹⁰³ The origin for this invention is presumably Berlioz’s close reading of Shakespeare. Leonato says, in an entirely 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” (2.1.322–5). Perhaps, too, the idea for presenting Béatrice’s most extravagant musical contribution was inspired by Shakespeare’s example: immediately she is gulled into confessing love, Beatrice breaks, for the first time in the play, into poetry (from 2.1.107).

¹⁰⁴ Rushton, “Berlioz’s swan-song,” 116.

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!”. But instead she takes the radical step of accepting that her subjectivity is founded on a void, and furthermore that the big Other of 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 which 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.

**** Insert “ex9.pdf” around here. Caption: “Example 9: Berlioz, *Béatrice et Bénédict*, Trio, No. 11, mm. 48–56.” ****

In the following trio, No. 11, Béatrice returns to G minor, the oppositional key which 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 and E♭, but this she time completes their hexatonic relation to marriage's G major, this movement's tonic (see Example 9). The symbolic consistency of tonal space is, if she is to have her way, 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, above. 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, too. 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 re-quilted. Béatrice has “frighted the word out of his right sense, so forcible is [her] wit.” G major, G minor, E♭: it's all one, all alike a fake, none of it with any power to prevent her traversal of the fundamental fantasy.

Now, at last, *Béatrice et Bénédict*'s final paeon to “demain” gives up its meaning, which we can understand as Berlioz's final idea of love. This “idea” is, in short, an expression of the “truth” of love as the Real of the situation, Platonic in a strong sense. Everything that features in reality—which includes 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, a Real that is the locus of truth. Berlioz's “idea” of love is not coherent in the same way that traditional or nontraditional conceptions of marriage, for instance, are coherent as ideas—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 symbolic efficiency, to graspable understanding—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, naggingly irrational.

The “truce” that Béatrice and Bénédict call is, therefore, a momentary, fake submission to the fundamental fantasy as it is embodied musically by the resolution to the work’s tonic, G major, which stands for the symbolic consistency that tonality blithely promises us. Perhaps it is for the sake of their friends Héro and Claudio, who submit so willingly to what Léonato calls the “fantasy” of marriage; 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 they will return to war: they reject the big Other’s promise of a life of symbolic fullness in preference for 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 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.”¹⁰⁵ 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.

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105 Nuttall, *Shakespeare the Thinker*, 224.

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5

4 3 2 1

Overture 1. 2./3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15.

Entr'acte

I II V VI I [VI] bVI bII bVI I V I

Fl.

Cl. (La)

Bns

Cors

(Sol)

(Ré)

BÉNÉDICT

8 dans un cou-vent! D'u - ne fem - me il est vrai

Vns

Altos

Vlles et Cb.

A

12 Andantino (♩ = 126)

Fl. *p*

Hb.

Cl. (La) *I*

Cors (Mi) *p*

HÉRO
toi! Nuit — pai-sible et se-rei - ne!

URSULE
Nuit — pai-sible et se-rei - ne!

Vns

Altos

Vlles *div. pizz.*

Cb. *Ppizz.*

p

Andantino (♩ = 126)

Score for voice and piano in G major, 4/4 time. The score consists of three staves: a vocal line, a piano right-hand line, and a piano left-hand line. The lyrics are "tout je fe - rai mon é - tu - de."

The vocal line begins with a half note G4, followed by a dotted quarter note A4, an eighth note B4, a quarter note C5, a dotted quarter note B4, an eighth note A4, and a quarter note G4. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line in the left hand and chords in the right hand.

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

m. 4 36 40 49 52 53/ 62/ 63/ 71/ 73/ 79 82 112 113 120 125
126 134 135 143 145

5

I III V I V I (VI V I) (IV V I) II V

158 160 162 166 175 188 193

2.

Je t'aime... Viens... Je t'aime...

I V I

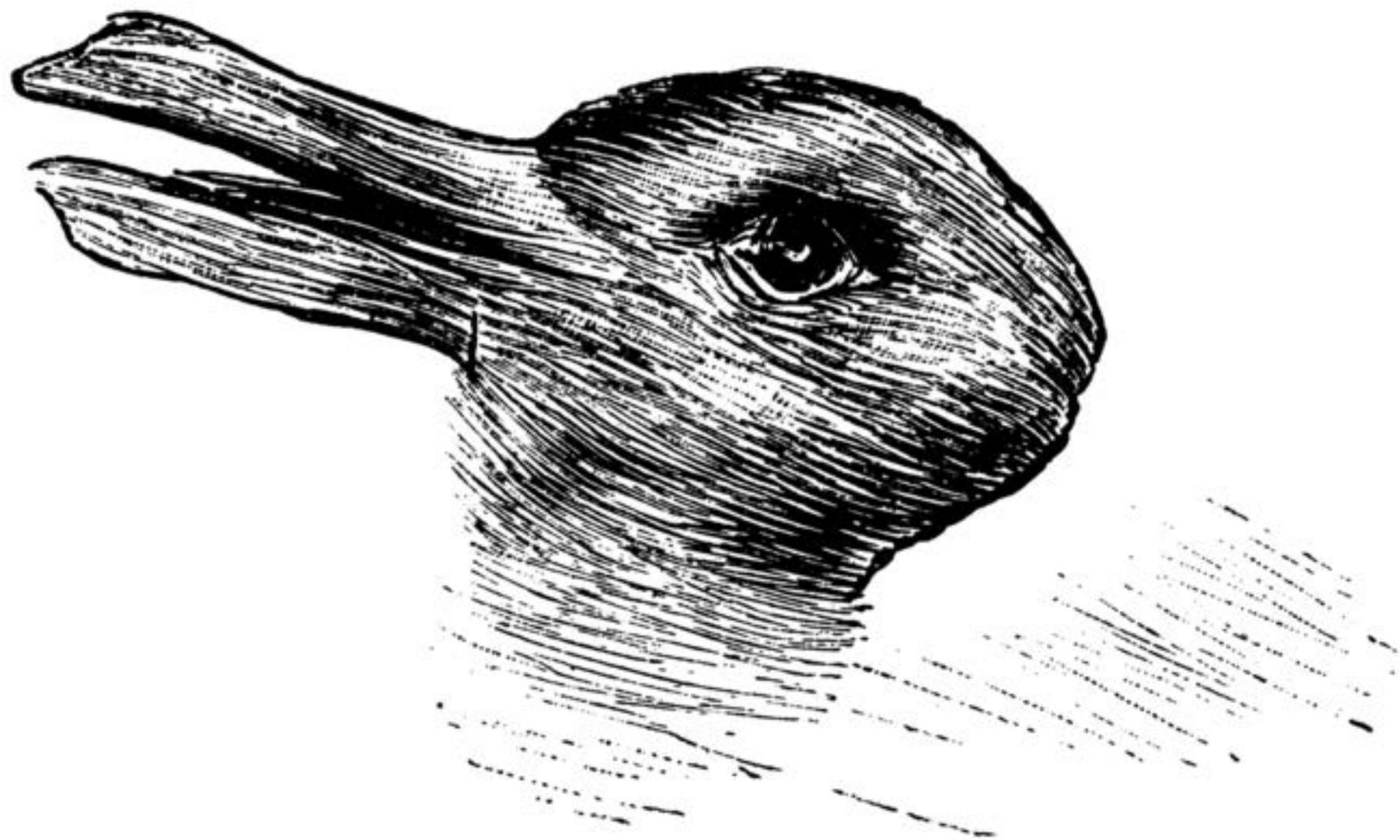
195 199 226 237 241 259 263 265 276

4 3 2 1

Je t'aime... Adieu...

V I

Welche Thiere gleichen ein-
ander am meisten?



Kaninchen und Ente.