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Nina ROLLAND

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BODIES IN COMPOSITION:
WOMEN, MUSIC, AND THE BODY IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY EUROPEAN LITERATURE

Supervisors:
M. Larry DUFFY – Senior Lecturer, University of Kent
M. Ian COOPER – Lecturer, University of Kent
Mme Tiphaine SAMOYAULT – Professeur, Université de Paris 3

Jury members:
M. Larry DUFFY – Senior Lecturer, University of Kent
Mme Tiphaine SAMOYAULT – Professeur, Université de Paris 3
M. Guy DUCREY – Professeur, Université de Strasbourg
Mme Helen ABBOTT – Senior lecturer, University of Sheffield
Mme Katja HAUSTEIN – Lecturer, University of Kent

Bodies in Composition: Women, Music, and the Body in Nineteenth-Century European Literature

Abstract:

This thesis examines the relations between music and literature through fictional women musicians in nineteenth-century European literature and more particularly through their bodies. The female body appears to be a rich juncture between music and literature, facilitating musical references in literature as well as creating complex musical narrative systems anchored in social, cultural and scientific discourses of the long nineteenth century. All types of women musicians are examined (singers, instrumentalists, composers, and even listeners) along with different discourses on the body (social, philosophical and scientific), shedding a new light on gender and the arts. Our chronological as well as thematic approach strives to highlight a common representation of the body and of female musicians in literature. German Romantic texts thus present women musicians as elusive figures who play a key role in the impossibility to materialise the abstract. Realist and sensation novels are analysed through a clinical perspective on the body and envision female musicians as monomaniacs. On the contrary, fiction written by female authors introduces empowered musicians as priestess of art. Finally, *fin-de-siècle* novels stage the female body as a degenerate entity of society. The parallel analysis of literary case studies with different perspectives on the body posits the women-music-body triangle as a new approach to gender, music and literature.

Keywords: Woman musician, body, androgyny, gender, music and literature

Corps en composition: les femmes, la musique et le corps dans la littérature européenne du XIX^{e} siècle

Résumé:

Notre recherche vise à étudier les relations entre musique et littérature au XIX^{e} siècle à travers la figure de la musicienne et plus particulièrement à travers son corps. Le corps féminin apparaît comme un riche point de rencontre entre musique et littérature, facilitant d'une part la référence musicale dans les textes et créant d'autre part un système musico-narratif complexe ancré dans les discours socio-culturels du XIX^{e} siècle. L'étude de textes canoniques de la littérature européenne nous permet d'envisager les musiciennes au sens large (compositrices, interprètes, prima donna et même auditrices) en combinaison avec différents discours sur le corps (philosophique, scientifique et social) afin d'apporter un regard nouveau sur les femmes et les arts. Notre approche est à la fois chronologique et thématique et s'attache à montrer une progression commune de la représentation du corps et de la musicienne dans les textes. Ainsi, les textes romantiques allemands présentent la musicienne comme un être évanescent et font d'elle le sujet de l'impossibilité de matérialiser l'abstrait. Les textes du milieu du siècle sont analysés parallèlement au discours clinique sur le corps et envisagent les musiciennes comme des monomanes. Les textes écrits par des femmes placent la musicienne – saine de corps et d'esprit – comme prêtresse d'une religion musicale. Enfin, dans les textes fin-de-siècle, le corps de la musicienne n'échappe pas aux théories de dégénérescence. L'étude parallèle de textes littéraires et de différents discours sur le corps pose ainsi les femmes, la musique et le corps comme un triptyque inévitable aux études de genre, de musique et de littérature.

Mots clés: Musicienne, corps, androgynie, genre, littérature et musique

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Contents

List of abbreviations and figures

In order not to be redundant in footnote references (I have followed the guidelines of the Modern Humanities Research Association), I have used, after giving full bibliographical details in the first reference to a text, the following abbreviations for long titles:

For case studies:

B Mann, Thomas, *Buddenbrooks*

CR Sand, George, *La Comtesse de Rudolstadt*

DD Eliot, George, *Daniel Deronda*

EW Eichendorff, Joseph von, *Werke*

HSW Hoffmann, E.T.A, *Sämtliche Werke*

LA Braddon, Mary Elizabeth, *Lady Audley's Secret*

LSO Berlioz, Hector, *Les Soirées de l'orchestre*

MB Flaubert, Gustave, *Madame Bovary*

WM Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*

WW Collins, Wilkie, *The Woman in White*

For other primary texts:

KW Kant, Immanuel, *Werke*

KFSA Schlegel, Friedrich, *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*

KGW Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Werke*

For journals:

AMZ *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*
RGM *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*

Figures:

Conventions

Due to the comparatist nature of this work, all quotations are given in the original language. However, in order to facilitate the reading for non-germanists, without making it too heavy, only long quotations in German have been translated into English in footnotes. Because this thesis is a *cotutelle* between the University of Kent and the Université de Paris 3 Sorbonne Nouvelle, quotations in French have not been translated.

Introduction

When one thinks about female musicians in the nineteenth century, one's first thought may be to count the female composers one knows: Clara Schumann, Fanny Hensel-Mendelssohn, and perhaps Ethel Smyth are the first (and sometimes only) names to come to mind, posing thereby the 'dearth of great women composers' in the nineteenth century as a gap to be filled and a topic to be researched.[1] However, there is a paradox between the small number of women composers known by music history and the profusion of women musicians in the large sense – interpreters, prima donnas, dilettantes – at the centre of nineteenth-century artistic life. This profusion is well-represented in literature, as many famous heroines are musicians. The figure of the female musician is central to many literary texts, and appears as the privileged means of referring to music in nineteenth-century European literature. If, as Marcia Citron claims, 'gender is inscribed in music. To deny this is to misread human expression', female musicians certainly appear as a rich angle for approaching the relationship between music and literature.[2] In fact, and this is the main argument of this study, a true incorporation of music takes place literally through women, since, as will be demonstrated, the female body is at the centre of musical references in literature. This key role of the body in relation to music reflects, on the one hand, biological, cultural and aesthetic concerns with the body developed throughout the nineteenth century, and, on the other, the intrinsically physical nature of music. The three cultural contexts (French, German and English) as well as the period chosen for this study – from Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* (1795) to Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks* (1901) – are particularly appropriate for examining socio-cultural developments in relation to women, music and the body in the long nineteenth century.

Although there is a homology between the place of female musicians in society and in literature, the particularity of literature is to associate it with the body. In his essay 'Encore le corps', Barthes states: 'Mais ce monde de la subtilité et de la fragilité du corps humain, pour moi, il n'y a vraiment que la littérature qui puisse en

[1] 'Is the musical idea masculine?', in *The Musical Standard*, vol. 47, n°32 (11 Aug. 1894), p. 103.
[2] Marcia Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 11.

rendre compte'.[3] The case studies chosen for this work indeed give a clear idea of the modern interest in the body that emerged in the century under consideration, particularly the female body, but also of the body of (or in) music. My work will explore this homology between literature and society by studying different types of fictional women musicians – composers, instrumentalists, singers, professionals, dilettantes, but also listeners – in conjunction with scientific, social, cultural, and philosophical discourses on the body and music. The body is thus not only understood as a clinical and sexual object at the centre of the female performance, but also as a social and metaphysical object. Music and the female body allow us to reconsider the links between literary and social discourses and to question the idea of representation in literature.

Existing Scholarship

The extensive scholarship on literature and music has mainly approached the two media through their aesthetic and structuring similarities, either comparing European literary texts,[4] focussing on one linguistic area,[5] or on one specific author.[6] Although these works have provided a significant frame for understanding the relationship between music and literature, they tend to offer redundant conclusions: the literary attempt to imitate musical structures, the recourse to music to express the ineffable, or

[3] Roland Barthes, 'Encore le corps', *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Eric Marty, 5 vols (Paris: Seuil, 2002), V, p. 569. This article is the transcription of an interview from 1978 for the French TV programme 'Zig-Zag'.

[4] For example: Calvin S. Brown, *Literature and Music: A Comparison of the Arts* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1948); Steven Paul Scher, *Literatur und Musik. Ein Handbuch zur Theorie und Praxis eines komparatistischen Grenzgebietes* (Berlin: Schmidt, 1984); Françoise Escal, *Contrepoints* (Paris: Klincksiek, 1990); Jean-Louis Backès, *Musique et littérature. Essai de poétique comparée* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1994); Pierre Brunel, *Les Arpèges composés* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1997); Eric Prieto, *Listening In: Music, Mind, and the Modernist Narrative* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002); Hoa Hoï Vuong, *Musiques de roman: Proust, Mann, Joyce* (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2003); Steven Paul Scher, 'Notes Towards a Theory on Verbal Music', in *Word and Music Studies: Essays on Literature and Music by Steven Paul Scher (1967-2004)*, ed. by Walter Bernhart and Werner Wolf (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004), pp. 23-36.

[5] For example: George Schoolfield, *The Figure of the Musician in German Literature* (New York: AMS Press, 1966); Timothée Picard, 'Les Dangers de la musique romantique allemande: fortune littéraire d'un topos', *Germanica*, 36 (2005), 125-142.

[6] Thérèse Marix-Spire, *Les Romantiques et la musique: le cas George Sand, 1804-1838* (Paris: Nouvelles Editions Latines, 1955); Alain Montandon, *E.T.A. Hoffmann et la musique, actes du colloque international de Clermont-Ferrand* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1987); Pierre Albert Castenet, *Balzac et la musique: suivi de Charges, Gambara, Massimilla Doni, Sarrasine* (Paris: Michel de Maule, 2000); Delia Da Sousa Correa, *George Eliot, Music and Victorian Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003); Hans Rudolph Vaget, *Seelenzauber: Thomas Mann und die Musik* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2006).

even to signify,[7] and the power of music to play with temporality seem to be the main outcomes of referring to music in literature. The critical attention directed towards women and music increased in the 1990s and now constitutes an important corpus, although it remains manageable. First, music history has seen a great number of dictionaries and monographs on female musicians emerge; these include Karin Pendle's *Women and Music: a History,* Sophie Fuller's *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers*, and Florence Launay's *Les Compositrices en France au XIXème siècle,* which all provide a key background for my research.[8] Moreover, musicology has brought forth the question of gender difference, most notably Marcia Citron's canonical *Gender and Genius*, and Ruth A. Solie's *Musicology and Sexual Difference*.[9] From the literary viewpoint, a great number of studies on female musicians in Victorian literature has emerged: Phyllis Weliver's *Women Musicians in Victorian Fiction* has offered me an important basis for the relationship between literature and the scientific discourse about music, while Sophie Fuller and Nicky Losseff's *The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction* has provided insights into female creativity in the face of the patriarchal order.[10] If on the German side there are a few works on women and music in literature,[11] no monograph exists for the sole French context.[12] This thesis intends to bring together canonical texts from French, German and English literature, in a comparativist perspective, in order to offer a European vision of the modern female artist. Furthermore, scholarship on female musicians in literature has mainly focused on the figure of the singer, highlighting mythical associations (such as the muse or the siren), and the paradox of the sublime voice

[7] Nineteenth-century authors play themselves with this idea. For example, the narrator of *Consuelo* states: 'La musique dit tout ce que l'âme rêve et pressent de plus mystérieux et de plus élevé. C'est la manifestation d'un ordre d'idées et de sentiments supérieurs à ce que la parole humaine pourrait exprimer. C'est la révélation de l'infini', George Sand, *Consuelo* and *La Comtesse de Rudolstadt,* ed. by Damien Zanone (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2004), p. 321.

[8] Karin Pendle, *Women and Music: a History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001); Sophie Fuller, *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers: Britain and the United States, 1629-present* (London: Pandora Press, 1994); Florence Launay, *Les Compositrices en France au XIX^e Siècle* (Paris: Bayard, 2006).

[9] Marcia Citron, see above; Ruth A. Solie *Musicology and Sexual Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993).

[10] Phyllis Weliver, *Women Musicians in Victorian Fiction, 1860-1900: Representations of Music, Science and Gender in the Leisured Home* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); Sophie Fuller and Nicky Losseff, *The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

[11] Sigrid Nieberle, *Frauen Musik Literatur: Deutschsprachige Schriftstellerinnen im 19. Jahrhundert* (Herbolzheim: Beiträge zur Kultur und Sozialgeschichte der Musik, 2001).

[12] However, we can find some articles or essays on the female musician in the texts of French authors, such as in David A. Powell, 'The Female Musician', in *While the Music Lasts: The Representation of Music in the Works of George Sand* (Lewisburg, Pa: Bucknell University Press, 2001), pp. 307-325.

within the dehumanised woman, as is studied in Felicia Miller Frank's *The Mechanical Song*.[13] Other works have shown the restrictions placed on the professional female singer, doomed to be judged and consumed by a male audience.[14]

My work presents some similarities with Julia Effertz's doctoral thesis, which, along with her article on E.T.A. Hoffmann and Berlioz, have proven to be of great value in elaborating a contrastive analysis. Although we do have some case studies in common (*Wilhelm Meister*, 'Rat Krespel' and 'Euphonia'), our analyses do not overlap. She deals mainly with the question of otherness and female agency in singing performances and although her work hints at the significance of the body it does not address it fully.[15] In her work, the female singer remains a mere literary motif explored from a socio-cultural perspective and the intricacies of the female figure at the heart of the process of referring to music in literature are not explored, as I intend them to be. Effertz's thesis is a rich study on the female singer, but my work also differs from hers from a linguistic (she compares France and Germany), historical and aesthetic viewpoint.

More generally, the above works on women singers mention the body only in terms of the dichotomy between the evanescent voice and the instrumental corporeal envelope, and do not examine the somatisation of music and of the text. Although it is true that many of the female characters are singers, they are often also instrumentalists. Examining instrumentalists, composers, singers and listeners will allow me to consider the body and music from different angles. Another doctoral dissertation, Maura Dunst's "'Such Genius as Hers": Music in New Woman Fiction', has recently dealt with women and music but focused on narratives in English of the end of the nineteenth century.[16]

This short literature review demonstrates that the existing scholarship on women, music and literature has continued to develop. However, a study on the figure

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[13] Felicia Miller Frank, *The Mechanical Song: Women, Voice, and the Artificial in Nineteenth-Century French Narrative* (Standford: Stanford University Press, 1995).
[14] Catherine Clément, *L'Opéra ou la défaite des femmes* (Paris: Grasset, 1979); Grace Lynn Kehler, 'The Victorian Prima Donna in Literature and the Ghosts of Opera Past' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1995); Marie-José Victoria, *La Cantatrice dans la littérature romantique* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 1997).
[15] Julia Effertz, 'The Woman Singer and her Song in French and German Prose Fiction (circa 1790-1848) (unpublished doctoral thesis, Oxford Brookes University, 2008) and 'E.T.A. Hoffmann Revisited: the Nightmare of the Romantic Singer in Berlioz's *Euphonia, ou, la ville musicale*', *French Studies*, 69 (2015), 173-189.
[16] Maura Dunst, "'Such Genius as Hers": Music in New Woman Fiction' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Cardiff University, 2013).

of the female musician in European literature of the long nineteenth century is missing, and yet such an approach can provide new insights on the female artist. My thesis proposes to fill this gap by studying the body from a socio-cultural and an aesthetic angle, considering it as a linking element between women, music and literature.

Women, Music and the Body

The idea that reference to music in literature mostly lies in the female body needs some theoretical grounding. Attention to the body was particularly developed in the nineteenth century; physicians, philosophers, writers, and artists particularly examined the body, which became

> une fiction, un ensemble de représentations mentales, une image inconsciente qui s'élabore, se dissout, se reconstruit au fil de l'histoire du sujet, sous la médiation des discours sociaux et des systèmes symboliques.[17]

The body as fiction, and as it is envisaged in this thesis, is thus not only the sexual and clinical body but also a cultural and social body. This is why each chapter is framed by a specific discourse (social, clinical or philosophical) highlighting the significance of the body and its evolution in the nineteenth century. The corporeal basis of this thesis is multi-layered and raises a number of questions: is the significance of the body a means to incorporate and contain music within the text? Or, on the contrary, is music a means to contain the female body within the text? Is the text as body altered by including music? Within this framework of inquiry, three ideas need to be delimited: the female body, the body of music, and the textual body.

Firstly, how is the female body presented? We shall see that the selected texts follow a progression of the representation of the female body in the century, from an elusive Romantic body, to a clinical, a social as well as a degenerate body always highlighting an instability that leaves the female body fragile, confined, and violated. However, these physical instabilities are not necessarily a will to contain or punish them, as Fuller argues,[18] but could, on the contrary, be a way to give women

[17] Alain Corbin, 'Introduction', *Histoire du corps, de la Révolution à la Grande Guerre*, 3 vols (Paris: Seuil, 2005), II, p. 9.
[18] Sophie Fuller, 'Cribbed, cabin'd, and confined': Female musical creativity in Victorian fiction', in *The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction*, pp. 27-55 (p.49).

characters importance, to single them out within the text, and perhaps even to place them at the heart of the physical process of integrating music within the text.

When Barthes talks about the music of Schumann, he uses the image of 'blows' (*les coups*): 'j'entends ce qui bat dans le corps, ce qui bat le corps, ou mieux: ce corps qui bat! […] Il faut donc appeler coup n'importe quoi qui fait fléchir brièvement tel ou tel lieu du corps'.[19] The unstable female body could be in literature the body that bends (*qui fléchit*) under the blows of music. The image of violence used by Barthes, but also of the *jouissance* produced by music – he specifies that the *coup* is a figure of *jouissance*[20] – corresponds to the image of female characters as unstable, violated and desired. Barthes offers us a first theoretical approach to understanding how the body is inscribed within music. We shall see that these reflections find their sources in nineteenth-century German philosophy, which already placed the body at the centre of reflection on music. Moreover, recent scholarship has pointed out the corporeality of music; Bernard Sève, for example, states that it is an overwhelming physicality: 'La musique est un art louche, elle apparaît comme une puissance irrationnelle, dangereuse, proche de l'ivresse, liée à l'élémentaire, au corps dans ce qu'il a d'immaîtrisable'. However, no study has shown the theoretical interrelations between music, women and the body.[21]

Barthes also provides us with an observation on the textual implications of incorporating music. Discussing Schumann again, he highlights that music is at the juncture between body and language:

> Telles sont les figures du corps ('les somatèmes'), dont le tissu forme la signifiance musicale (et dès lors plus de grammaire, finie la sémiologie musicale: issue de l'analyse professionnelle – repérage et agencement des 'thèmes', 'cellules', 'phrases' -, elle risquerait de passer à côté du corps […]).[22]

Although Barthes affirms, in relation to the body, 'la sémiologie' to be 'finie' and wishes to see in the body a means to escape the deconstruction of music with

[19] Barthes, 'Rasch', IV, p. 827, p. 831.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 830-31.
[21] Bernard Sève, *L'Altération musicale, ou ce que la musique apprend au philosophe* (Paris: Seuil, 2002), p. 57. We can also cite John Shepherd, 'Music, the Body and Signifying Practice', in *The Routledge Reader on the Sociology of Music* ed. by John Shepherd and Kyle Devine (Routledge, 2015), pp. 87-95.
[22] Barthes, 'Rasch', IV, p. 833-34.

linguistic concepts, he still argues that 'dans la musique, champ de signifiance et non système de signes, le référent est inoubliable, car le référent, ici, c'est le corps. Le corps passe dans la musique sans autre relais que le signifiant'.[23] Barthes thus sees in music itself a (bodily) semiology. How can this idea be applicable to music in literature? We shall see that if narratives refer to music through the female body this is not only in order to find an intermediate to materialise music, but is also because the female body, in its complexities, resists semiological classifications. Music and literature seem to be in conflict and the female body is the place of this conflict. This thesis aims to locate the female body at the centre of musical references in literature, not as a subjected but as an empowered body.[24]

Finally, it is crucial to understand that if the body of female musicians is so prevalent, it is because it is highlighted by musical performances. Female musicians playing an instrument or singing are also exposing their figures front stage. The female body becomes then the centre of different perspectives: that of the performer, of the audience, of the performance and, as Judith Butler (1990) explains, of gender. Butler defines gender in terms of performativity; gender is not something one is but something one does. She argues:

> Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being […]. Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. That the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality.[25]

The female musician's performance is thus also a gender performance. Gender will not be envisaged as a dichotomy but my analysis shall rely on the complexity of gender visible through the body and music. Female characters, whether they are

[23] Barthes, 'Rasch', IV, p. 834.
[24] According to Foucault, there is no empowerment without subjection : 'le corps ne devient force utile que s'il est à la fois corps productif et corps assujetti', Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), p. 34.
[25] Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*, 4th edn (New York, London: Routledge, 2007), p. 45, p. 185.

musicians or listeners, are playing with music and therefore performers: they perform music, their gender, social conventions, and their narrative roles.

Women, music and the body form a narrative triangle that offers a new perspective in musical-literary studies, but which is also, I shall argue, a narrative system reflecting socio-cultural discourses.

Methodology

Because of the vast nature of the subject, I have had to be selective and have decided to examine influential texts of the long nineteenth century in which female musicians and their bodies play a significant role. Although this is a comparativist study, I have opted for key studies analysed chronologically as well as thematically. Each chapter provides a theoretical frame from discourses of the period concerned. Chapter 1 is a contextualising chapter that provides insights into the representation of women musicians in periodicals of the nineteenth century as well as an overview of the situation of women musicians of the time. It also introduces the first case study, Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, which allows us to make a transition from the eighteenth century and to introduce some of the themes that will pervade the following case studies.

The case studies presented in Chapter 2 are framed by the Romantic account of the transcendental, the material and the immaterial. These notions are reflected in the novellas of E.T.A. Hoffmann and of Eichendorff, where elusive female musicians are a unifying element of the narration. Hoffmann's texts also provide us with a Romantic theory of music that underlines the conflicts between absolute music and the writing of music. The third author discussed in the chapter, also introduced through his novellas, is the musician Berlioz. Although Berlioz is attached to the German Romantic tradition, he also provides the transition to the following chapter by presenting elusive but also earthly women subjected to male violence.

Chapter 3 concerns the clinical approaches to women musicians, and uses contemporary developments in medicine, in particular in relation to the disease entity monomania, to explore the female musician. Monomania is an affliction of the mind but also of the body, which allows us to understand women musicians as being intellectually empowered but physically subjected. The section on Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* offers a new perspective on the character of Emma Bovary, who has mostly

been interpreted as a hysterical character. Furthermore, while she is one of the characters who is the least musical, music plays a key role in the narrative. The study of Balzac's *Béatrix* focuses in particular on the notion of theatrical performance, of which the character of Camille Maupin is the key. Mary E. Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* belongs to the genre of sensation fiction and music plays a significant role in the detective story and the unveiling of the heroine's life.

Chapter 4 presents texts written by women and anchors its case studies in socialism and art as religion: while Pierre Leroux and Félicité Robert de Lamennais influenced George Sand's socialism, George Eliot was informed by the scientific discourse on evolution. Sand's *Consuelo* and Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* show many similarities in relation to the incorporation of music. In fact, the inclusion of Sand in this chapter is a chronological breach, but this is justified by the treatment of the female musician, which is similar to that of Eliot over which she exerted a strong influence. Both authors deal with questions concerning the legitimation of female artists (notably the combination of the artist-mother), and see in the female musician a priestess preaching music as religion.

Finally, Chapter 5 closes the thesis with theories on degeneration as well as with Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's reflections on music and decadence. Many similarities can be identified in the narrative structures of Zola's *Nana* and Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*, although their treatment of music is opposed. The figure of the female musicians allows us to highlight an opposition between degenerate bodies and a reflection on the place of the individual in society.

The contemporary theories framing each chapter are not the only ones possible to ground the figure of the female musician, however, they mark a progression of the representation of women musicians in literature throughout the long nineteenth century, placing female musician characters as one of the century's keystones for examining questions of identity and alterity.

Chapter 1: Grounding women and music

The visibility of women musicians in nineteenth-century France, Germany and England

Before exploring literary case studies, and in an effort to understand the complexities of the figure of the female musician, it is crucial to set forth the socio-cultural reality of the time. This introductory section does not aim to offer an exhaustive approach[1] but to provide an overview of the visibility of female musician in nineteenth-century society by taking key examples from periodicals of the time and historical criticism.

As Nancy Reich points out, the question of women musicians in the nineteenth century is a question of class.[2] The social and economic changes that occurred after the French Revolution corresponded to industrialisation and to a growth of the middle classes, which allowed women to widely practise music in their homes, as amateurs.[3] While some of these women could be judged on a professional level, others were actual professionals trying to earn their living through music; in this case they belonged to a different social category, that of the 'artist-musician class'.[4] The fictional women musicians that will be explored in the next chapters belong to one or other of these categories (they are either bourgeois amateurs or professionals), with the exception of Consuelo who comes from a gypsy family. The female musical practice was therefore mainly domestic, but it was at the same time a mass phenomenon, as Siân Reynolds argues with reference the role of women in the arts: 'They were "everywhere": as readers of periodicals and novels, as patrons of circulating libraries, members of the audience for theatre and opera, purchases and so

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[1] The *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* (1827-1880) alone gathers countless articles and reports about female musicianship.

[2] Nancy B. Reich, 'Women as Musicians: A Question of Class', in *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, ed. by Ruth A. Solie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 125-146.

[3] Nancy B. Reich, 'European Composers and Musicians, ca. 1800-1890', in *Women and Music: a History*, ed. by Karin Pendle (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), pp. 147-174 (p. 147). Interestingly, Barthes refers to the amateur specifically as a corporeal figure, 'Musica practica', III, p. 449.

[4] Reich, 'Women as Musicians: A Question of Class', p. 125.

on'.[5] Amateur female musicians thus played a significant role in the 'music industry'; it can even be argued that they were the main consumers of music, as Reich points out: 'Their numbers gave an impetus to all the businesses that served music: the number of piano builders swelled, music publishing houses proliferated, and music journalism became a thriving enterprise'.[6]

In the middle and upper classes, learning music (like modern languages) was a requirement for women.[7] In the novels analysed in this thesis the female characters learn music mainly through private lessons, except for Emma Bovary who learns it in a convent, and Consuelo who is a student of a Venetian *ospedale*. The *ospedali*, which were orphanages and music schools, were forerunners of the European conservatoires established in the nineteenth century. Most of the major conservatoires accepted female students, although their access was limited to harmony, singing and instrumental classes.[8] The Conservatoire de Paris is a particularly revealing example of the place of women in society, as Emmanuel Hondré's list of teachers from its founding until 1995 shows.[9] Created in 1795, the Conservatoire de Paris was from the beginning open to female students as well as to female teachers. This situation continued until the first Empire (1804) and Napoleon's 'Code Civil', which made women legally dependent on their husbands, after which it remained closed to female teachers until around 1830. It was only from the 1850s that the number of female teachers increased and female students had access to composition classes.[10] In 1861 a woman won a prize in composition for the first time, but it was not until before 1913 that a female composer (Lili Boulanger, 1893-1918) won the Grand Prix de Rome in composition.[11] Musical education in the middle and upper classes was therefore aimed at providing women with musical skills, but not at enabling them to become professionals or virtuosos.

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[5] Siân Reynolds, 'Mistresses of Creation: Women as producers and consumers of art since 1700', in *The Routledge History of Women in Europe since 1700*, ed. by Deborah Simonton (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 341-379 (p. 343).
[6] Reich, 'European Composers and Musicians', p. 147.
[7] Phyllis Weliver, *Women Musicians in Victorian Fiction,* p. 1.
[8] Reich, 'European Composers and Musicians', p. 149. The instruments women were allowed to play were piano, harp and violin.
[9] Emmanuel Hondré, *Le Conservatoire de Paris: regards sur une institution et son histoire* (Paris: Association du bureau des Etudiants du CNSMDP, 1995), pp. 283-300.
[10] *Ibid.*
[11] Launay, p. 13. The role of women in music institutions is still topical since there has never been a woman director of the Conservatoire de Paris, and l'Académie des Beaux Arts only accepted a woman composer in 2005.

This is the paradox female musicians of such social classes had to face: they were required to learn music but had to limit themselves to light tunes. We can find a few articles in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (*AMZ*) addressed to female amateurs, which highlight the range of skills in which they were supposed to remain. For example, Guthman explains:

> Für diese, sage ich, giebt es einen gewissen Grad der Ausbildung, unter und über welchen selten der beabsichtigte Zweck, ohne Hintansetzung höherer, erreicht wird. Das Weib soll nicht glänzen, wohl aber rühren und erheitern.[12]

In another article the same author recommends that women sing and play light songs such as 'Kleine liebliche, naive Lieder, Tänze, Rondos, leichte Sonaten, Variationen' and *Volkslieder*, because opera and arias demand too much energy and can weaken the students.[13] Similarly, in 1863 a musical critic advised women against singing Schubert's Lieder of Eichendorff, because it could alter their 'head voice'.[14]

If women were supposed to have a good knowledge of music (but not too good), it is mainly because they were meant to entertain at family evenings and to pass their knowledge on to their children. Talking about the general role of women in the home, Jules Michelet said: 'Toute femme est une école. Et c'est d'elle que les générations reçoivent vraiment leur croyance. Longtemps avant que le père songe à l'éducation, la mère a donné la sienne qui ne s'effacera plus'.[15] Since women were perceived as home entertainers as well as educators, numerous advertisings in music periodicals were addressed to women, like the one for an exercise book of the *RGM* of 1843, which states 'destinée à tous les élèves et aux mères de famille qui veulent instruire leurs enfants par la méthode la plus simple et la plus rationnelle'[16] (Fig. 1) or the one for a new instrument in 1858 (the harmoni-flute) picturing a woman[17] (Fig. 2).

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[12] Friedrich Guthman, *AMZ*, 'Grad der musikalischen Bildung bey Frauenzimmern', 11 March 1807, vol. 9, n°24, pp. 380-382 (p. 380). ('Concerning these women, I believe, there is a certain level of musical education that must not be exceeded or undervalued at the risk of being too ambitious. Female musicians are not supposed to shine, but to move and amuse us.' My translation.)
[13] *AMZ*, 'Winke über den musikalischen Unterricht der Frauenzimmer', 14 May 1806, vol. 8, n° 33, p. 515.
[14] *AMZ*, 'Apostrophe an die singenden Damen', 9 Sept. 1863, vol. 1, n°37, p. 630.
[15] Jules Michelet, *La Femme,* in *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Paul Viallaneix, 21 vols (Paris: GF-Flammarion, 1985), p. 467.
[16] *RGM*, 18 June 1843, vol. 10, n°25, p. 214.
[17] *Ibid*., 15 August 1858, vol. 25, n°33, p. 275.

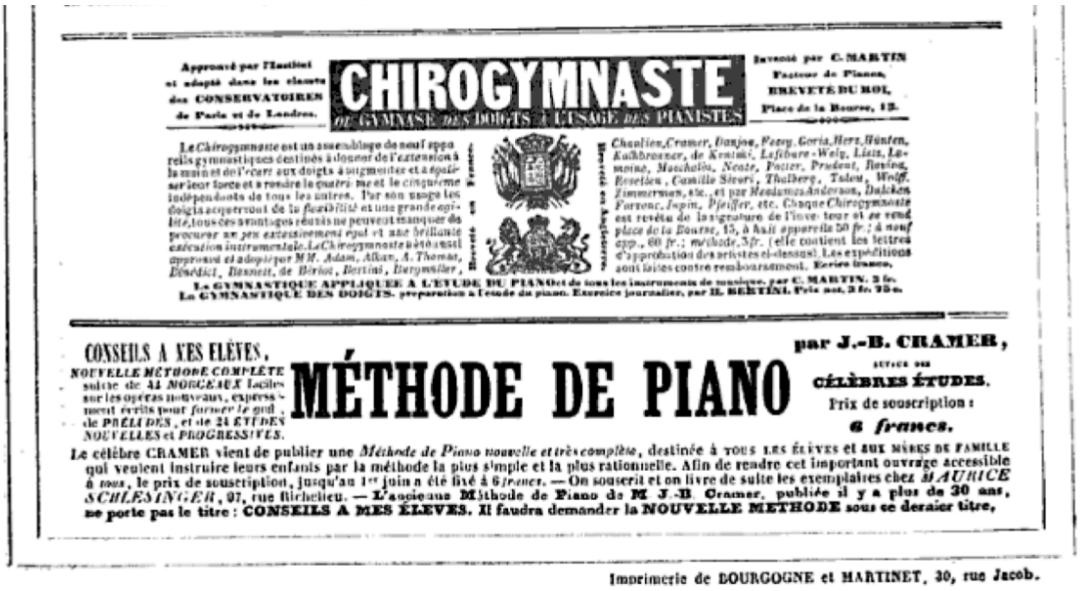

Figure 1

Figure 2

The role of mother-musicians was thus to structure children's minds and music, in the limited practice of light tunes, and seemed to be a means to impart moral ideas, as Ruth Solie points out in connection with Victorian society:

> The Victorian public, for its part, remained entirely convinced that music's significance was moral, construing it as a kind of sub-department of religion or of social work. […] Turning the lens on the same idea, musicality could serve as an index of character or moral purpose.[18]

[18] Ruth A. Solie, 'Music', in *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Culture*, ed. by Francis O'Gorman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 101-118 (pp. 114-115).

However, some intellectuals of the time saw in music a source of danger for women, like Mary Wollstonecraft who claimed in 1792:

> Novels, music, poetry, and gallantry, all tend to make women the creatures of sensation, and their character is thus formed in the mould of folly during the time they are acquiring accomplishments, the only improvement they are excited, by their station in society, to acquire. This overstretched sensibility naturally relaxes the other powers of mind.[19]

Despite the common requirements of remaining at an amateur level, some women were praised for their talents. In the *AMZ* articles cited above, Guthmann specifies that he is talking about amateurs and not about professionals or virtuosos, who were 'the exception of their sex', implying that such talented women did exist.[20] Furthermore, many articles in the *AMZ* acknowledge the talent of female singers and instrumentalists. For example, Marie Camilla Pleyel (1811-1875) is on several occurrences qualified as a 'Virtuosin', 'Meisterin' or 'Künstlerin'.[21] Similarly in the *RGM*, a great number of articles praise female performances. The critic Henri Blanchard, for example, was often particularly admiring of women, writing an article about female composers and even acclaiming a female conductor in an article of 1857:

> Une partie de la séance a été dirigée par Mlle Laure Micheli. Sous son bâton dictatorial l'orchestre a fonctionné comme un seul homme… empressé de lui plaire et d'obéir à ses lois. Mlle Micheli est jolie; elle n'a rien affecté de masculine dans ses graves fonctions de chef d'orchestre, et elle a été sobre de geste; quoique un peu voyante, sa mise était simple en même temps qu'élégante. Parmi différentes polkas de sa composition, le public a remarqué et fort applaudi celle des *Viveurs*, avec choeurs, oeuvre par laquelle Mlle Micheli a prouvé que le

[19] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (New-York: G. Vale, 1845), p. 64. Music as a source of madness will be explored in Chapter 3.
[20] *AMZ*, 14 May 1806, vol. 8, n°33, p. 514.
[21] *AMZ*, 6 Nov. 1839, vol. 41, n°45, p. 878; 13 Nov. 1839, n°46, p. 903.

> talent de conduire un orchestre, exécutant de la manière la plus brillante la belle ouverture du Guillaume Tell de Rossini, n'était pas le seul qu'elle possédât.[22]

Although his report focuses particularly on her appearance – which would be less the case for male conductors – and intertwines a vocabulary of seduction and power – which perhaps contains hints of irony – the general positive criticism shows us that women could be accepted as conductors and composers to a certain extent, notably in concerts in smaller venues, such as the *Concerts de Paris* at the Hôtel d'Osmond. The above extract also demonstrates that female creative abilities were recognised. If at the beginning of the century discourses about female composers claimed that they were essentially unable to compose,[23] this changed towards the end of the century, when periodicals started to question the claimed impossibility to compose[24] – as a matter of fact, the French term 'compositrice' was not coined until 1847.[25] According to Florence Launay, there was in fact a great number of female composers throughout the nineteenth century in France, who were acknowledged by criticism – although 'la réception reste androcentriste, la femme étant toujours "l'autre"'[26] – and who were even able to publish their works with famous publishers.[27] The recognition of female composers went hand in hand with the idea of genius, which was rarely attributed to women. Christine Battersby highlights the paradox of the necessary 'feminine' qualities male geniuses were to have and the impossibility for women to be perceived as geniuses.[28] Similarly, Launay underlines that some women were praised for having qualities associated with male composers.[29] It seems that the idea of artistic genius, the genius creator and genius creation, as explained by the socio-cultural discourse, was intrinsically linked to gender ambiguities. The connection between art,

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[22] *RGM*, 'Concert à l'hôtel d'Osmond', 8 Nov. 1857, vol. 24, n° 45, p. 365.
[23] We can read in the *Contemporary Review* of 1871: 'The woman's temperament is naturally artistic, not in a creative, but in a receptive, sense', 'Music and Morals: Women and Music', H. R. Haweis, April 1871, vol. 17, p. 501.
[24] Henri Blanchard published an article entitled 'Des femmes compositeurs' in the *RGM* of July 1840; in the *Musical Standard* of August 1894, an article entitled 'Is the musical idea masculine?' questioned the reasons why no great pieces of music had been composed by women, p. 103; an article praised Cécile Chaminade's compositions in *The Magazine of Music* October 1894 and even reported a comment by Ambroise Thomas, who apparently said after her concert 'Ce n'est pas une femme qui compose, c'est un compositeur', 'Cécile Chaminade', p. 223.
[25] Yves Bessieres and Patricia Niedzwiecki, *Women and Music, Women of Europe*, Supplement No. 22 (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, 1985), p. 15.
[26] Launay, p. 125-26.
[27] *Ibid.*
[28] Christine Battersby, *Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics* (Bloomington: Indiana Press University, 1989), p. 4.
[29] Launay, p. 15.

performance and feminine or masculine qualities is at the heart of this thesis: we will see that the figure of the androgyne, recurrent in the case studies, reflects the idea that gender confusion is a privileged way to envisage the creator and its creation. Furthermore, Launay reveals that affirming that women composers were not predominant is 'un mensonge par omission'; they were as active as male composers but their works were not referenced in music history books and therefore did not survive to posterity.[30] Likewise, Françoise Escal explains that it is not so much a question of how many women composers have existed that is relevant, but more the fact that they were never associated with the notion of the masterpiece. And yet, the main characteristic of a masterpiece is that it lasts into posterity, as Escal states:

> le chef-d'oeuvre dure, se perpétue, renaît. Il provoque des "développements infinis", comme disait Valéry de l'oeuvre d'art en général. Il appelle la reprise et induit le renouvellement (ce qui revient à dire qu'en musique, aucune oeuvre, aucun chef-d'oeuvre n'est égal à la meilleure de ses interprétations possibles).[31]

It is as if compositions by women could not exceed the mere process of creation, as if they were doomed to improvisation. Thus, women could compose and even be published, but their works were not played beyond the time of their lives: they were not remembered. However, we will see in our case studies that key female performances often tend to reappear in the text; there is a form of repetition within the narration underlining the significance of such performances.

This brief overview of the socio-cultural discourse about female musicians in the nineteenth century reveals that they enjoyed a fairly wide visibility and that in fact, several discourses about women coexisted: a discourse encouraging the domestic practice, a discourse praising women who dared to be virtuosos, composing or conducting, and a discourse condemning the dangers of female musicianship. Women musicians are, in the Foucauldian sense, 'un noeud dans un réseau'[32] where the different discourses succeed, overlap and discontinue one another. It is this diversity of discourses that makes female musicianship such a rich literary topic; female musicians do not fit into one category: 'they are organic, fluid and certainly not a

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 10.
[31] Françoise Escal and Jacqueline Rousseau*, Musique et différence des sexes* (Paris: l'Harmattan, 1999), p. 25.
[32] Michel Foucault, *L'Archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), p. 34.

coherent piece', as Simonton argues generally about women.[33] We will see how our case studies not only echo the variety of discourses on women musicians but tend to a form of coherence through the female body. The first case study that will now be explored enables a transition to be made between the literary traditions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and establishes the main themes mentioned in this section as literary topoi.

[33] Simonton, 'Introduction: Writing Women in(to) Modern Europe', in *The Routledge History of Women in Europe*, pp. 1-13 (p. 4).

Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* (1795): a paradigm for women, performance and bodies

The vast scholarship on *Wilhem Meisters Lehrjahre* has established this text as canonical of European literature, notably presenting it as: a cultural turning-point of the end of the eighteenth century,[1] a paradigmatic *Bildungsroman*,[2] and a milestone both for major themes developed in Romantic literature[3] and for later texts of the nineteenth century, particularly through the figure of Mignon.[4] In this line of thinking, this first case study will enable us to establish the main themes centred on women and music that will be developed (or subverted) in the texts of the following chapters. These include the elusive quality of music and women (on which Romantic texts greatly rely), androgyny and cross-dressing, on- and off-stage female performances, and crossing geographical boundaries. *Wilhelm Meister* not only offers us the premise of the interrelations between gender, performance and music – showing that performing music is always tied to gender – but also presents a transition from the eighteenth-century conception of genius to the nineteenth-century modern creativity.

My analysis will be focused not only on the character of Mignon, but also on the other women performers that pervade the text. While some critics have qualified women characters as passive protagonists next to the hero,[5] I argue for a certain

[1] The following references are only a few examples among the vast scholarship. Ernst Behler, *German Romantic Literary Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 168.
[2] Jürgen Jacobs, *Wilhelm Meister und seine Brüder: Untersuchungen zum deutschen Bildungsroman* (München: W. Fink, 1972); Michael Minden, 'Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre', in *The German Bildungsroman: Incest and Inheritance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 16-59; Hellmut Ammerlahn, 'The Marriage of Artist Novel and Bildungsroman: Goethe's Wilhelm Meister, a Paradigm in Disguise', *German Life and Letters*, 59 (2006), 25-46.
[3] Nicholas Saul, *The Cambridge Companion to German Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Stefanie Bach, 'Musical Gypsies and Anti-Classical Aesthetics: the Romantic Reception of Goethe's Mignon Character in Brentano's *Die mehreren Wehmüller und ungarische Nationalgesichter',* in *Music and Literature in German Romanticism,* ed. by Siobhán Donovan and Robin Elliott (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2004), pp. 105-119.
[4] Julia Effertz, 'The Woman Singer and her Song in French and German Prose Fiction (circa 1790-1848)' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Oxford Brookes University, 2008), pp. 68-97; Terence Cave, *Mignon's Afterlives: Crossing Cultures from Goethe to the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
[5] Minden, for example, affirms that all the characters surrounding Wilhelm Meister are 'passive protagonists' and that women are there to convey a 'sense of Wilhelm's authentic subjectivity', p. 20, p. 39. We will see that women have other functions in the novel.

female agency, in line with the comments of a number of other critics,[6] while at the same time highlighting a female pre-domestication that is particularly visible through music and theatre. In fact, in each woman performer one can perceive characteristics that are repeated and developed in female musician characters of the nineteenth century. Mignon's elusiveness, Philine's sexuality, Mariane's self-affirmation, and Aurelie's insanity will therefore be central to this study, as will other features such as female creativity. Because some of the novels examined in the following chapters can be considered as female *Bildungsromane*, such as Sand's *Consuelo*, it is also interesting to note that some of Wilhelm Meister's features can be found in nineteenth-century heroines.

Wilhelm Meister's apprenticeship consists of a confrontation between artistic and social ideals, where he must renounce the theatrical ambitions of his youth in order to become a merchant and father. After a disappointing relationship with Mariane, Wilhelm decides to leave his home for commercial goals but soon becomes involved with actors and theatre. During the course of his travels, his encounters with performers, and especially the actresses and singers mentioned above, are determining steps of his apprenticeship, revealing music as an aesthetic model in his life. The role of women in the novel is clearly marked by performance; however, while it is undeniable, female creativity remains unstable, notably due to women's androgyny. Herein lies our primary concern in relation to women and music: the body. *Wilhelm Meister* hints at gender, performance and music being connected mainly through the feminine body but this remains evasive in the sense that the (androgynous) body is approached through clothes and cross-dressing, rather than direct concerns with the (bare) body, as will be more the case in the nineteenth century. This instability of women's creativity embodies an instability of the artistic life, from which Wilhelm must distance himself in order to understand the meaning of his life. This is also a problematic that will stand at the centre of nineteenth-century texts: the contentious predominance of art – visible through women and music – framed by a patriarchal material model.

[6] John Blair, *Tracing Subversive Currents in Goethe's Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (Columbia, S.C: Camden House, 1997), pp. 134-162.

1. Music and the feminine as aesthetic models of Wilhelm's *Bildung*

Music is mainly present in the text in the form of popular, folk music performed by women singers (Mignon and Philine), as well as the harpist (Augustin) who is in fact Mignon's father, as the reader learns towards the end of the text. However, music also appears as an aesthetic discourse accompanying Wilhelm's self-realisation. Although theatre is Wilhelm Meister's main concern, it is always connected to music; it seems that the ineffable character of music provides the hero with an unfathomable distance necessary to his personal development. I would like to argue that, while the practice of drama has to be overcome in order to settle into moral life, music as an aesthetic model remains indispensable throughout Wilhelm's life, even once he has accomplished his apprenticeship.

1.1 The elusiveness and ineffability of music

On several occasions, music is presented as a model for theatre and for the actor. Laertes, one of the comedians of the troupe that Wilhelm meets, suggests, for example, that music can guide the gestures (the body) of the actor since the composer furnishes 'Deklamation und Ausdruck'.[7] This idea is repeated by Serlo, a theatre director and acquaintance of Wilhelm, who maintains that an actor must have a love for music and practise drama with music:

> So wie man viel leichter und anständiger agiere, wenn die Gebärden durch eine Melodie begleitet und geleitet werden, so müsse der Schauspieler sich auch seine prosaische Rolle gleichsam im Sinne komponieren, dass er sie nicht etwa eintönig nach seiner individuellen Art und Weise hinsudele, sondern sie in gehöriger Abwechselung nach Takt und Maß behandle.[8]

[7] Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Wilhem Meisters Lehrjahre* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2008), p. 134.
[8] *WM*, p. 252. ('As a man performs [...] with far more ease and dignity when his gestures are accompanied and guided by a tune; so the player ought, in idea as it were, to set to music even his prose parts, that he may not monotonously slight them over in his individual style, but treat them in suitable alternation by time and measure.' *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, trans. by Thomas Carlyle (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1824), II, p.76. The following translations are from this edition.)

Wilhelm seems to adopt this crucial role of music in theatre when admitting the importance of sight-reading.[9] However, music helps him to understand not only theatre but his own life values, as his new understanding of theatre goes hand in hand with his understanding of Serlo's self-interested personality. Music thus helps Wilhelm engage in a reflection on theatre and life, and gain in maturity. One of the musical principles that Wilhelm seems to embrace the most is that of rhythm ('Takt und Maß') and repetition.

Music is an aesthetic model in Wilhelm's approach to theatre, which, it should be noted, he must discard for a more moral life. Music also has a wider impact on his life, which is mainly made possible by its elusive character. The power of 'true' music relies on its intangibility, as is suggested by Mignon's songs and confirmed at the end of the novel in the words of Natalie's uncle:

> Die Musik dient dort [Theater] nur gleichsam dem Auge, sie begleitet die Bewegungen, nicht die Empfindungen. Bei Oratorien und Konzerten stört uns immer die Gestalt des Musikus; die wahre Musik ist allein fürs Ohr; eine schöne Stimme ist das Allgemeinste, was sich denken last, und indem das eingeschränkte Individuum, das sie hervorbringt, sich vors Auge stellt, zerstört es den reinen Effekt jener Allgemeinheit [...]; hingegen wer mir singt, soll unsichtbar sein, seine Gestalt soll mich nicht bestechen oder irremachen.[10]

Music is opposed to theatre in its effects on beings; it addresses the emotions directly and may therefore have a stronger impact. Moreover, the uncle's acousmatic[11] requirement connects music to the recurrent motif of the invisible (*unsichtbar*). The sixth book of the novel[12] introduces another narrative: the Beautiful Soul's confessions, as justified by Wilhelm's reading of them. The motif of the invisible is particularly present in this section of the novel; in religion, the Beautiful Soul finds

[9] *Ibid.*, 'Wie man von jedem Musikus verlange, dass er, bis auf einen gewissen Grad, vom Blatte spielen könne, so solle auch jeder Schauspieler […]', p. 316.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 559. ('The music there is, as it were, subservient to the eye; it accompanies the movement, not emotions. In oratorios and concerts the form of the musician constantly disturbs us: true music is intended for the ear alone; a fine voice is the most universal thing that can be figured; and while the narrow individual that uses it presents himself before the eye, he cannot fail to trouble the effect of that pure universality [...] whoever sings to me must be invisible; his form must not confuse me or corrupt my judgment.' II, p. 303.)
[11] 'Acousmatique, adj.: se dit d'un son que l'on entend sans voir les causes dont il provient', in Pierre Schaeffer, *Traité des objets musicaux* (Paris: Seuil, 1977), p. 91.
[12] The novel is divided into eight books, which are themselves divided into chapters.

her invisible friend, a means of self-affirmation. We could draw a parallel between the reliance of the Beautiful Soul's self-realisation on her 'invisible friend', and the connection between Wilhelm's self-awareness and the intangibility of music, his own invisible friend.

The invisibility of music is present throughout the narration with Mignon's songs, following Wilhelm's development. Her music is opposed to the clarity of language and appears as an elusive, intangible thread. First, the narration of the songs never coincides with their performances or the performances are deferred by dreaminess. Her music appears to the reader as reported, accentuating the idea of elusiveness. The lyrics of Mignon's first song 'Kennst du das Land' open the third book but the actual performance is related shortly after with Wilhelm as audience. The second song she performs, 'Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt', is a duet with the harpist which Wilhelm hears while in a dreamy state ('träumende Sehnsucht'),[13] blurring the narration of the performance. The insertion of the third one, 'Heiss mich nicht reden', does not coincide with its performance; it is clearly announced by the narrator as an illustration of Wilhelm's departure: 'wir zeichnen hier noch zum Schlusse ein Gedicht auf, das Mignon mit großem Ausdruck einigemal rezitiert hatte und das wir früher mitzuteilen durch den Drang mancher sonderbaren Ereignisse verhindert wurden'.[14] Finally, the last song, 'So lasst mich scheinen', is also indirect as it is reported by Natalie.

The deferment between the moment of performance and the narrative moment of inserting the lyrics of a song highlights the impossibility of inscribing a musical performance. It is for this reason that Wilhelm cannot write down the song 'Kennst du das Land' despite asking Mignon to repeat the verses. Mignon's broken language is not the only reason for this failure – it is said several times that she speaks, and sings, a 'gebrochenes Deutsch' – music, despite the words of the poem sung, must remain evasive, it cannot be fully grasped. The narrator does not give musical indications but only impressions or moods such as 'dumpfe', 'düstere', 'unwiderstehliche Sehnsucht'.[15] The elusiveness of music contrasts with language, as can be understood when the first line of the song becomes a question that opens up a dialogue between Mignon and Wilhelm. When they are sung, Wilhelm does not understand the lyrics,

[13] *WM*, p. 246.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 366-67.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 148.

but when they are spoken they can be integrated into a perfectly intelligible dialogue. The connection between music and language is anchored in eighteenth-century discourse, particularly in the thought of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and will be one of the milestones of nineteenth-century literature. According to Rousseau, music is the fundamental mode of expression and historically precedes language:

> Avec les premières voix se formèrent les premières articulations ou les premiers sons, selon le genre de la passion qui dictait les uns ou les autres. La colère arrache des cris menaçants, que la langue et le palais articulent: mais la voix de la tendresse est plus douce, c'est la glotte qui la modifie, et cette voix devient un son; seulement les accents en sont plus fréquents ou plus rares, les inflexions plus ou moins aiguës, selon le sentiment qui s'y joint. Ainsi la cadence et les sons naissent avec les syllabes: la passion fait parler tous les organes, et pare la voix de tout leur éclat; ainsi les vers, les chants, la parole, ont une origine commune.[16]

The necessity to express emotions led to musical sounds, which in turn resulted in articulate language. In line with this context, Mignon's songs are her mode of communication, expressing her emotions and even her biography, which remains inaccessible to Wilhelm, but they also reflect Wilhelm's moods. Her songs are a form of language, albeit disconnected from the clarity of spoken and written language.

The elusiveness of music and the impossibility of writing it down contrast with the theme of inscription, which is recurrent in the novel. We can see this in the contrast between Mignon's life, which is enigmatically sung, and Wilhelm's life, which is clearly written down by the secret society, *die Turmgesellschaft*, which has been following him. Another occurrence of the theme of inscription is when Aurelie, one of the actresses Wilhelm meets, cuts his palm with a dagger and says: 'Man muss euch Männer scharf zeichnen, wenn ihr merken sollt'.[17] The necessity of inscription would lie on the masculine side while the lack of inscription, the evasive, is on the side of the feminine; it is as though men, contrary to women, needed inscription to gain self-awareness, perhaps because the women Wilhelm meets already possess a higher degree of self-awareness. According to Gailus, this cut in his palm is a means for Wilhelm to question his life in an organic way, to reconsider 'the intrinsic

[16] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Essai sur l'origine des langues* (1781), in *Œuvres de Jean-Jacques Rousseau,* 20 vols (Paris: Lequien, 1821), XIII, p. 194.
[17] *WM*, p. 288.

meaningfulness of his body'.[18] Extending this comment to gender concerns, we could say that, in *Wilhelm Meister,* there seems to be a difference between the importance of marking or inscribing the male body in order to gain self-awareness, and the fact that the female body escapes inscription but finds and expresses self-awareness by other means, such as performance. This idea of the link between the evasive feminine and the impossibility of inscribing music is a topic that is particularly apparent in the texts of E.T.A. Hoffmann, but can also be seen in later texts, such as those of Sand or Braddon, in a reverse manner where female musicians seek forms of inscription.

The elusiveness of music and its characteristic of not being inscribable find its source in the eighteenth-century discourse of language. Rousseau opposes sounds and inscription, affirming that writing degrades language. He states the following:

> L'écriture, qui semble devoir fixer la langue, est précisément ce qui l'altère ; elle n'en change pas les mots, mais le génie ; elle substitue l'exactitude à l'expression. […] On écrit les voix et non pas les sons : or, dans une langue accentuée, ce sont les sons, les accents, les inflexions de toute espèce, qui font la plus grande énergie du langage, et rendent une phrase, d'ailleurs commune, propre seulement au lieu où elle est.[19]

One final non-negligible impact of music as an evasive aesthetic model is its capacity to defer the notion of origins. As I have already mentioned, Mignon's songs are a way for her to give hints as to her biography, although it takes time for her mysterious life to be displayed. In fact, instead of providing comprehensible elements, her songs increase the mystery around her. Already lacking gender-clarity, as I will analyse later, Mignon becomes, as it were, even more ambiguous with(in) her songs.

Furthermore, her music always refers to an origin which is longed for but cannot be reached; 'Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühn' and 'Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt' express a yearning for a primal origin, which is not necessarily a place (the supposed Italy) but rather an impression. This will be a crucial aspect of the Romantic texts studied in Chapter 2, which I will analyse in the light of Kant's account of transcendental origins. Moreover, it is safe to say that 'Kennst du das Land' becomes a literary motif in nineteenth-century literature. We find it, for

[18] Andreas Gailus, 'Forms of Life: Nature, Culture and Art in Goethe's Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship', *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory*, 87 (2012), 139-174 (p. 139).
[19] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Essai,* pp. 162-63.

example, in Eichendorff's texts with Taugenichts travelling to Italy to find his beloved, or in *Das Marmorbild*, where Fortunato also sings about Italy, describing it as 'Ein blühnder Garten' and 'Ein sehnsuchtsvolles Träumen'.[20] Berlioz also refers to it as a motif and even translates it by making the German composer Xylef say about Italy: 'les moeurs barbarescentes de *cette contrée où l'oranger fleurit encore*, mais où l'art, mort depuis longtemps, n'a pas même laissé un souvenir'.[21] It is also to be found, however, in Sand's *Consuelo*, where the heroine dreams about her youth in Venice, and in Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, where Mirah repeatedly sings 'O patria mia'.

Consuelo, like Mirah, possesses many characteristics in common with Mignon; she is androgynous, fragile, sings and travels with her guitar (while Mignon plays the cithar), but we can also compare Zdenko, an idiotic vagabond in Sand's novel, to Mignon. Zdenko also sings and improvises about his native Bohemia in an obscure German or in Bohemian. By longing for a lost origin through music, Mignon highlights the connection between music and memory, which will also be central in the next chapters. For instance, Madame Bovary also yearns for a form of nostalgia triggered by music, while Mirah frequently remembers her childhood and mother through music.

The fact that, through the impact of Mignon's songs, music plays an important role in the hero's life does not mean that Mignon's role is subsidiary. In fact, the songs she composes and interprets make her, more than any other character in the novel, an embodiment of creativity. However, Wilhelm finds in the elusiveness of her music a guiding principle for self-affirmation, which enables him to achieve a better understanding of theatre, as well as of the women he encounters and of his own sexuality, as we will see now.

[20] Joseph von Eichendorff, *Das Marmorblid*, in *Joseph von Eichendorff Werke,* ed. by Wolfgang Frühwald, 5 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985), II, pp. 423-24.
[21] Hector Berlioz, 'Euphonia, ou la ville musicale, nouvelle de l'avenir', in *Les Soirées de l'orchestre* (Lyon: Symétrie, 2012), p. 293. My emphasis.

1.2 Feminine *Bilder*, sexual *Bildung*

Wilhelm's lack of self-awareness often leads him to perceive women as evasive images. While the elusiveness of music is not only related to Wilhelm's perception of it – since Mignon's songs are also a mystery to the other characters and the reader – the presentation of women as evasive images seem to be specifically related to Wilhelm's perception. Wilhelm is often in a state of confusion, particularly in the face of female performances. He cannot understand Mignon's biographical hints in her songs, while Natalie, to whom he is engaged at the end, is able to understand parts of Mignon's story. Confusion is a characteristic of the hero of the *Bildungsroman* that we will find in other characters, particularly Taugenichts and Florio, who understand the true identity of the women surrounding them only at the end of the novellas. Similarly, the full identities of some of the women characters are only revealed at the end of *Wilhelm Meister*. Thus, Wilhelm discovers that the Amazon, who took care of him after he was attacked, and Natalie are one person; Mignon is the harpist's daughter and the result of an incestuous relation between him and his sister; Mariane did not betray Wilhelm contrary to what he thought; and the Beautiful Soul is Natalie and the countess's aunt. At the end of the novel, all the mysteries are solved and everything finds an explanation,[22] contrary to Hoffmann's texts, in which fantastical elements leave the reader without explanations.

Until the final resolutions, Wilhelm perceives women as confusing beings; he frequently refers to them as 'Bilder', as if they have remained evasive images. Sometimes these 'Bilder' are even interchangeable, for instance when he notes a resemblance between the Amazon and the countess:

> Die Erinnerung an die liebenswürdige Gräfin war ihm unendlich süß. Er rief sich ihr Bild nur allzugern wieder ins Gedächtnis. Aber nun trat die Gestalt der edlen Amazone gleich dazwischen, eine Erscheinung verwandelte sich in die andere, ohne dass er imstande gewesen wäre, diese oder jene festzuhalten.[23]

[22] It is interesting to note that in the earlier version of the *Lehrjahre* called *Wilhelm Meisters theatralische Sendung* (1777-85), discovered only in 1910, the mystery around Mignon and the Harpist does not find any explanation.

[23] *WM*, p. 245. ('The recollection of the amiable countess was to Wilhelm infinitely sweet. He recalled her image but too willingly into his memory. But anon the figure of the noble Amazon would step between; one vision melted and changed into the other, and the form of neither would abide with him', II, p. 65.)

This visual confusion of women, highlighting the notion of the double, will be examined in the next chapters, particularly in relation to Eichendorff's texts, where Taugenichts mistakes the *gnädige Frau* with other women (or men) he meets, or Florio who confounds the *Marmorbild* with the mistress of the castle. In Chapter 3, we will see how women characters take advantage of the figure of the double, constituting numerous identities for themselves. However, even when women are constituted as images by male characters, they can never be fixed and always remain in movement.

Wilhelm's confusion in front of these *Bilder* seems to be of a sexual nature. Most of the female encounters in Wilhelm's journey are linked to the development of his sexuality: Mariane is the first lover, Philine the physical temptation, Mignon the forbidden love, the countess the social temptation, Therese the rational love, and the Amazon (Natalie) the ultimate ideal image. The narrator regularly highlights Wilhelm's lack of understanding regarding the sexuality of these characters. For example, one night Wilhelm thinks that a woman has entered his room to spend the night with him, but he does not know whom it is and what (or if) something has actually happened. He suspects Philine, who not long after whispers a few words in his ear, which he cannot understand, as the narrator underlines: 'Er war verwirrt und verdrießlich und wusste nicht, was er erwarten oder tun sollte'.[24] Philine, who has been charming him, appears to be fully aware of her own sexuality; it is Wilhelm's lack of understanding that presents her as a source of confusion. Wilhelm does not seem to understand Mignon's sexuality either, whose attachment to the hero becomes more than that of a child for her father. When Wilhelm decides to leave the first troupe he meets, at the end of Book 2, Mignon displays a strong physical reaction to his caresses:

> Endlich fühlte er an ihr eine Art Zucken, das ganz sachte anfing und sich durch alle Glieder wachsend verbreitete […] er drückte sie an sich und küsste sie. […] Sie hielt ihr Herz fest, und auf einmal tat sie einen Schrei, der mit krampfigen

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 343.

> Bewegungen des Körpers begleitet war. Sie fuhr auf und fiel auch sogleich wie an allen Gelenken gebrochen vor ihm nieder. Es war ein grässlicher Anblick![25]

Her violent reaction could be interpreted as an awakening of sexuality that has to be repressed due to the father/child relationship she has with Wilhelm. Wilhelm does not understand her reaction, nor does he comprehend the fact that their impossible love leads to her death. At the end of the novel, the doctor tells Wilhelm that Mignon was in his room during the night when Philine mysteriously came in, and since then her health has been deteriorating. This continues up to her death, when she hears Therese calling Wilhelm 'mein Geliebter! mein Gatte!'.[26] Despite her elusive nature and her androgyny, Mignon develops a physical love for Wilhelm, which remains impossible. At the end of Mignon's spasmodic scene, the harpist can be heard playing a song, and yet, as we learn later, the harpist is the father of Mignon, whom he had with his sister Sperata. With this in mind, his musical intervention could point to the incestuous character of Wilhelm's relationship with Mignon. Admitting that Mignon has a sexuality would be to admit her double nature: on the one hand she is an elusive image for Wilhelm, while on the other she is a character with full agency. As an elusive character, she remains an ideal; she is a means for the hero to gain subjectivity, and a 'primitive state of consciousness'[27] – or rather, her music as primordial language becomes this means. As a character with agency, she has her own creative and sexual evolution, albeit a pathological one. From this viewpoint, Mignon paves the way for the pathological figures that will be explored in Chapters 3 and 5, where the female body will be at stake.

Wilhelm cannot understand female sexuality despite women's attempts to display it. The only way for him to acknowledge their erotic power is to turn them into works of art, as MacLeod argues in relation to Mignon: 'the narrative of male *Bildung* results in the enervation of this female androgyne and her transformation into

[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 145-46. ('At last he felt a sort of palpitating movement in her, which began very softly, and then by degrees with increasing violence diffused itself over all the frame [...] he pressed her towards him and kissed her [...]. She held firmly against her heart; and all at once gave a cry, which was accompanied by spasmodic movements of the body. She started up, and immediately fell down before him, as if broken in every joint. It was an excruciating moment!', I, p. 225.)
[26] *Ibid*., p. 560.
[27] Judith Ryan, *The Cambridge Introduction to German Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 106.

an inanimate work of art'.[28] By doing so, Wilhelm does not acknowledge their artistic power but places women on the side of art, as something to be categorised since it cannot be grasped. Music is a means for him to operate this categorisation. At the end of the novel, Wilhelm finally understands the significance of the marble statues in Mignon's song: 'diese Bilder hatten über mich nicht zu trauern, sie sahen mich mit hohem Ernst an und schlossen meine früheste Zeit unmittelbar an diesen Augenblick'.[29] Here, 'diese Bilder' echo the images of the countess and Natalie, which were a source of confusion for Wilhelm; in other words, Wilhelm has changed the women he has met into marble statues in order to fix them, understand them, and then gain self-awareness. Thus, when he finally understands that the Amazon is Natalie when visiting her house, he admires the marble statues of which 'einige schienen ihm bekannt'.[30] The marble statues are undoubtedly an embodiment of the women he has known.

Moreover, even though it is Mignon who 'composes' the statues in the first place in her song, she herself becomes a 'Marmorbild' once she is dead. Her funeral is described at length, even more precisely than any elements of her life. A full description of the décor is offered, notably the marble both of the temple and of her coffin, where she lies 'unverzehrt'.[31] The evasive Mignon, who remained artistically and erotically mysterious, always in flux, is now deciphered and fixed by Wilhelm in the form of a marble statue. He makes her a statue instead of the creator of these musical statues. While Mignon's creative power is refused, Wilhelm acknowledges a certain creativity in Natalie:

> er beschäftigte sich, das Bild der Amazone mit dem Bilde seiner neuen, gegenwärtigen Freundin zu vergleichen. Sie wollten noch nicht miteinander zusammenfließen; jenes hatte er sich gleichsam geschaffen, und dieses schien fast *ihn* umschaffen zu wollen.[32]

[28] Catriona MacLeod, 'Pedagogy and Androgyny in Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre', *MLN*, 108 (1993), 389-426 (p. 409).
[29] *WM*, p. 535.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 528.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 595.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 532. ('He kept comparing the figure of the Amazon with the figure of his new acquaintance. The two would not combine: the former he had, as it were, himself fashioned; the latter seemed as if it almost meant to fashion *him*.', III p. 151.)

Not only does he recognise here that he has been creating (ideal) female images, and therefore had a need to fix women as artworks, but he now confers a power to create ('umschaffen') upon a woman who is the only one not performing, but whose essence is 'a moral principle',[33] as if female agency could only be acknowledged within the frame of moral stability, not within artistry. By acknowledging he has created female images, Wilhelm becomes aware of his own subjectivity. This idea is charged with Kantian meaning, as Boyle reminds us: 'But the grounds of such an assurance lie not in things as they are in themselves, but in the necessary nature of our thought, and in the orientation of our will: they are subjective'.[34] Natalie is the ultimate ideal of Wilhelm's apprenticeship, and as such remains unattainable. Because she remains a Kantian ideal, her love for Wilhelm is not sealed in marriage, the end of the narration rather points towards them moving towards each other. Boyle further states about the Kantian ideals : 'We point ourselves in their direction, we do not expect to attain them'.[35] In the next chapter this Kantian view will be further explored, in the context of Romanticism and with reference to the 'transcendental call' of the Other. Moreover, Wilhelm calls Natalie 'die würdige Priesterin, ja der Genius selbst',[36] which is the only reference to feminine genius in the whole novel, all other occurrences referring to men. The concept of genius was particularly developed in the eighteenth century, signifying a man with unique talents and creativity.[37] This concept was indeed applied to men, underlining not only the strength but also, paradoxically, the feminine qualities they needed to have.[38] Women were not envisaged as figures of genius, as Rousseau famously says:

> Les femmes en général n'aiment aucun art, ne se connaissent à aucun, et n'ont aucun génie […] Mais ce feu céleste qui échauffe et embrase l'âme, ce génie qui consume et dévore, cette brulante éloquence, ces transports sublimes qui portent leurs ravissements jusqu'au fond des cœurs, manqueront toujours aux écrits des femmes.[39]

[33] Nicholas Boyle, *Goethe: the Poet and the Age,* 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991-2000), II, p. 380.
[34] *Ibid.*, p. 376.
[35] *Ibid.*, p. 380.
[36] *WM.*, p. 535.
[37] Christine Battersby, p. 3.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 4.
[39] Rousseau, 'Lettre à M. d'Alembert' (1758), *Œuvres de J.J. Rousseau* (1826), XI, p. 139.

Deprived of genius, artistic women remain works of art rather than creators. While the relationship between genius and gender was to change slightly in the nineteenth century (Balzac presents Camille Maupin as a genius), the motif of women as marble statues will be a recurrent one in nineteenth-century literature; linked to music, it is a means of questioning the creative role of women. Either women musicians are fixed as statues and their creativity denied, as in *Wilhelm Meister,* or statues become musicians, as in Eichendorff's *Das Marmorbild*. In this case, however, they are perceived as dangerous and their status as an artist is also negated.

In *Wilhelm Meister*, the perception of women as images and statues, triggered by Mignon's music, corresponds to the hero's sexual *Bildung*. Unable to understand female sexual energies due to his lack of self-awareness, he fixes women as works of art in order to grasp them. Wilhelm's confusion in front of women is paralleled with phases of self-questioning, showing that he is trying to understand himself, and the model he calls upon in his quest for self-affirmation is an aesthetic one, combining the elusiveness of music and feminine images.

2. 'Das treulose Geschlecht'[40]: the androgynous myth

2.1 Poetics of androgyny

The androgynous myth finds its source in Plato's *Symposium* (385-370 BC), where Aristophanes recounts the origins of humanity. Originally, he explains, there were three genders, male, female and androgynous, but Zeus decided to split the latter because they were too strong and dangerous.[41] Thus, in Aristophanes' speech, the androgynous is the original gender that has been sundered into male and female. Examining the most important thinkers of androgyny, MacLeod underlines that the androgynous figure presented in the *Symposium* is replete with complexities and can be interpreted either as static or as fluid.[42] MacLeod further presents Johann Winckelmann as a fundamental thinker of androgyny; for him, hermaphroditism is an

[40] *WM*, p. 126.
[41] Plato, *Symposium,* ed. by Frisbee C. C Sheffield and trans. by M. C Howatson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 22.
[42] Catriona MacLeod, *Embodying Ambiguity: Androgyny and Aesthetics from Winckelmann to Keller,* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), p. 22.

embodiment of ideal beauty due to its polymorphous and fluid character.[43] Another fundamental work of the end of the eighteenth century can be found in Schlegel's novel *Lucinde* (1799), which unites art and eroticism through androgyny. Schlegel also links androgyny to art in his *Athenäum*, arguing that art can be total if individuals unite: 'Oft kann man sich des Gedankens nicht erwehren, zwei Geister möchten eigentlich zusammengehören, wie getrennte Hälften [...]. Gäbe es eine Kunst, Individuen zu verschmelzen [...]'.[44] On another level, Franz von Baader established androgyny as essential to spirituality at the beginning of the nineteenth century: 'Hat man nun aus dem soeben Gesagten die Einsicht gewonnen, dass ohne den Begriff der Androgynie, der Zentralbegriff der Religion, nämlich jener des Bildes Gottes unverstanden bleibt'.[45] Theories of androgyny were thus already fairly present in Goethe's times, and were further developed with Romanticism. Inasmuch as androgyny seems primarily to concern women – we will find exceptions such as Balzac's Zambinella or Mann's Hanno – I will examine throughout this thesis what androgynous figures tell us about women performers. MacLeod explains that the androgyne is 'an embodiment of diffuseness and instability' often associated with 'the iconic marble statue, the marker of neoclassical stability'.[46] Does androgyny mean that women are perceived as always performing? Does the elusiveness of androgyny confer a greater artistic power on women? Or does the association with marble statues forbid androgynous women from being creators themselves? In any case, the real dichotomy of androgyny seems to rest upon artistic legitimation between the creator and the creation rather than being a gender dichotomy.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 23.
[44] Friedrich Schlegel, *Athenäums-Fragmente, Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, ed. by Ernst Behler et al., 35 vols (Munich: Schöningh, 1958–), II, [125], p. 185.
[45] Franz von Baader, *Sätze aus der erotischen Philosophie und andere Schriften* (Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 1966), p. 84.
[46] MacLeod, *Embodying Ambiguity*, p. 22.

2.2 Cross-dressed women in *Wilhelm Meister*

Laertes, one of the actors of the first troupe Wilhelm meets, is described as 'Weiberfeind'[47] and declares: 'deswegen geht sich's so angenehm mit Weibern um, die sich niemals in ihrer natürlichen Gestalt sehen lassen'.[48] For him, women are always disguised, and indeed most of the women characters like to dress as men. Androgyny relates mainly to clothing in the text: Mariane appears in an officer's suit at the beginning of the novel; Mignon wants to be a boy and refuses to wear female clothes; the baroness also likes to disguise herself; and Natalie first appears as an Amazon. Jarno even says that Therese is 'eine wahre Amazone' while other women are 'artige Hermaphroditen',[49] as if hermaphroditism were a common female feature. Most of the time, cross-dressing is associated with performance; even when the characters are not exactly on stage, it is clearly explained that this is part of a game, as if the performing frame were justifying a transgression that would normally be socially condemned. Mignon's constant cross-dressing is justified by the fact that she performs, sings all the time, and is a child.

According to Robert Tobin, the presence of transvestite women helps the hero to develop his masculinity.[50] However, in an attempt to present women characters not only through the perspective of the hero's development but as independent characters with agency, I would further suggest that cross-dressing is a way for women to confront art and the social world in a self-affirming purpose. Each transvestite woman corresponds to a different degree of gender affirmation – there is, for example, a difference between Mariane who wants to be more independent and Mignon who really wants to remain gender neutral. Androgynous figures contrast with women who are epitomes of femininity, such as Philine who is 'die wahre Eva, die Stammutter des weiblichen Geschlechts'.[51] Femininity is never depicted through direct references to the body – with the exception of Mignon's convulsions, as mentioned above – but centres, rather, on a game between male and female clothing. Thus, while Mariane first appears as an officer, she is shortly after associated with feminine sensuality

[47] *WM*, p. 180.
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 119.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 452.
[50] 'Wilhelm Meister learns to become a husband and a father from a series of cross-dressed women', Robert D. Tobin, *Warm Brothers: Queer Theory and the Age of Goethe*, (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2000), p. 124.
[51] *WM*, p. 100.

when Wilhelm discovers her corset lying on the harpsichord, which establishes a link once again between clothing and musical performance.[52]

The association of cross-dressing with performance appears in nineteenth-century texts – we will find androgynous figures in the texts of Eichendorff, Balzac, Sand, Eliot and Mann – and can also be related to the tradition of the gypsy figure.[53] Although Sand's Consuelo and Eliot's Mirah can be seen as gypsy figures, they are not embodiments of the feminine gypsy. Instead, they wear neutral, dark clothes, or even dress like men in the case of Consuelo, and embody a freedom of gender and movement. This freedom also relates to their practice of music; Mignon and Consuelo sing and play popular music on instruments such as the guitar or cithar, rather than conventional serious music on the piano or harpsichord. The popular music Mignon sings emphasises her mysterious and ephemeral nature. Goethe himself wanted Mignon to remain a popular song singer, disapproving, for example, of Beethoven's setting of 'Kennst du das Land', which he judged as too serious: 'Mignon kann wohl ihrem Wesen nach ein Lied, aber keine Arie singen'.[54] Moreover, under the features of an androgynous gypsy, Mignon, as a combination of the itinerant, the musician, and the dancer, opens the way for future gypsy figures and a preponderant theme: travel and wandering.

2.3 Mignon: neither woman nor artist

Mignon is first described through what she wears and is presented, from her first appearance, as having something foreign about her: 'Ein kurzes, seidnes Westchen mit geschlitzten spanischen Ärmeln, knappe, lange Beinkleider mit Puffen standen dem Kinde gar artig'.[55] Clothing occupies a central role, while the body is relegated to a lesser one. However, more attention is accorded to the description of Mignon's body than to that of other female characters; she has dark hair and seems rather fragile, like Consuelo, Mirah, and other androgynous figures. Alternating feminine and neutral pronouns to emphasise her androgyny, the narrator also decomposes her face and highlights, for instance, her twitching mouth. Mignon wishes to remain genderless

[52] *Ibid*., p. 60.
[53] Stephanie Bach recalls that one of the grounding texts on gypsy figures is Cervantes' 'La Gitanella' (1613), p. 106.
[54] Discussion between Goethe and Wenzel Tomaschek of August 1822: see Jack M. Stein, 'Musical Settings of the Songs from Wilhelm Meister', *Comparative Literature*, 22 (1970), 125-146 (p.132).
[55] *WM*, p. 92.

throughout the novel; at the beginning, she repeats that she is a boy and at the end, before her death, she puts on a dress, not to be a woman but an angel. However, she is androgynous also because she is a figure of contrasts – I have already mentioned above that she is elusive but has agency. This is also revealed in her songs, where themes of concealment and revelation are intertwined. For example, in the duet 'Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt', an organic grounding ('die Eingeweide') contrasts with an immaterial longing ('Firmament', 'Weite', 'Es schwindelt mir').[56] Furthermore, this song can be understood as an affirmation of the artist as a different social category, as if only an artist (like Mignon or the harpist) could understand, in suffering, the nature of the conflict between unearthly yearning and earthly matter ('Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt/ Weiss, was ich leide'). This song could be addressed to Wilhelm to show him that he does not belong to this social category, he does not know artistic yearning and therefore cannot understand Mignon's sorrows. Similarly, in the song 'Heiß mich nicht reden', we find an artistic contrast between sound and silence ('reden', 'schweigen') and a material contrast between bodily exposure ('Innre', 'Busen', 'Arm', 'Brust', 'Lippen') and concealment ('Geheimnis', 'tiefverborgnen').[57] Mignon's contrasts and androgyny are part of her development not as a woman but as an artist; if anything, she rejects her femininity. Therefore, her sexual awakening, which was exposed earlier in relation to her physical attraction to Wilhelm, is rejected for an angelic and childlike appearance. Her last song, 'so lasst mich scheinen', advocates a body without clothing ('keine Kleider, keine Falten/Umgeben den verklärten Leib') and a return to a childlike state ('Macht mir auf ewig wieder jung'). It is as if she could not be an artist and a woman at the same time; however, her status as artist is also limited since she is not recognised as a composer. Yet, the marble statues of her first song are her creation before Wilhelm appropriates them; the statues look at and address their creator Mignon ('stehn und sehn mich an:/Was hat man dir, du armes Kind, getan?')[58] in a Pygmalion moment. Although it is not spelled out in the text, Mignon is a figure of genius and paves the way for famous genius characters, male and female, of the next century. Thus, Mignon's death upon hearing that Wilhelm is engaged is not only a renunciation of her femininity but also symbolises

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 246.
[57] *Ibid.*, p. 367.
[58] *Ibid.*, p. 147.

the impossibility of being a female creator; she rather remains an androgynous creator.

Mignon is therefore a complex hybrid; she is both a creator and a creation, an elusive musician and a mechanical puppet (when she performs her egg dance). In other words, she is both immaterial and material. From this viewpoint, androgyny would not constitute, as Aristophanes suggested, a primal unity split in two, but the merging of dual forms into one, in an attempt to rebuild a possible original unity. Finding a lost unity, through the androgynous figure, is one of the fundamental points of Romantic texts (Chapter 2).

2.4 Instability outside androgyny

Mignon is not only androgynous in her gender and in her relationship with art, but also because she is presented, from the outset, as an unstable dual character. One of the key, problematic characteristics of Mignon is the disconnection between her body and soul: 'Auch hier schien ihr Körper dem Geiste zu widersprechen'.[59] The body and soul of the Beautiful Soul are also separated, but she seems to have greater control over her own life. Mignon does not appear to be in control either of her movements (she cannot write properly despite Wilhelm's teaching) or of her mind ('Man konnte auch hier wieder bemerken, dass bei einer großen Anstrengung sie nur schwer und mühsam begriff').[60] In fact, Mignon appears as a character in development but who cannot reach completion, contrary to Wilhelm. At the end, although she is only a 'halbentwickelte Natur',[61] she decides to stop her development, as it were, and return to a child state, in the form of an angel. Therefore, her progressive decay seems to be responding to a certain personal will, as Lothario tells Wilhelm, 'die arme Mignon scheint sich zu verzehren', while Natalie remarks 'dass das Kind von wenigen tiefen Empfindungen nach und nach aufgezehrt werde'.[62] Despite the instability of her nature, Mignon seems to have an agency that allows her to decide for herself. We might draw a link here with Mann's *Buddenbrooks* and the character of Hanno, a child-musician marked by decay who seems to be the masculine pendant to Mignon, as we shall see in Chapter 5.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 137.
[60] *Ibid.*, p. 268.
[61] *Ibid.*, p. 540.
[62] *Ibid.*, p. 523, p. 529.

Instability outside androgyny can also be perceived in mad figures. The harpist, for example, is presented as mad, but like Mignon he seems to refuse any cure, despite a brief redemption, and kills himself. Similarly, Aurelie is the madwoman of the novel; as a double of Shakespeare's Ophelia, whom she plays, she heralds characters such as Berlioz's Mina, Flaubert's Emma Bovary, or Braddon's Lady Audley, whom we will explore later on. Madly in love with Lothario, who left her, she spends her time yearning for him; while she is recounting her life to Wilhelm, she cuts his hand with a dagger, and dies of despair not long after.

If androgyny is intrinsically linked to instability, instability does not necessarily go hand in hand with androgyny, as Philine illustrates. To a lesser degree than Aurelie, Philine sometimes appears on the brink of madness in the sense that she does not socially conform. She always wants to play comedy, incarnates a joyous woman, often interrupts or expands discussions by singing, and is the standard-bearer of femininity, as she sings: 'Wie das Weib dem Mann gegeben/Als die schönste Hälfte war'.[63] Whether they are androgynous or not, female characters are always presented as instable characters. However, the instability at stake with androgyny distances them from reality and rather bestows idealism on them. Even Natalie, who appears as more anchored in reality – as mentioned earlier she is a moral figure – remains an ideal for Wilhelm. She is first introduced as the ambiguous Amazon and Wilhelm and her do not make their love concrete (real) by marrying each other. Like the other women Wilhelm encounters, Natalie is 'a perfected image of Wilhelm's characteristic striving after better things'.[64]

[63] *Ibid.*, p. 325.
[64] Boyle, II, p. 380.

3. Performance and gender difference

I have already shown some important differences between male and female performers: although we find male performers in the novel (Laertes, Friedrich, Jarno, Serlo, the harpist), female performers are singled out through their elusiveness, androgyny, and constant performing. Another crucial difference is that male performers are also viewers and stage directors. In fact, all the performances have a masculine frame. However, we will now see how women try to confront this frame with their own creativity.

3.1 Masculine settings

All the theatre directors and viewers who give their opinions on theatrical plays are men; women appear, instead, as objects of male desires. The best example is Mignon, who is bought by Wilhelm and Philine after being brutalised by her previous owner who wanted her to perform all the time. The implication of money associates Mignon's performances with prostitution, as will be the case in Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, where Mirah is forced by her father to constantly perform, and, inevitably, in Zola's *Nana*. Mariane is also an object of desire for Wilhelm, who always envisages her in performance. Her acting, on- and off-stage, covered with clothes and uncovered, even appears as a staged stripping for Wilhelm. For examples, he observes her behind the scenes, getting changed in the middle of all the theatre accessories such as powder, towels and music books. He also observes her from the street in her house across the curtains, and asks a music band to play at her window. The intertwining of music and the impossibility of seeing her provokes a strong sexual excitation in him: 'Seine Lippen lechzten, seine Glieder zitterten vor Verlangen […] Hätte er den Hauptschlüssel bei sich gehabt […] er würde ins Heiligtum des Liebe eingedrungen sein'.[65] We will find a similar scene in Zola's *Nana*, who also performs on- and off-stage, responding to male desires. However, Wilhelm seems to realise that what he sees in Mariane are his own desires. While at the beginning it is specified that Wilhelm fell in love 'in dem günstigen Lichte theatralischer Vorstellung'[66] (this is exactly what happens to Sarrasine in Balzac's novella), Wilhelm later questions if he

[65] *WM*, p. 74.
[66] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

fell in love with Mariane because of theatre or the other way around. Female performance is certainly the embodiment of Wilhelm's ideals.

Female performances are therefore associated with male desires, and framed by a masculine gaze. Towards the end of the novel, Wilhelm learns that his life has been followed and recorded in writing by the secret society, *Turmgesellschaft,* of which Jarno, the Abbé, and Lothario are all members. Although women are affiliated with the society, it primarily assumes a patriarchal form.[67] This aristocratic society guides Wilhelm towards the life of a merchant and father while preserving a place for art, as a spiritual resource. Wilhelm's encounters and experiences have been regulated by a patriarchal order, as were female performances. The motif of the secret society can also be found in Sand's *Consuelo*, where the heroine is followed by *les Invisibles*. In both *Wilhelm Meister* and *Consuelo*, the hero (or heroine) discovers during his/her affiliation with the society, which takes place through initiation rites, that part of their lives has been staged. We could therefore retrospectively see music as an indicator of this staging; the presence of music in their lives would be a sign that they are performing under the direction of a patriarchal order. Besides, the similarities between Wilhelm's and Consuelo's initiation rites are accentuated by the significance of music. We might conceive of Mignon's funerals as the achievement of Wilhelm's initiation rite, while Consuelo's last rite of passage is her ordeals in the *Invisibles*'s temple.[68] Both Goethe and George Sand were influenced by Masonic traditions – Goethe obtained the freemasonic grade of Master in 1782 and was later introduced to the Illuminati order,[69] while Sand was initiated to freemasonic habits by Pierre Leroux[70] – and both incorporated them into their heroes' rites. However, the masonic settings are musicalised – there are invisible choirs in both cases – and theatricalised, which led Boyle to describe Wilhelm's initiation as a 'parody of Masonry'.[71] In *Consuelo*, art will become the means and the goal, as Consuelo and her husband will become prophets of music. Wilhelm's life and the lives of female characters are thus framed by a patriarchal order to which they must conform; interestingly, art is a way for women to conform and at the same time to resist the order.

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[67] MacLeod, 'Pedagogy and Androgyny', p. 412.
[68] In fact, because Consuelo takes place in the second half of the eighteenth century, we could see both rites in parallel.
[69] Boyle, I, p.274, p. 337.
[70] Simone Vierne, *George Sand et la franc-maçonnerie*, (Paris: Editions maçonniques de France, 2001), p. 26.
[71] Boyle, II, p. 374.

3.2 Feminine resistance

Within the masculine framing, women nonetheless try to affirm their independence and creativity; for instance, Mariane says that she wants to be independent: 'bis dahin will ich mein sein'.[72] Mignon is not only creative, as I have tried to demonstrate above, but also marks a superiority compared to male artists when she teaches the fandango to a musician and affirms her independence by refusing to dance despite Wilhelm's request. In this sense, we could interpret Mignon's recurrent reverences ('Bückling', a different one for each person she meets) not as subjection but as a mockery of the constant requirements of performances. On the contrary, Aurelie does not like the confrontation with her audience; she recounts how she could not bear male desires and applauds when she was performing (Mirah will present the same aversion).

The resistance to patriarchal order is probably best embodied by the Beautiful Soul, who refuses to accept a marriage of convenience and turns instead to religion. She also underlines the status of women who have to be educated, but not too much: 'Man hatte die gelehrten Weiber lächerlich gemacht, und man wollte auch die unterrichten nicht leiden, wahrscheinlich weil man für unhöflich hielt, soviel unwissende Männer beschämen zu lassen'.[73] According to her, women have the intellectual capacity to express themselves but must remain discrete so as not to undermine the (patriarchal) order. Music plays an important role in her emancipation; vocal music, which she will ask to hear several times, works as an epiphany, leading her towards religion and away from marriage. The Beautiful Soul is herself creative; she explains that she used to write songs (poems) in French and, as her narrative shows, she also wrote her memoirs. In fact, other women characters appear as author figures. All the digressions in the novel are female narratives; the confessions of the Beautiful Soul constituting Book 6 are presented as a book Wilhelm reads, but other narratives such as Aurelie's and Therese's interrupt the omniscient narration with first-person narrations. In Book 3, the baroness is also presented as a female author who deceives the count by rewriting or re-arranging parts of the play he wrote. Sometimes, however, women are more subtle and create comedies for themselves around them by manipulating men and pretending to entertain them. Philine, with her numerous manipulations, appears as a stage director. She is the one who persuades

[72] *WM.*, p. 8.
[73] *Ibid.*, p. 376.

Wilhelm to dress like the count in order to surprise the countess, to whom he feels drawn. She also tells Wilhelm that he should fall in love with Aurelie and she with Serlo, to distract themselves: 'Wenn das nicht eine Lust auf ein halbes Jahr gibt, so will ich an der ersten Episode sterben, die sich zu diesem vierfach verschlungenen Romane hinzuwirft'.[74] In this sense, we can see Philine as a precursor of Camille Maupin and Lady Audley (Chapter 3), who present the same manipulative and dramatic manias. Despite the masculine settings, women do not appear to be subjected but rather have an agency that allows them to create and to perform, without completely conforming to the patriarchal order.

[74] *Ibid.*, p. 255.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to offer a contextualisation for the relations between women and music. The representation of female musicians in socio-cultural discourses of the nineteenth century has shown us that female musicianship was particularly significant in the middle and upper classes but gave rise to contradictory discourses. The ambiguities of female musicians, fluctuating between domestic practice and restrained composition, seem to be a rich literary source. Literature reflects, exploits, and rekindles the image of the female musician presenting her as a pivotal figure. Our first literary example, *Wilhelm Meister,* already plants the seeds of the crucial conflict between women musicians and patriarchal order through the themes of creativity, sexuality and androgyny. Here, it is not the domestic practice that is at stake but nonetheless a form of containment through theatre and material duties.

Despite the hero's predilection for theatre, music associated with women in fact becomes a form of spiritual guidance in his journey. Schlegel appears to have noted the significance of music in the novel, as his essay 'Über Goethes Meister' is replete with musical metaphors, which he uses to comment on the story. For example, he compares the end of the first book to 'einer geistigen Musik […], wo die verschiedensten Stimmen, wie ebensoviele einladende Anklänge aus der neuen Welt, deren Wunder sich vor und entfalten sollen, rasch und heftig wechseln'.[1] Music is nevertheless a spiritual recourse for Wilhelm Meister,[2] helping him realise that his individual will is not sufficient in life and that other forces, such as reason and moral law are at play.

However, in *Wilhelm Meister*, music is also connected to female agency. Women cannot only be envisaged through the perspective of Wilhelm's self-realisation; Mignon's songs, for example, are not only a projection of Wilhelm's desires, they are created by Mignon herself. Some critics have argued that her songs are a creation of Wilhelm;[3] because she speaks a broken German, the transcription of her songs in the novel is only made possible through Wilhelm's understanding of them. However, Mignon's genius lies in the transmission of moods and impressions

[1] Schlegel, 'Über Goethes Meister', *KFSA*, II, p. 128.
[2] The role of music in the hero's self-realisation will be clearly displayed in the *Wanderjahre* (1821), where Wilhelm finds in the symphony form an art responding to individual and collective needs.
[3] See for example the article by Hellmut Ammerlahn, cited above.

throughout the novel that escape the transcription of her songs into poems, and thus Wilhelm's perspective. While I acknowledge Mignon's ambiguous status, her artistic agency cannot be denied, especially in the light of the other female performers. We have seen that all the women characters – except Natalie, the last and moral representant of Wilhelm's ideal – are performers. Whether they are singers, actresses, authors, directors, or simply playing with cross-dressing, they seem to ironically conform to a patriarchal order by punctually resisting it.

Wilhelm Meister establishes the foundations of the relations between women, performance and music, which are so crucial to nineteenth-century texts. I have tried to show that the women performers in the novel already bear characteristics that will be developed in the female protagonists of the next chapter. The themes of elusiveness, androgyny, insanity, spirituality and decay will be central to the following case studies. Female artistic agency will be questioned further, due to the development of a patriarchal bourgeois order, and will be a source of narrative conflict. While the female body remains covered in *Wilhelm Meister*, it will be the centre of future narrative discords, showing that female musicality is a rich and controversial topic of nineteenth-century literature.

Chapter 2: Music, femininity and ideals in Romantic imagery:

E.T.A. Hoffmann (1816-18), Eichendorff (1819-36), Berlioz (1834-44)

Introduction: Romanticism and the German philosophical context

Romanticism in literature and in music is not a clearly defined concept. Some critics see Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven as Romantics,[1] while others see Romanticism as beginning with Beethoven's death.[2] Similarly, conceptualisations of the movement vary in literature, although its origins are commonly situated in the German tradition, notably after Schlegel's lecture in Jena where he drew a distinction between 'romantische' and 'klassische' literature.[3] In this chapter, I will show that the interplay between music and femininity is at stake with the characterisation of E.T.A. Hoffmann, Eichendorff and Berlioz as Romantic writers. Evolving in parallel with philosophical theories, music became an expressive art for the Romantics, conveying the ineffable. In this sense, music perfectly embodies the contradictions of the Romantic aesthetic: it offers an alternative to that which cannot be expressed, while at the same time this alternative remains indeterminate, leaving infinite possibilities of interpretation.[4]

Music is thus strongly associated with the question of language in the Romantic perspective. In the texts of Hoffmann, Eichendorff and Berlioz, women musician characters do not have 'full status' but are presented through a male perspective, responding to desires of artistic ideals. Connected to music, these ideals are always ambiguous and in flux. The very notion of the 'woman musician' is therefore an ambivalent one, and it seems more appropriate to refer to the 'feminine' in this chapter. Through physicality, the idea of femininity carries the notion of intangibility, which constitutes one of the main features of the interrelations between

[1] Iain McCalman, *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture, 1776-1832* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).
[2] Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998).
[3] Michael Ferber, *A Companion to European Romanticism* (Malden, Mass: Blackwell Pub, 2005), p. 1.
[4] Vladimir Jankélévitch explains this characteristic of music: 'L'équivoque infinie n'est-elle pas le régime naturel de la musique ? Appelons *Espressivo* inexpressif la première de ces équivoques', *La Musique et l'ineffable* (Paris: Seuil, 1983), p. 83.

the feminine and the musical. The fact that women musician characters are presented mainly as singers, although most of them are also talented instrumentalists, establishes the body as their musical instrument. This chapter centres on the feminine 'physical' presence combined with music as revealing features of philosophical Romantic theories. The meeting of music and femininity in the texts reflects the Romantic aesthetic as well as helping to develop it by channelling key philosophical concepts such as the infinite, longing, sublime, and reflection. I will briefly contextualise these concepts as a preface to my textual analysis in order to substantiate the argument that women musicians are not merely figures of the Romantic ideal but are complex narrative and aesthetic agents.

The Kantian heritage

The premise of Romanticism can be found in the philosophy of Kant as well as in idealism. One of the main Kantian ideas endorsed by Romanticism, and which is crucial for the understanding of the woman musician, is subjectivity. In *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Kant states that the subject only knows objects that it can perceive within a framework: 'wir kennen nichts, als unsere Art sie wahrzunehmen, die uns eigentümlich ist'.[5] Kant defines knowledge as being linked to subjectivity: what 'I' know is limited to my own perspective.[6] However, the awareness of the possibility of knowledge – the subject must understand the 'framework' (namely time and space) in which it perceives objects – necessitates a kind a self-consciousness that exists a priori of cognition. As Scruton explains: 'The unity of self-conscious subject is not the conclusion of any enquiry, but the presupposition of all enquiries. The unity of consciousness 'transcends' all argument, since it is the premise without which an argument makes no sense'.[7] For knowledge to be possible, it requires a primal unity in the subject and a self-awareness of the process of thinking; it is under these conditions that Kant defines the subject as transcendental. Kant reorders the subject as a point of view upon the world rather than an object within it.[8] According to Scruton,

[5] Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, in *Immanuel Kants Werke*, ed. by Hermann Cohen and others, 11 vols (Berlin: Cassirer, 1912-1922), III, p. 71.
[6] Roger Scruton summarises this idea in 'German Idealism and the philosophy of music', in *The Impact of Idealism: The Legacy of Post-Kantian German Thought,* vol. 3, *Aesthetics and Literature,* eds. Jamme, Christoph and Ian Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 168-81 (p.169).
[7] *Ibid.*
[8] *Ibid*. p. 170.

Kant's transcendental subject presupposes an other; thus, the subject stands at the edge of the world but is at the same time confronted with the other: ''I' requires 'you', and the two meet in the world of objects'.[9] The subject addressing another subject from the edge strives to attain the transcendental horizon from which the other calls it. Scruton deduces from Kant and the post-Kantian Idealists that by trying to understand the context in which objects are given, the subject responds to a call from the transcendental and aims to return to the origin of this call, exceeding the 'body' of this other subject in order to find 'the true but hidden self'.[10]

In the aftermath of this context, the presence of women musicians in texts through a male perspective raises multiple questions: considering the Kantian heritage of the Romantics, how should questions of gender be related to the idea of the transcendental subject? Can music be transposed in the transcendental order? If the knowledge of 'things in themselves' is impossible,[11] could women musicians be seen as objects independent of the form in which male subjects perceive them? In that case, what would the form be and what would constitute the framework of perception? As we will see with the case studies, the subject-object problematic is central to understanding the place of women musicians. Besides, because of their abstract nature, music and femininity (through the intangibility of women characters as expressed in their identification of voice) seem to be particularly appropriate for expressing the tension between the materiality of the subject (its body) and its need to find the disembodied other subject. Music and the feminine are not ornamental references in the texts of Hoffmann, Eichendorff and Berlioz. Rather, they are literary means of the period that are able to convey, through their interactions, aesthetic principles that transcend the text itself. One of these principles echoes another Romantic contradiction: the desire to materialise the abstract.

Another Kantian impact on German Romanticism, which is inevitable in the analysis of art and women, is the idea of the sublime. Kant grounds the sublime in the individual's experience. He distinguishes it from beauty that appears within limitations, while the sublime can be unlimited as long as the individual's experience, or power of judgement, 'perceives' it through limitations:

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[9] *Ibid.*
[10] *Ibid.,* p. 171.
[11] Andrew Bowie, *Introduction to German philosophy: From Kant to Habermas* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2003), p. 22.

> Das Schöne der Natur betrifft die Form des Gegenstandes, die in der Begrenzung besteht; das Erhabene ist dagegen auch an einem formlosen Gegenstande zu finden, sofern Unbegrenztheit an ihm oder durch dessen Veranlassung vorgestellt und doch Totalität derselben hinzugedacht wird.[12]

Kant's sublime refers to a reasoning process that nonetheless necessitates a transcendence of the individual through its capacity for judgement. Because of this surpassing process, the sublime is a source of distress or even 'terror'. It is not Nature or an object that is sublime but the perception and comprehension of it, which reason represents as something 'schlechthin groß'.[13] These elements from Kant's understanding of the sublime are useful for comprehending the Romantic sublime. Romantic literature borrowed from Kant the notions of excess, surpassing and terror for its own application of the sublime. I will specifically use the Romantic understanding of the sublime to present Berlioz's female figures. They are first perceived as indeterminate and higher beings by the male characters but their transfiguration causes distress and leads, as we shall see, to the counterpart of the sublime: the grotesque.

Longing and the infinite

The desire or need to respond to a transcendental call can be developed with reference to the Romantic notion of longing (*Sehnsucht*), especially as explored by the early Romantic Friedrich Schlegel. Andrew Bowie explains that 'longing is not an indeterminate wish for something inaccessible, because it goes together with the understanding, the capacity for knowledge. The point is that the knowledge produced by the understanding needs to be complemented by something else'.[14] Longing is therefore part of the transcendental logic, and can also be understood as the desire to return to the transcendental origin. Bowie suggests that the idea of loss of the origin underlying the concept of longing has to do with the limitations of language; music

[12] Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft, KW,* V, §23, p. 315. ('The beautiful in nature is a question of the form of the object, and this consists in limitation, whereas the sublime is to be found in an object even devoid of form, so far as it immediately involves, or else by its presence provokes, a representation of limitlessness, yet with a super-added thought of its totality.', *Critique of Judgement*, trans. by James Creed Meredith, ed. by Nicholas Walker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 75.)
[13] *Ibid.,* V, §25, p. 319.
[14] Andrew Bowie, 'Romantic Philosophy and religion', in *The Cambridge Companion to German Romanticism,* ed. by Nicholas Saul (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 243-256 (p. 187).

then appears as a new form of language capable of giving expression to transcendental longing.[15] Perhaps this is what Schlegel meant by 'Musik ist am meisten Sehnsucht'.[16] We will see that music is in fact not only a form of expression for longing but, in association with the feminine, also constitutes a transcendental reflection that triggers longing. The feminine and music form the love/artistic ideal that the male artist longs for in our texts but which can never be attained.

Another important concept for Schlegel is the fact that the non-representational nature of music makes it an art that can be endlessly interpreted. Mirko M. Hall explains that 'musical signifiers activate a process of hermeneutic inexhaustibility that potentiates music's truth content into new semantic constellations'.[17] Music is seen in Romantic imagery as being able to express the infinite, the ineffable and the absolute. For Schlegel, any work of art is endlessly in progress, particularly poetry for which he has a higher consideration than music: 'Die romantische Poesie ist eine progressive Universalpoesie […] Sie allein ist unendlich'.[18] The infinite in all art kindles the idea that the work of art transcends the artist, and consequently the subject. A work of art may be finite but its interpretation and the subject's longing for it are infinite. Because it is a temporal form of art, music came to be seen as the closest artistic form to the infinite, especially in the case of 'absolute' music. The term 'absolute music' was defined later by Carl Dahlhaus. Referring to nineteenth-century music, he drew on the ideas of artists and intellectuals such as Hoffmann, Schopenhauer and Wagner, to define 'absolute music' not only as music 'for its own sake', or pure instrumental music, but rather as the possibility of expressing the true essence of things.[19] Wordless music was seen as the one artistic form capable of expressing the unsayable. Hence the emergence of instrumental music at the beginning of the century, such as piano recitals, symphonies, and concertos. Yet Berlioz decided to accompany his *Symphonie fantastique* (1830) with a note explaining the story depicted in the symphony. We will see that, instead of diverging from the absolute and the unsayable of Romanticism, program music can reinforce certain Romantic concepts by reflecting literary commonplaces.

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[15] Bowie, 'Romanticism and Music', *Ibid.*, pp. 243-256 (p. 247).
[16] Schlegel, *KFSA*, X, p. 551.
[17] Mirko M. Hall, 'Friedrich Schlegel's Romanticization of Music', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 42:3 (2009), 413-429 (p.414).
[18] Schlegel, *Athenäums-Fragmente*, *KFSA*, II, [116], p. 182-83.
[19] Carl Dalhaus, *Die Idee der absoluten Musik*, (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1978), p. 130.

While Schlegel did not establish a comprehensive theory of musical aesthetics from his remarks on music in his literary notebooks,[20] Schelling was more explicit about music. In the wake of Fichte (and his notion of the 'absolute I') Schelling envisioned an absolute subject that primordially exists and is then sundered. The subject remakes itself as an object and, according to Schelling, only art, particularly music, can bring about a return to the primal order. Scruton explains that music is 'engaged in repairing that primordial self-alienation'.[21] The Absolute (oneness) contains both subjectivity and objectivity and is constituted from reality.[22] The return to the original absolute performed by music shows that music fluctuates between the ideal and reality. Music is ambivalent for both Schlegel and Schelling; for the former, it is the expression both of longing and of the object longed for, and for the latter it constitutes both reality and the ideal. To represent this ambivalence in literature, both real and ideal views of music must be conveyed. Through its elusive nature, the feminine appears as a possible embodiment of music in its philosophical sense. It seems that the feminine is caught up in the attempts of the male artist to position himself in the world. The texts studied in this chapter all make use of the complex music/feminine knot as a narrative and aesthetic device but offer different perspectives on the place of women musicians in the ideal/real artistic dichotomy.

[20] Mirko M. Hall, p. 413. Hall also recalls in a note that Schlegel's exposition to music came mainly from his wife Dorothea who was a talented pianist and singer. It is interesting to think that Schlegel's idea of music came from his wife's practice, as if she were the feminine at the origin of his reflection on longing.
[21] Scruton, p. 172.
[22] Herbert M. Schüller, 'Schelling's theory of metaphysics of music', *The Journal of Aesthetics and art criticism*, 15:4 (1957), 461-476, (p.463).

Reflection and doubles

Reflection is a dominant concept in the texts of all three authors studied in this chapter, although we will see that it has a particular importance in Eichendorff. In the German philosophical context, the double meaning of the word reflection is interrelated. The subject reflects on the very process of knowledge (self-reflection is necessary for the subject to be transcendental), and recognition of the transcendental call in the other subject requires it to see itself reflected in that other. Reflection, in both senses, implies a split of the subject: 'as the subject encounters the other, it is split into two: into the external world it is aware of, and into something opposed to that world'.[23] The subject recognising itself in the other must be self-reflective in order to understand that the reflection is a double. This mental state of absolute artistic control is what the Romantics call *Besonnenheit.*[24] Since women musicians exist in the following texts only through male reflection, we will see that they are doubles of the male characters. According to Schlegel, art, or more precisely 'Universalpoesie', is a mirror of the world:

> Nur sie kann gleich dem Epos ein Spiegel der ganzen umgebenden Welt, ein Bild des Zeitalters werden. Und doch kann auch sie am meisten zwischen dem Dargestellten und dem Darstellenden, frei von allem realen und idealen Interesse, auf den Flügeln der poetischen Reflexion in der Mitte schweben diese Reflexion immer wieder potenzieren und wie in einer endlosen Reihe von Spiegeln vervielfachen.[25]

Like poetry, music can reflect the world and arouse self-reflection. Music is therefore linked to the split of the subject in a double 'image',[26] and participates in its fragmentation. Fragmentation, as a recurrent theme connected with women musicians,

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[23] Bowie, *Introduction to German philosophy*, p. 86.
[24] Maria M. Tatar, 'E.T.A. Hoffmann's Der Sandmann: Reflection and Romantic irony', *MLN*, 95:3 (1980), 585-608, (p. 606).
[25] Schlegel, *Athenäums-Fragmente, KFSA,* II, [116], p. 182-83. ('It alone can become, like the epic, a mirror of the whole circumambient world as image of the age. And it can also – more than any other form – hover at the midpoint between the portrayed and the portrayer, free of all real and ideal self-interest, and can raise that reflection again and again to a higher power, can multiply it in an endless succession of mirrors.' *Philosophical Fragments*, trans. by Peter Firchow (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p. 31-32.)
[26] The Romantic composer Robert Schumann highlighted the importance of the figure of the double, by creating two alter egos: Florestan and Eusebius. The first one is the frantic side of the composer and the second is the reflexive one. The two characters 'appear' in Schumann's *Carnaval*; he also used their names to sign some of his critiques.

is at stake with the idea of reflection. In the following texts, the theme of fragmentation is linked both to the elusive feminine physicality and to dissonant music; it could also be associated with the form of the texts, notably with Hoffmann and Berlioz, who fragment the frame narrative into embedded stories. Hall makes the following comment on the use of fragments in Schlegel's writing: 'Its [fragmentation's] brevity, heterogeneity, and incomprehensibility reject narrative closure and – like the literary and musical signifier – postpone meaning into the infinite future'.[27] The key Romantic concepts converge towards fragmentation, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy agree that 'plus même que le 'genre' du romantisme théorique, le fragment est considéré comme son incarnation, la marque la plus distinctive de son originalité et le signe de sa radicale modernité'.[28]

The last notion I wish to present before analysing each text is more of a literary concept than a philosophical one, although it was explored by Romantic philosophers: allegory becomes the figure of fragmentation in our texts. Schlegel affirms that 'Die Unmöglichkeit das Höchste durch Reflexion positive zu erreichen führt zur Allegorie'.[29] In Romantic imagery, the allegory is not seen as a component that gives (adds) an image to something that does not have one. Rather, it highlights the original absence that necessitates it. The allegory is associated with longing as it gives an image to the absolute unity. However, it is not the absolute unity, it only points to it. Paul de Man states that:

> it remains necessary, if there is to be allegory, that the allegorical sign refer to another sign that precedes it. The meaning constituted by the allegorical sign can consist only in the repetition […] of a previous sign with which it can never coincide, since it is the essence of this previous sign to be pure anteriority.[30]

Allegory is a figure that embodies the tension between an original unity and manifoldness, and yet music is engaged in returning from manifoldness to the absolute origin. Because music and allegory act on the same level, we will see that

[27] Hall, p. 423.
[28] Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *L'Absolu littéraire: Théorie de la littérature du romantisme allemand*, (Paris: Seuil, 1978), p. 58.
[29] Schlegel, *KFSA,* XIX, p. 25.
[30] Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota, 1983), p. 207.

they act as two complementary figures in the texts. Both of them point to a distant world without being able to recreate it.

In the context of a subject trying to define itself in the world – notably male artists in the texts of this chapter – music and the feminine, envisaged as elusive, abstract and ideal elements of the narration, participate in developing philosophical concepts of Romanticism.

E.T.A. Hoffmann's music theory and the figure of the woman musician in 'Rat Krespel' and 'Die Fermate': myth, catalyst or rival?

Being both a musician and a writer, E.T.A. Hoffmann was the first author of the Romantic period to accord such an important place to music in literature. The original association of music with the fantastic and the grotesque allowed him to articulate a musical aesthetics that influenced many European writers and musicians of the nineteenth century. Considered as a late Romantic, Hoffmann describes music as the Romantic art par excellence. This idea is presented several times in his *Kreisleriana.* In 'Beethovens Instrumental-Musik', he states that: 'Sie ist die romantischste aller Künste, beinahe möchte man sagen, allein echt romantisch, denn nur das Unendliche ist ihr Vorwurf'.[1] For Hoffmann, this infinite is constituted by the communion of the composer, the interpreter, and the listener. Abigail Chantler sums up the central principles of Hoffmann's musical aesthetics as: 'the idea of a "religion of art", of the composer as a "genius", and the listener as a "passive genius"'.[2] In addition, as an heir of the Enlightenment and of early Romanticism, Hoffmann pursues the idea of a 'music of nature'. As David Charlton explains: 'Men act through the grace of nature, thereby developing a more perfect music'.[3] This therefore explains the close link between nature, religion and music in Hoffmann's aesthetics. Faced with these two aesthetic triangles (nature, religion, music and composer, interpreter, listener) we might question what place women musicians occupy. As Timothée Picard suggests, the feminine figure is often associated in Hoffmann's writings with the idea of an aesthetic idol:

[1] E.T.A. Hoffmann, 'Beethovens Instrumental-Musik', *Sämtliche Werke,* ed. by Hartmut Steinecke, Wulf Segebrecht Gherard Allrogen et al., 6 vols (Frankfurt/Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag 1985-2004), II/1, p. 52.
[2] Abigail Chantler, *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Aesthetics* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. ix.
[3] E T.A. Hoffmann and David Charlton, *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings: Kreisleriana, the Poet and the Composer, Music Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 13.

> l'idole esthétique, cette figure féminine qui, comme l'indique les noms stéréotypés qu'elle revêt (Angela, Olympia, Clara, Rosa, Seraphita, etc.), semble servir d'intercesseur souriant entre l'homme et la grâce, et qui parfois n'est au bout du compte qu'une chimère venue tourmenter l'âme fragile de l'artiste.[4]

Thus, the woman musician would be a figure on the side of the composer, who affects his creativity. Moreover, the musicianship of women would be secondary to that of men. However, Hoffmann does not appear to offer a gendered opinion in the sense that he does not make a hierarchical claim about the role of men and women in music. Instead, women musicians are presented through the male artist's perspective in the narrative context of the *Serapionsbrüder*, which provides the narrative frame. Although music is present throughout the *Serapionsbrüder*, two musical stories will be analysed here after Hoffmann's music theory. 'Rat Krepsel' and 'Die Fermate', both narrated by Theodor, introduce the feminine as an integral part of the male creative process. The physical presence of women musicians seems to be connected to the impossibility of materiality in music. As musicians, women seem to fully embody the ideal, fusing love and art,[5] for the male artists Theodor and Krespel. Yet the notions of embodiment and the ideal are contradictory. The physicality of women musicians is in fact elusive, it is its annihilation that allows an endless longing proper to the Romantic context.

1. Theory of the origins of music

Hoffmann's musical aesthetics lies within the late eighteenth-century tradition of the connection between music and nature. In 'Gedanken über den hohen Wert der Musik', Hoffmann offers an explanation of the intimate relationship that true musicians (who are ironically characterised as madmen) have with nature:

[4] Timothée Picard, 'L'esthétique musicale, d'Hoffmann à ses héritiers', in *Romantismes, l'esthétisme en acte,* ed. by Jean-Louis Cabanès (Nanterre: Presses universitaires de Paris Ouest, 2009), pp. 281-290 (p. 285).
[5] Birgit Röder argues that: 'both art and love allow the nearest approximation to the Ideal in the material world', in *A study of the Major novellas of E.T.A. Hoffmann* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2003), p. 97.

> Von der Musik hegen diese Wahnsinnigen nun vollends die wunderlichsten Meinungen; sie nennen sie die romantischste aller Künste, da ihr Vorwurf nur das Unendliche sei, die geheimnisvolle, in Tönen ausgesprochene Sanskrita der Natur, die die Brust des Menschen mit unendlicher Sehnsucht erfülle, und nur in ihr verstehe er das hohe Lied der – Bäume, der Blumen, der Tiere, der Steine, der Gewässer![6]

Nature is presented as the source of music. Echoing the philosophical idea of the original absolute, there is an original, natural state of music, a golden age or *Urzeit,* that the musician has to re-establish. The natural state of music also corresponds to longing (*Sehnsucht*). The idea of an original, natural harmony occurs in Hoffmann's texts through synesthesia. This can be seen, for example, in 'Ritter Gluck': 'Schaut die Sonne an, sie ist der Dreiklang, aus dem die Akkorde, Sternen gleich, herabschießen und Euch mit Feuerfaden umspinnen. – Verpuppt im Feuer liegt Ihr da, bis sich Psyche emporschwingt in die Sonne'.[7] The reference to the Psyche, the soul, and its association with light indicate the close link between nature and the spiritual.

Furthermore, Hoffmann was undoubtedly familiar with Rousseau and his essay on the origins of language and music,[8] as Kreisler mentions him several times in *Lebensansichten des Katers Murr*. The idea of a common origin of music and language helps Hoffmann to establish music as a spiritual language, as shown in 'Kreislers Lehrbrief': 'Der Ton wohnt überall, die Töne, das heißt die Melodien, welche die höhere Sprache des Geisterreichs reden, ruhen nur in der Brust des Menschen'.[9] Moreover, the connection between nature and language (which might be extended to music, since music and language are connected according to Hoffmann) entails a unity, even an 'organic force' according to Herder,[10] which connects music with the metaphysical. The organic unity of nature and music encompasses the idea of

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[6] 'Gedanken über den hohen Wert der Musik', *HSW*, II/1, p. 49. ('With regard to music these madmen cherish quite the most astonishing opinions. They call it the most romantic of all the arts since its only subject-matter is infinity; the mysterious Sanskrit of nature, translated into sound that fills the human breast with infinite yearning; and only through it they can perceive the sublime song of – trees, flowers, animals, stones, water!' *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, trans. and ed. by David Charlton, p. 94. The following translations are from this edition.)

[7] 'Ritter Gluck', *Ibid.*, II/1, p. 24.

[8] See Chapter 1.

[9] 'Johannes Kreisler Lerhbrief', *HSW*, II/1, p. 453.

[10] '[D]as *eine* organische Principium der Natur, das wir jetzt *bildend*, jetzt *treibend*, jetzt *emfindend* jetzt *künstlich bauend* nennen und im Grunde nur eine und dieselbe organische Kraft ist', Johann Gottfried Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* , in *Johann Gottried Herder Werke*, ed. By Martin Bollacher, 10 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985-2000), VI, p. 104.

physicality, as Abigail Chantler points out: 'for Hoffmann the physical unity of musical works was the *source* of their metaphysical meaning'.[11] We will see that the importance of the 'physical presence' of women musicians is linked to the 'physicality' of music. However, as Ruth Solie comments, it is not only the physicality of a musical work that is important, but also its transcendence: 'For the philosophers, the point of calling something "organic" was not to describe the arrangement of its physical attributes but, on the contrary, to elevate it to a status transcendent of the physical'.[12] We will see that women musicians seem to simultaneously 'embody' the physicality of music and its transcendence. Because of the union of nature and the metaphysical in the infinite of music, we can easily see how Hoffmann idealises both music and women.

One last important point on the origins of music in Hoffmann's aesthetic is the idea of notation. Following eighteenth-century conceptions of language, Hoffmann thinks that writing 'expresses' less than music. One can once again discern the influence here of eighteenth-century discourse on the problem of inscription, as we have seen in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* and in Rousseau's idea of writing altering language. Similarly, the Hoffmannian composer is frustrated by the impossibility of writing down, or concretely realising, the melodies of nature that he hears: Kreisler burns his music scores and Ritter Gluck interprets *Armide* on the piano by following an empty music sheet. Hoffmann uses the image of the hieroglyph to render the mystery and invisibility of the musical sign,[13] as Kreisler explains:

> die Fähigkeit, jene Anregungen wie mit einer besonderen geistigen Kraft festzuhalten und festzubannen in Zeichen und Schrift, ist die Kunst des Komponierens. Diese Macht ist das Erzeugnis der musikalischen künstlichen Ausbildung, die auf das ungezwungene, geläufige Vorstellen der Zeichen (Noten) hinarbeitet. Bei der individualisierten Sprache waltet solch innige Verbindung zwischen Ton und Wort, daß kein Gedanke in uns sich ohne seine Hieroglyphe (den Buchstaben der Schrift) erzeugt, die Musik bleibt allgemeine Sprache der Natur, in wunderbaren, geheimnisvollen Anklängen spricht sie zu

[11] Chantler, p. 67.
[12] Ruth Solie, 'The Living Work: Organicism and Musical Analysis', *19th-Century Music,* 4 (Fall 1980), pp. 147-56 (p. 150).
[13] The deciphering of Egyptian hieroglyphs was contemporary with Hoffmann's writings since Champollion started to decode them in the 1820s. Many thinkers, such as Wackenroder, used this idea as a topos of their texts.

> uns, vergeblich ringen wir danach, diese in Zeichen festzubannen, und jenes künstliche Anreihen der Hieroglyphe erhält uns nur die Andeutung dessen, was wir erlauscht.[14]

Hoffmann illustrates that music can express more than language and therefore cannot be accurately ciphered into hieroglyphs. Similarly, in *Die Symbolik des Traumes* (1814), G.H. Schubert argues that esoteric images constitute a cultural symbol. As David Charlton posits: '[Schubert] assumed the basic connection between dream-images, images occurring in nature, and esoteric cultural images (as of 'old Egyptian monuments' or 'curious idols of the Orientals').[15] In addition, like Friedrich Schlegel, who asserts that all Romantic views are in essence a 'Hieroglyphe der Einen ewigen Liebe und der heiligen Lebensfülle der bildenden Natur',[16] Hoffmann highlights the universality of the ciphered symbol, through the recurrent idea of the 'Sanskritta oder Natur'. [17] The difficulty of writing music down demonstrates the dilemma of the physicality of music. Music and language are likened in Hoffmann's texts and respond to a Romantic understanding of communication between the subject and the world. Bowie explains that, in the wake of Kant, just as language shifted from being a means of representing the world to a way of responding to the world and interacting with other subjects, so too does music become 'the source of new relationships between ourselves and the world'.[18] In the Romantic view, music is another way of responding to the world, another language. By demonstrating that music is, from then on, seen as being able to fulfil needs that philosophy and religion cannot, Bowie answers the question 'what does music say?', but not 'how can music be said?' Yet the ubiquity of music in Hoffmann's texts illustrates the attempt of literature to talk about music, to materialise it. The materiality of music is therefore at stake within the understanding of the relationship between words and music.

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[14] 'Johannes Kreisler Lehrbrief', *HSW*, II/1, p. 454. ('The art of composing consists in his ability to seize upon his inspirations with special mental powers and to conjure them into signs and symbols. These powers are the product of a musical training directed towards producing the symbols (notation) spontaneously and fluently. In any individual language, there is such an intimate connection between sound and word that no idea can arise in us without its hieroglyphs (letters of the alphabet). But music is a universal language of nature; it speaks to us in magical and mysterious resonances; we strive in vain to conjure these into symbols, and any artificial arrangement of hieroglyphs provides us with only a vague approximation of what we have distantly heard.' pp. 164-65.)
[15] E.T.A. Hoffmann and David Charlton, pp. 33-34.
[16] Schlegel, *Gespräch über die Poesie*, *KFSA*, II, p. 334.
[17] 'Gedanken über den hohen Wert der Musik', *HSW*, II/1, p. 49.
[18] Bowie, 'Romanticism and music', pp. 243-44.

The materiality of musical instruments is often rejected in Hoffmann's texts. It is represented in 'Rat Krespel' with the act of dismantling violins, in 'Die Fermate' with the 'altem, knarrenden, schwirrenden Flügel',[19] and in 'Ritter Gluck' through his use of the metaphor of sickness: 'in eine Arie aus Fanchon zerfließt, womit eine verstimmte Harfe, ein paar nicht gestimmte Violinen, eine lungensüchtige Flöte und ein spasmatischer Fagott sich und die Zuhörer quälen'.[20] It would seem that the voice represents at best a disembodiment of music, as Effertz explains: 'Rousseau clearly separates the ideal of song and language as an original, worthy human expression in a pre-social state, from its perversion through a decadent performance culture, embodied by performers, theatre people and especially women singers'.[21]

2. Theory of composition

Hoffmann's theory of composition brings the inner and outer worlds of the musician into confrontation. The musician hears melodies in nature and has to transcribe them, but most of the time fails to do so:

> Mit einem Wort: der Künstler muß, um uns zu rühren, um uns gewaltig zu ergreifen, selbst in eigner Brust tief durchdrungen sein, und nur das in der Extase bewußtlos im Innern Empfangene mit höherer Kraft festzuhalten in den Hieroglyphen der Töne (den Noten) ist die Kunst, wirkungsvoll zu komponieren.[22]

The process of composing is double: it involves an initial transposition from the melodies of nature into the inner-self of the composer, and a second transposition from the inner-self into the realisation of music and its notation. Insomuch as hearing the sounds of nature is already a physical act, the process of composing seems to be a chain of materialisation, from outside to inside and outside again. Besides, we can see another transposition of the creative process in the very act of writing. It would seem that composition does not escape materiality, and one might even suggest that the

[19] 'Die Fermate', *HSW*, IV, p. 74.
[20] 'Ritter Gluck', *Ibid*., II/1, p. 19.
[21] Effertz, 'The Woman Singer', p. 51.
[22] 'Über einen Ausspruch Sachini's, und über den sogenannten Effekt in der Musik', *HSW*, II/1, p. 438. ('In a word, in order to move us, in order to stir us profoundly, the artist must be affected deeply within his own heart; and the art of composing effectively is to employ the highest possible skill to capture ideas unconsciously conceived in a state of ecstasy, and to write them down in the hieroglyphs of musical sounds (notation).' p. 155.)

process of composing is made up of transcriptions rather than transpositions.

According to Bowie, the loss of immediacy between 'instinctual expression' and its 'conventional social articulation' links music to longing; music can 'sustain or restore affective immediacy'.[23] However, the ideas of longing and composing seem to be in opposition in the sense that the musician does not 'compose' longing. So if music is longing, it is not an achievement of composition but rather a means of composing. Longing is one aspect of music that concerns the composer, interpreter and listener. It is important, therefore, to make a distinction between the realm of reality, with the composition and consecration of music, and the realm of the imaginary, with the aspiration to an ideal music. This tension between the two realms provides the composer with the impulse to create. Hoffmann often refers to an ecstatic state or a dreamy state to convey this tension. For example, the last performance of Antonie is recounted by Krespel through visions, leaving Theodor (and the reader) uncertain of the exact circumstances of Antonie's death.

As mentioned in the introduction, wordless music is seen as the best manifestation of absolute music. However, listening to Hoffmann's own musical compositions, and particularly the opera *Undine* (1816), offers an interesting illustration of the particular place he accorded to words in his music. Hoffmann leaves numerous passages of the libretto by de la Motte Fouqué without music, just spoken words, thus connecting his music with literature rather than absolute music. This shows us again that longing and composition are two different aspects of music, belonging to two different realms.

The particular place occupied by opera in music reveals that music and words express the same longing and are not separable, as shown in 'Der Dichter und der Komponist': 'da sind Dichter und Musiker die innigst verwandten Glieder einer Kirche, denn das Geheimnis des Worts und des Tons ist ein und dasselbe, das ihnen die höchste Weihe erschlossen'.[24] In this essay, Hoffmann explains how music should come from poetry in opera composition. The close relationship in this story between the composer Ludwig and the poet Ferdinand reveals an artistic desire. Ludwig desires his friend's poetry in the same way as Theodor desires women musicians. The longing for poetry is embodied by a male character while the longing for music is embodied by female characters.

[23] Bowie, 'Romanticism and music', p. 247.
[24] 'Der Dichter und der Komponist', *HSW*, IV, p. 102.

3. *Die weibliche, musikalische Gestalt*

3.1 The woman musician as revelation and initiation

Timothée Picard affirms that, in Hoffmann's aesthetics, the musician must find the original natural harmony through a series of revelations: 'L'homme prend progressivement conscience de cette mission lors de moments privilégiés, qui ressemblent à des révélations'.[25] The idea of revelation has a spiritual connotation that is reflected in the notion of *Gestalt*. The mention of the *weibliche Gestalt* is ambivalent and becomes confused with the musical revelation: 'In den langen, anschwellenden Tönen der Nachtigall verdichteten sich die Strahlen zur Gestalt eines wundervollen Weibes, aber die Gestalt war wieder himmlische, herrliche Musik!'[26] In 'Rat Krespel' and 'Die Fermate', the woman musician seems to be a figure that accompanies the evolution of the male artist more than a fully-fledged character.

Presented as an unattainable ideal, she appears at key moments of the male artist's life. The male artist is Theodor in both cases. He is a self-conscious narrator, which allows the reader to understand the totality of his artistic life, and responds at the same time to the 'Serapiontic principle' of involving the reader in the fictional world. This 'principle' sets stories between fantastic and reality, where the fantastic is created within the real.[27] All the narratives with women musicians are therefore framed by male settings. Moreover, because of the similarities between Hoffmann's theoretical and fictional writings about music, the different narrators can be seen as different facets of the author.

In 'Rat Krespel', Antonie becomes an object of fantasy for Theodor, who has never heard her singing but imagines and dreams of her voice. He only has the testimony of the professor, who told him: 'ich muß Ihnen gestehen, daß gegen die Stimme, gegen den ganz eigenen, tief in das Innerste dringenden Vortrag der Unbekannten mir der Gesang der berühmtesten Sängerinnen, die ich gehört, matt und ausdrucklos schien'.[28] Her voice revealed an ideal of music to the professor and at the same time to Theodor. Krespel also has revelations through women: with his wife, for

[25] Picard, p. 282.
[26] 'Johannes Kreislers Lehrbrief', *HSW*, II/1, p. 115.
[27] The 'Serapionsbrüder' are a circle of (male) friends who meet to tell each other stories; 'Die Fermate' follows 'Rat Krespel' and precedes 'Der Dichter und der Komponist'.
[28] 'Rat Krespel', *HSW*, IV, p. 46.

example, the singer Angela, who breaks his violins after an argument. Yet, it is after this episode that Krespel starts to build and dissect violins. His second revelation is with his daughter Antonie, whose voice has the same effect on both Theodor and the professor:

> nie hatte er selbst Angela so singen hören. Der Klang von Antoniens Stimme war ganz eigentümlich und seltsam, oft dem Hauch der Äolsharfe, oft dem Schmettern der Nachtigall gleichend. Die Töne schienen nicht Raum haben zu können in der menschlichen Brust.[29]

The death of Antonie brings about another revelation for Krespel, who decides to stop making violins. For Theodor, her death corresponds to a fantastical physical manifestation; he experiences a sense of oppression on the day of her funeral, an anxiety as if 'ein glühender Dolch durch meine Brust fuhr […] Die Tränen stürzten mir aus den Augen, es war, als begrübe man dort alle Lust, alle Freude des Lebens'.[30] In 'Die Fermate', the initiation is more 'practical'. Theodor tells his friend Eduard how he became a musician. They are looking at a painting by Hummel, which represents two women musicians and a conductor, when Theodor recounts the origin of the scene and his first musical revelation with the singer Lauretta:

> Aber sowie Lauretta immer kühner und freier des Gesanges Schwingen regte, wie immer feuriger funkelnd der Töne Strahlen mich umfingen, da ward meine innere Musik, so lange tot und starr, entzündet und schlug empor in mächtigen herrlichen Flammen. Ach! – ich hatte ja zum erstenmal in meinem Leben Musik gehört. […] Sie, nur sie hatte mir ja die wahre Musik erschlossen.[31]

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[29] *Ibid*. p. 60. ('Never had he heard even Angela sing so splendidly. The tone of Antonia's voice was quite sui generis – at times it was like the Aeolian harp, at others like the trilling roulades of the nightingale. It seems as though there could not be space for those stones in human breast.' *The Serapion Brethren*, trans. by Major Alex Ewing (London: George Bell and sons, 1908), I, 43. The following translations are from this edition.)

[30] *Ibid.,* p. 52.

[31] 'Die Fermate', *HSW*, IV, p. 77. ('And as Lauretta soared on her bright pinions of song, higher and higher, and as the beams of those beautiful tones shone brighter and brighter upon me, all the music within me – dead and dormant hitherto – caused fire, and blazed on high in glorious and mighty flames. "Ah! That was the first time in my life that I ever heard music [...] (Her, only her showed me what true music was)', p. 60.)

Lauretta seems to play a catalytic role by initiating and showing 'true music'. She also inspires Theodor, who composes for her. Theodor has a second revelation with Lauretta's sister, Teresina. She is presented as mysterious; the fact that she sings and plays the guitar shows us that her knowledge of music is more complete than that of Lauretta. After some time, Theodor realises that her vocal style is simpler but more profound than Lauretta's. It is as if the evolution of Theodor's artistic understanding (through women) has allowed him to become progressively aware of 'higher' music. In addition, each of these revelations corresponds to a love relationship and therefore places women twice as ideals; the longing for music thus coincides with a longing for love.

Women play an important role in the accomplishment of men as musicians, but their own musical life is not developed. However, this does not mean that they are not accomplished musicians themselves. Lauretta and Teresina have professional musical lives, but it is not this aspect of their musicianship that interests Hoffmann. Rather, what he is drawn to is the interaction of a 'musical image' of these women musicians with the musical development of men. One might note a connection here with Wilhelm Meister, who needed feminine images to affirm his own sexuality and self-awareness. Here, the feminine image is specifically directed towards musical development.

3.2 Unphysicality and the realisation of music

The 'musical image' used by Hoffmann could be seen as representative of the physical presence of women musicians in his texts. This presence influences male musicianship in three successive manners: the revelation of an ideal music, the supervised practice, and the repudiation of the presence of women.

In 'Rat Krespel', Antonie's physicality is emphasised through the hyperbolisation of her body. Her sickness places her between life and death; that is to say, in the infinite. Her musical perfection positions her as sublime, inasmuch as she arouses a highest imaginative state in the male characters. Because Antonie is at once a hyperbolised body and a perfect voice, she is both the real and the Ideal. Yet we saw earlier that these two notions cannot be materialised in a common physical entity. As Schelling explains, music fluctuates between the real and the ideal, but they do not coexist in a stable way. Antonie is thus the symbol of the 'Unendlicher Vorwurf' mentioned earlier. Her 'presence' embodies the ideality of music, but this ideality demands liberation from the materiality of music as a physical voice, hence her death. The voice is never to be embodied. After the funerals, Krespel stops making violins and confesses that he is finally free:

> Nun ist der Stab über mich gebrochen, meinst du, Söhnchen? nicht wahr? Mitnichten, mitnichten, nun bin ich frei – frei – frei – Heisa frei! – Nun bau ich keine Geigen mehr – keine Geigen mehr – heisa keine Geigen mehr.[32]

This passage also contributes to the presentation of Krespel as a mad musician: he builds a house without doors and windows (they are added later); he pushes his wife out through a window; and he confines his daughter to the home, to ensure she does not sing, lest she die of exhaustion. However, the reader soon realises that the external disharmony of Krespel hides an inner harmony. By making and dissecting violins, Krespel is an agile musician with a goal: to look for the 'source' of music. By keeping Antonie from singing he is protecting her and also trying to separate her body from her voice, just as he does with his violins. His obsession is not to control music but, on the contrary, to liberate it from any materiality. The dissection of his violins and

[32] 'Rat Krespel', *HSW*, IV, pp. 53-54. ('The staff's broken over me now, you think, little son, don't you? Nothing of the kind, nothing of the kind, I'm free now – free – free! And fiddles I'll make no more, boys! And fiddles, I'll make no more! Hurray, hurray!' p. 37.)

the confinement of his daughter do not provide him with an answer; it is in fact the death of Antonie that reveals the liberation of materiality. It is in the annihilation of materiality that he grasps the 'source' of music: it is infinite, and the longing for music is unfulfillable.

In 'Die Fermate', the realisation of music is also deferred. After having heard true music and practised with the sisters, Theodor realises that the achievement of music emanates from the union of musical inspiration and an embodied self: 'Oft war es mir, als habe ich das gar nicht gedacht und gesetzt, sondern in Lauretta's Gesange strahle erst der Gedanke hervor […] Nie hatte ich geahnt, daß das so klingen könnte'.[33] This also shows the importance of the role of the interpreter in the process of creation. Therefore, Lauretta does not only embody a figure of revelation but is also the final link of the composition. However, the power of women musicians seems to reside in their unphysicality. When Theodor has not yet met the two sisters, his longing is 'stifled'. Then the two women arrive in his life and reveal his longing for both love and music (which is, at that moment, one and the same for him). Nonetheless, the progression from Lauretta, who is the beautiful singer, to Teresina, who is the reflective instrumentalist, corresponds to a progression towards the yearning for music and only music. Theodor's ultimate disappointment forces him to leave the two women and to live his life as a musician; music constitutes longing, and no longer love. Once the musical longing has been unveiled, and the sisters cast aside, Theodor can initiate his musical creativity. Women musicians are embodiments both of reality (with their hyperbolised physical presence: the sick body of Antonie, the double body of the sisters, and their *mise en abyme* with the painting of Hummel) and of the Ideal (their physical disappearance places them in the sphere of the transcendental), but not at the same time. It is the passage from absence to presence, and presence to absence, their unphysicality, that represents the source of their empowerment. After playing out their roles as the 'embodiment of a musical ideal', the two sisters are cast aside and the longings for love and music separated so that the quest for the sole music may start. It is only when Theodor leaves the two sisters that he can become an independent artist. In other words, once the physical presence of women musicians has been discarded, the infinite of music can be explored. Theodor clearly states at the end of the story that a repudiation of female presence is necessary:

[33] 'Die Fermate', *HSW*, IV, p. 80, p. 85.

> Jeder Komponist erinnert sich wohl eines mächtigen Eindrucks, den die Zeit nicht vernichtet. Der im Ton lebende Geist sprach, und das war das Schöpfungswort, welches urplötzlich den ihm verwandten, im Innern ruhenden Geist weckte; mächtig strahlte er hervor und konnte nie mehr untergehen. […] Glücklich ist der Komponist zu preisen, der niemals mehr im irdischen Leben die wiederschaut, die mit geheimnisvoller Kraft seine innere Musik zu entzünden wußte. […]Was ist sie denn nun aber anders als das höchste Ideal, das aus dem Innern heraus sich in der äußern fremden Gestalt spiegelte.[34]

However, we do not know to what extent Theodor explores his longing, since no mention is made of his compositions after he leaves the sisters. There is even an ellipsis of fourteen years in the narration that leaves the reader without any information as to his musical production. We could link this ellipsis to the definition of a fermata. A fermata is a musical symbol, usually at the end of a movement or a phrase in a musical score, which corresponds to a suspension and allows the interpreter to hold the note, fade it, or ornament it. In other words, it is the material sign of dematerialisation. A narrative ellipsis has the same effect in literature, in that it leaves the reader free to pause and imagine what could have happened. We might therefore see the story of Theodor as the only way for him to bring into being his musical longing, by imitating a musical device in his narrative structure. Insofar as the fermata is a dematerialisation of music, and women musicians are dematerialised, we could even see the *story* of Theodor as an attempt at artistic concretisation. The unphysicality of women is therefore still 'active' and plays a role in the search for the artistic ideal. The image of women musicians (*die weibliche Gestalt*) used as an embodiment of the musical and love ideal appears elusive, whereas the power of their unphysicality is constant, transcending the boundaries between the real and the ideal. This unphysicality reveals a certain circularity: the feminine constitutes the goal and origin of music. In other words, music starts with the presence of the feminine and

[34] *Ibid.,* pp. 91-92. ('No doubt every composer can remember some particular occasion when some powerful impression was made on him, which time never effaces. The spirit which dwells in music spoke, and the spirit en rapport with it within the composer awoke at that creative fiat; it flamed up with might and could never be extinguished again [...] that composer is a happy man who never again, in his earthly life, sees Her who, with mystic power, kindled the music within him [...]. What is he but his highest ideal, reflected on him on to herself?' pp. 73-74.)

longs to return to it. However, the feminine that music longs for must be a disembodied one.

With music and the feminine, Hoffmann develops the Kantian transcendental subject. The male character is the subject looking for a place in the world as an artist. His artistic ideal, constituted both by love and music, corresponds to a transcendental origin he wishes to attain. The female artist is not the other subject with whom he is confronted; the other subject is, rather, his own creative impulse constituted by the feminine. Again, explaining the creative process with the transcendental subject reveals the circularity of the artistic system: 1- the male artist longs for a love/artistic ideal, 2- music and the feminine constitute that very ideal, 3- music is the expression of longing for that ideal, 4- the feminine triggers the musical creation while at the same time constituting its goal. It would seem that the subject responds to a transcendental call that is female. The subject perceives the feminine as the ideal; music is a response to this confrontation with the other, and yearns to fulfil this transcendental call. The feminine transcendental, being unattainable, is therefore a source of artistic creation.

Hoffmann associates an imagery of the body with his female characters that highlights their status as non-physical characters. The fantastic illness of Antonie in 'Rat Krespel' and the description of Hummel's painting in 'Die Fermate' are another way of saying that the female singers are not flesh and blood characters but *images* at the service of male creativity which are simultaneously determinative of male creation. Their non-materiality makes them spectral presences for the male artist, corresponding to the transcendental call that the male artist tries to attain.

Eichendorff's *Das Marmorbild* and *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts*: Androgyny and the musical code

Like those of Hoffmann, Eichendorff's texts are replete with music; however, while the former exposes 'art music' and professional musicians, the latter introduces 'popular music', inspired by the *Volkslied.*[1] *Das Marmorbild* (1818) and *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* (1826) are two complementary novellas in relation to the understanding of the figure of women musicians and the use of their image in the development of (male) artists. The musician characters are amateurs, students, noble people or wanderers from a lower social class, and music remains a mere past-time for all of them.[2] Both stories present the motif of the Wanderer[3]: the main protagonists, Florio and Taugenichts, travel and are confronted with obscure and disorienting adventures that lure them into the pursuit of an ideal. If, as in Hoffmann's texts, this ideal can take the 'form' of women and music, none of these elements properly constitute 'longing'; they are, rather, means of becoming aware of the possibility of longing. Music is not as specifically characterised as it is in Hoffmann. It seems to play a passive role; the instruments (mainly the guitar, violin and lute) and the voices are not described in a technical or musical manner, and yet the musical environment, or soundscape, is preponderant. The musicians wander through towns and forests – places that symbolise their love and musical experience – and it is this very contact with nature that allows them to envisage an ideal.

This ideal is not purely a musical one. Eichendorff does not instantiate creative musicians but highlights instead an artistry constituted by music, language, nature and painting – that is to say, poetical creation. Nor is this ideal a purely feminine one. Women musicians are presented through the eyes of the heroes (*Das*

[1] Herder defines the Volkslied as such: 'Alle unpolizierte Völker *singen* und *handeln;* was sie handeln, singen sie und singen Abhandlung. Ihre Gesänge sind das Archiv des Volks, der Schatz ihrer *Wissenschaft* und *Religion,* ihrer *Theogonie* und *Kosmogonien* der Taten ihrer Väter und der Begebenheiten ihrer Geschichte, Abdruck ihres Herzens, Bild ihres häuslichen Lebens in Freude und Leid, beim Brautbett und Grabe. Die Natur hat ihnen einen Trost gegen viele Übel gegeben, die sie drücken und einen Ersatz vieler sogenannten Glückseligkeiten, die wir genießen: d.i. Freiheitsliebe, Müßiggang, Taumel und Gesang.' Johann, Herder, 'Von Ähnlichkeit der mittleren englischen und deutschen Dichtkunst, nebst Verschiedenem, das daraus folgt', II, p. 560.
[2] Schoolfield, p. 49.
[3] Jacob Harold Heinzelman, *The Influence of the German Volkslied on Eichendorff's Lyric* (Leipzig: G. Fock, G.m.b.h, 1910), p. 54.

Marmorbild offers a third-person narrator with an internal focalisation on Florio, and Taugenichts is a first-person narrator); as in Hoffmann's texts, they are not introduced 'for themselves' but in response to the subjectivity of the main protagonists. The woman musician should not be considered as an 'other' against which the artistic self is defined, but rather as *part* of the story telling of the (male) artist. Furthermore, the male representational system is undermined by a series of narrative elements such as the figure of the double, the symbols of mirrors and masks, the idea of concealment and revelation, and the limits between dream and reality. Therefore, the artist-protagonist seems 'impersonal' rather than merely male. This can be seen to find confirmation in the names of the heroes; Taugenichts does not have a name but is called by his (supposed) function, and the name Florio may refer to a 'flower' and means to blossom. Yet, according to Lawrence Radner, 'the "woman" is a flower' in *Das Marmorbild,*[4] Florio therefore appears as a feminised character. From the beginning, the two main protagonists are not presented as stable male characters but as androgynous. However, the androgynous figure does not appear as an ideal artist but seems to illustrate the confusion of the protagonists in their quest for the ideal. The perspective on artistic creation differs from the Hoffmannian one. While Hoffmann presents the artistic process through the point of view of the creator (with music and women constituting the creative impulse), Eichendorff does not offer a clear figure of the creator – while Taugenichts is a violonist, in *Das Marmorbild*, the hero Florio is not a musician – but displays creation itself, *poiesis.* We will see, in this chapter, that Eichendorff uses the imagery of women, music, painting and nature to entrench in the first instance a nebulous narration – where the main protagonists are confused by dreamy and contradictory visions, confounding the reader at the same time – to then be able to show that the entire story was in fact the result of the imagination of the protagonists, who therefore have produced *poiesis* without being conscious of it.

Das Marmorbild and *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* are both stories that present blurred narrative elements. The main protagonists are often confused between illusion and reality. Visions of the marble statue in *Das Marmorbild* obsess Florio, who does not really understand who she is or why she has come to life, and confounds her with other women, particularly one playing the lute. It is only at the end that

[4] Lawrence Radner, *Eichendorff: the Spiritual Geometer* (Lafayette, Ind: Purdue University Studies, 1970), p. 7.

Fortunato reveals, through a song, the power of the statue and the hallucinatory effect it has on some men. Florio finally understands and can be free of his confusion. Taugenichts leaves the family mill at the request of his father to find an occupation and his path in life. He takes his violin and arrives at a castle in Vienna where he becomes a gardener and meets *die gnädige Frau* playing the guitar. He then travels to Italy and remains obsessed with the figure of the lady playing the guitar. Taugenichts never really understands who she is; his confusion leads to a series of misunderstandings, twists and turns in the plot, which fully participate in the ambiguity of the narration. It is once again at the very end that Leonardo, a painter he has met during his adventures, appearing as a *deus ex machina* figure, resolves the confusion of Taugenichts and allows a wedding to take place between the musician and *die gnädige Frau.* In both cases, there is a secondary character, external to their illusions, who reveals the cause of the confusion at the end. It is as if Eichendorff were pointing out that the haze of the protagonists was in fact their imagination and therefore artistic creation. The development of the characters, from confusion to the awareness of poetic creation, corresponds to a shift from subjectivity to objectivity. I would argue that the theme of androgyny in the texts corresponds to the idea of an artistic creation composed of feminine and masculine characteristics, and music allows this union of the masculine and the feminine to reveal *poiesis*.

1. Figures of women musicians and the Romantic-Christian opposition

The role of women musicians in Eichendorff's writings is a notably passive one; they bring a sort of feminine 'force' which, along with music and painting, constitutes an impersonal self that embodies the imagination. Martha Helfer states that it is commonly accepted that in Romantic imagery the figuration of women 'appears to be metaphysical in nature: woman and the feminine are troped as the originary condition of possibility of Romantic self-definition and Romantic artistic production, and feminine descriptors shape Romantic conceptions of subjectivity and creativity'.[5] However, she claims that, contrary to this common view, it is in fact a male ground that stands at the origins of Romanticism, 'the metaphysical ground of the Romantic

[5] Martha B. Helfer, 'The Male Muses of Romanticism: The Poetics of Gender in Novalis, E.T.A. Hoffmann, and Eichendorff, *The German Quarterly*, 27/3 (Summer, 2005), 299-319 (p.299).

project – presumed to be the maternal, eternal feminine embodied in the form of the beloved – proves to be the self-positing male subject'.[6] While some other scholars have suggested that the presence of women in Eichendorff's texts is a source of narcissistic satisfaction for the heroes[7] or a materialisation of their love and creativity[8], I would like to expand on Helfer's argument by showing that women are not tropes adjunct to the self-development of male artists, but are, rather, integrated into the construction of an androgynous ideal artistic creation. Within the male imagination, the role of women musicians is multiple as they embody different figures: they can be moral or immoral figures, or simply doubles of the heroes.

1.1 The Doppelgänger

a- In Das Marmorbild

In *Das Marmorbild*, women's duality is visible through the distinction between Christian and immoral figures – the female musician being on the side of immorality. While travelling in Italy, Florio meets a minstrel, Fortunato, who warns him of a mysterious musician who attracts wanderers, bewitches them and makes them disappear. Unbeknownst to him, Florio falls into the trap, which turns out to be that of his own imagination. After falling in love with a young villager, he dreams of sirens who resemble her. He then hears the music of nature, as if the landscape were singing to him:

> Auch da draußen war es überall in den Bäumen und Strömen noch wie Verhallen und Nachhallen der vergangenen Lust, als sänge die ganze Gegend leise, gleich den Sirenen, die er im Schlummer gehört. Da konnte er der Versuchung nicht widerstehen. Er ergriff die Gitarre, die Fortunato bei ihm zurückgelassen, verließ das Zimmer und ging leise durch das ruhige Haus hinab.[9]

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[6] *Ibid.,* p. 300.
[7] Brad Prager, *Aesthetic Vision and German Romanticism: Writing Images* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2007), p. 207.
[8] Lawrence Radner states: ''Poesie' is a woman. Her name may be Rosa, Romana, Bianca, Venus, Annidi, Juana, 'die gnädige Frau', to cite just a few. Eichendorff insists that the poet dare not deal in abstractions but must give the idea in flesh and blood', in *Eichendorff: the Spiritual Geometer,* p. 4.
[9] Joseph von Eichendorff*, Das Marmorblid*, in *Joseph von Eichendorff Werke,* ed. by Wolfgang Frühwald, 5 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985), II, p. 395. ('Out there as well, among the trees and streams, everywhere, there came, answering or fading, echoes of past happiness, as if the whole landscape were softly singing like the sirens he had heard in his slumber. He could not resist the temptation. He seized the guitar, which Fortunato had left with him, went from the room and softly down the stairs through the peaceful house.', in *German literary fairy tales*, ed. by

Music is presented here as a tempting force that not only attracts him but transforms him into a musician; his vision is then distorted to the extent that the image of the beloved is itself metamorphosed into something 'viel schöneres, größeres und herrlicheres'.[10] During this night walk, he encounters the marble statue of Venus, which comes to life and becomes, for him, the perfect embodiment of the beloved. As we shall see in *Taugenichts,* all the women he sees from this point on will be the ideal beloved. Thus, when he hears a woman playing the lute, he sees the beautiful statue of Venus. Later, at a masked ball, Florio sees two women dressed as Greek goddesses and is unable either to understand who they are or to distinguish them from one another, though he thinks one of them is the lute player. The feminine chtonic figures are in fact a transition between the demonic forces of Venus and religion. It is by praying that Florio is able to escape the temptress and his own madness: 'Herr Gott, laß mich nicht verloren gehen in der Welt!'[11] At the end, he once again sees the villager, Bianka, and realises that he wants to be with her. Venus the temptress is commonly accepted as being opposed to Bianka, an image of the Virgin Mary.[12] As is the case in *Taugenichts*, we can note that Bianka, the moral figure, does not play music. Music creates the ambiguity of the *Doppelgänger* but at the same time distinguishes its two sides.

The figure of the double is emphasised in *Das Marmorbild* by the symbol of mirrors and reflection. When Florio visits the mistress of the castle, he finds that 'Ein Mädchen, neben ihr kniend, hielt ihr einen reich verzierten Spiegel vor',[13] in which the mistress looks at herself. The fact that there is a girl holding the mirror for the lady looking at her reflection demonstrates the duplication of feminine faces. Detlev Schumann underlines that reflection 'implies a definite backing away from empirical reality, a dematerialization. As against the world of objects, the reflection lacks one entire dimension, it is incorporeal; and even its two-dimensional contours are unsteady, dissolved: again we see that peculiar abhorrescence of form'.[14] This

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Frank G. Ryder and Robert M. Browning, trans. by Frank G. Ryder (New York: Continuum, 1983), p. 142. The following translation of *Marmorbild* is from this edition.)

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 397.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 419.

[12] Prager, pp. 223-24.

[13] *Das Marmorbild*, p. 416.

[14] Detlev W. Schumann, 'Eichendorff's Taugenichts and Romanticism', *The German Quarterly,* 9/4 (1936), 141-153 (p. 152).

confirms the incorporeal nature of the women musicians presented in the texts; they are images created by the main protagonists, reflections of the main protagonists. As we saw in the introduction to Chapter 2, in the confrontation with the other, the subject recognises itself in that other and it is not the other but the recognition within it that creates a fragmentation into a double figure. To sum up, the subject seeing both itself and another self in its reflection is aware of that reflection. However, Andrew Webber explains that the *Doppelgänger* is the symbol of a tension between reality and fantasy: 'the *Doppelgänger* is more properly a figure of the displacement which inheres in the environment it disrupts. It represents the abiding interdependence of real and fantasy worlds, by rendering them impossibly co-present at the site of the *Doppelgänger* encounter'.[15] The idea of the *Doppelgänger* is in itself double in Eichendorff. On the one hand, there is a double image of women (the Christian woman and the temptress woman associated with music), and, on the other hand, women are themselves images, reflections of the main protagonists, their *Doppelgänger*. The women *Doppelgänger* are never acknowledged as such by the protagonists when they meet because they are unable to realise they are living in a fantasy.

b- In Taugenichts

In *Taugenichts*, too, the figure of the beloved is blurred by music. Music, notably the guitar, is supposed to be the thread in the search for the beloved while it is in fact an element of confusion that mixes up different women in one image of love. It is interesting to note that *die vielschöne gnädige Frau* is often designated by two adjectives, which already conveys the idea of the double and depersonalises her. Taugenichts never really grasps the identity of the lady and always thinks it is her every time someone plays the guitar, confusing, at the same time, the reader in the understanding of this female character. The lady, who Taugenichts thinks is a countess, is never fully described; the first description depicts her as 'eine schlanke weiße Gestalt'[16]. The vague descriptions do not help to grasp the identity of the beloved.

[15] Andrew Webber, *The Doppelgänger: Double Visions in German Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 8.
[16] Eichendorff, *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts,* in *EW*, II, p. 523.

Once in Italy, the narrator highlights the same characteristics with reference to two women musicians. One of them sings a never-ending trill while the other accompanies her on the guitar. The woman playing the guitar is also pale, with 'runde[n], blendendweiße[n] Achseln'[17]. This scene in fact refers to Hoffmann's 'Die Fermate' (as seen in the previous chapter) and the story inspired by a painting by Hummel representing two women musicians. There is a *mise en abyme* wherein Eichendorff's protagonists re-enact the description of Hoffmann, himself describing a real painting. Like Theodor in Hoffmann's story, Taugenichts witnesses the interminable trill of the singer:

> da flog plötzlich die Gartentür weit auf, und ein ganz erhitztes Mädchen und hinter ihr ein junger Mensch mit einem feinen, bleichen Gesicht stürzten in großem Gezänke herein. Der erschrockene Musikdirektor blieb mit seinem aufgehobenen Stabe wie ein versteinerter Zauberer stehen, obgleich die Sängerin schon längst den langen Triller plötzlich abgeschnappt hatte und zornig aufgestanden war. Alle übrigen zischten den Neuangekommenen wütend an. «Barbar!» rief ihm einer von dem runden Tische zu, «du rennst da mitten in das sinnreiche Tableau von der schönen Beschreibung hinein, welche der selige Hoffmann, Seite 347 des ‹Frauentaschenbuches für 1816›, von dem schönsten Hummelschen Bilde gibt, das im Herbst 1814 auf der Berliner Kunstausstellung zu sehen war!»-Aber das half alles nichts. «Ach was!» entgegnete der junge Mann, «mit euren Tableaus von Tableaus![18]

The passage illustrates the layers Eichendorff has created between reality and the imagination of Taugenichts, also revealing the importance of the visual and illusion, establishing the woman character as an image more than a fully-fledged character, and as opposed to a musical being. Moreover, the fact that it is a 'Tableau von

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 531.
[18] *Ibid.* ('Suddenly the garden gate flew open wide and a flushed girl, followed by a young man with delicate, pale features burst in, engaged in a violent quarrel. The frightened conductor stood still like a petrified magician with wand raised, although the singer had long since broken off her extended trill and had angrily stood up. All the others hissed furiously at the newcomers. 'Barbarian', one of those at the round table shouted at him, 'you are running right into the middle of the brilliant tableau, enacted just as the blessed Hoffmann on page 347 of the *Ladies Companion for 1816* so beautifully described the finest picture by Hummel shown at the 1814 exhibition of art in Berlin!' But this had no effect. 'Oh, fie,' returned the young man, 'on your tableaux of tableaux!'', *The Life of a Good-for-nothing*, trans. by Michael Glenny (London, Glasgow: Blackie, 1966), pp. 77-78. The following translations are from this edition.)

Tableaus' shows a relation between an artistic origin and the attempts to reach it. The primal painting, which itself represents music, becomes a spectral presence, with each attempt to recreate it marking a distance from it. The use of the term 'Zauberer' to designate the music director as well as the historical precision concerning the exhibiting of the painting entwine the fantastic and reality; it is as if the attempts to reach the original work were taking place in a distantiating chain. It is also interesting to note that the very disruptive element of the trill is repeated in each work. This is the subject of the original painting, which Hoffmann also recounts both in his *Frauentaschenbuch* and in 'Die Fermate', and the trill scene is, ultimately, similarly interrupted here. This conveys the idea of inevitability and of infinite repetition of a work of art. Painting is an important theme both in *Das Marmorbild* and in *Taugenichts*, but this scene emphasises the idea that Eichendorff is presenting us with the production of an imagery that constitutes artistic creation. Later, Taugenichts is again mistaken about a woman playing the guitar, calling her his beautiful lady without seeing her properly:

> Die schöne gnädige Frau, mit der Gitarre im Arme auf einem seidenen Faulbettchen […] Dabei sang die gnädige Frau so kläglig aus dem Hause, dass es mir recht durch Mark und Bein ging. […] Mir klopfte das Herz zum Zerspringen. Aber wie erschrak ich, als ich recht hinsah und anstatt der schönen gnädigen Frau auf einmal eine ganz fremde Person erblickte![19]

His desire to see her creates visions. At the end of the story, when Taugenichts goes back to Vienna and finally finds his beautiful lady, leading eventually to their wedding, another confusion between two women occurs:

> Denn auf dem grünen Platze am Schwanenteiche, recht vom Abendrot beschienen, saß die schöne gnädige Frau […] Ihr gegenüber saß eine andere junge Dame, die hatte den Weißen, runden Nacken voll brauner Locken gegen

[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 538-39. ('There [...] lay my gracious lady, her guitar on her arm, on a silken chaise-longue [...]. All this time my lady was singing with such sadness that it melted the very marrow of my bones [...]. My heart thumped as if it would burst – but what my horror when I looked closely and all at once saw instead of my beautiful, gracious lady a total stranger!' pp. 86-87.)

> mich gewendet und sang zur Gitarre […] Da hob die schöne Frau auf einmal die Augen und schrie laut auf, da sie mich erblickte.[20]

It is the repetition of the same vague physical characteristics, the beauty and paleness associated with the guitar that creates the confusion, yet this can also be associated with the figure of the Virgin Mary. The reader realises that the 'weiße Gestalt' who was playing the guitar this entire time was probably not the beautiful lady but someone else, like Flora, the real countess who was travelling in Italy under the name of Guido and dressed like a man. Symbolically, however, the pursuit of the 'weiße Gestalt' revealed a Christian pursuit of eternity. At the same time as the reader learns that the beautiful lady is not a countess, and that a wedding without mésalliance is indeed therefore possible between her and Taugenichts, we learn that she did not, and probably does not, play music; it is as if the main protagonist were finally able to separate his dream from the real world. Music also appears as antithetical to a 'moral' union; besides, Taugenichts plans to go to Rome with his wife just after the wedding, the emblematic city of Christianity. This can be paralleled with the music of the opera *Der Freischütz* by Weber, in which the bridesmaids sing a chorus for Taugenichts' wedding. This opera concerns a man who contracts a deal with the devil to be able to marry the woman he loves; however, he yields to temptation before being with his beloved, and we are therefore presented with an opposition between the temptress and the Christian beloved. Women musicians in *Taugenichts* correspond to what the protagonist wants to see, to his desires. In other words, they are reflections of his own personality.

Therefore, Taugenichts and Florio are not aware of the reflection (they do not self-reflect) and believe they find the materialisation of the ideal beloved in the different feminine figures, while they actually create a (mute) dialogism with themselves. The figure of the *Doppelgänger* is a figure of repetition, of duplication, but also of lack. The very idea of repetition, as we have seen in relation to Hummel's painting, always establishes a distance from the original. This leaves a gap between an

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 554. ('On the green lawn beside the swan's lake, in the light of the evening sun, there on a stone bench sat my gracious lady [...]. Opposite her sat another young lady, whose white, rounded nape with its cascade of brown curls was turned towards me as she sang to a guitar [...]. Suddenly my dear lady lifted her eyes and cried aloud as she caught sight of me.' p. 103.)

original and its doubles that creates the longing for fulfilment, which cannot be achieved.

Finally, music, presented along with the demonic face of the feminine *Doppelgänger,* contributes to the blurredness of the image of women. The alternation between concealment and revelation codes the text. However, as Simon Jan Richter explains, it is not meant to be deciphered but should be taken as a whole:

> The reader cannot gain access to what is behind the scenes because there is no behind-the-scenes. If there is a conspiracy, it is the conspiracy of the text. […] The *zwischen* of a decision between two opposites, as well as the *zwischen* between the reader and the meaning are flattened into the bars and strokes of language, its body, the *zwischen* that both obstructs and *is* our view.[21]

The best embodiment of this in-betweenness can be found in the androgynous figure, which concerns both women and men as we shall see now.

1.2 The androgynous female

The lack of materialisation of women (musicians) is intensified by their androgyny. In *Das Marmorbild*, Venus is presented as tall, as an 'overwoman',[22] and is mistaken for male figures. For example, Florio seems to make a connection between Venus and the male character Donati. He is presented as a deadly, pale character in the same way that Venus is pale and motionless. Donati tells Florio about the lady who played the lute – who Florio thinks is his Venus-beloved: 'Die Dame ist eine Verwandte von mir',[23] without giving more detail, as if Venus were another face of Donati. Besides, he is also described as a 'Mondscheinjäger',[24] a lunatic, someone with two faces. While we have seen in Chapter 1 that the androgyny of women characters in *Wilhelm Meister* forms part of their will to perform, to play along but at the same time resist the patriarchal order, here female androgyny seems to be completely subjected to the

[21] Simon Jan Richter, 'Under the Sign of Venus: Eichendorff's 'Marmorbild' and the Erotics of Allegory', in *South Atlantic Review,* 56/2 (1991), 59-71 (p.68).
[22] In Chapter 5, we will see that Nana also presents the characteristics of an overwoman, but not in the androgynous sense of a strong virile woman, but as the epitome of femininity in its organic understanding.
[23] *Das Marmorbild*, p. 403.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 395.

male imagination, as if the androgyny of the *Marmorbild* were a projection of male desires.

As in *Wilhelm Meister*, the notion of female cross-dressing is also present in *Das Marmorbild* when, at the end of the novel, Bianka dresses as a man to travel with her uncle. Similarly, in *Taugenichts*, Flora disguises herself as a male artist (going by the name Guido) so that she can travel and marry Leonardo (also a pseudonym and a disguise for the man Flora marries). It is only at the very end of the novella that Taugenichts realises that Flora is a woman, as if he wanted to see in Guido a male artist. Furthermore, Taugenichts mistakes a man playing the guitar and wearing a white coat (like his gnädige Frau) for his beloved, as if he desired a part of masculinity in his beloved. However, when they are too masculine, women are not presented as good musicians, as appears in *Taugenichts*: 'Die andere war wie verzückt und sang auf italienisch ganz außerordentlich künstlich, dass ihr die Flechsen am Halse aufschwollen'.[25] Furthermore, female androgyny in *Taugenichts* reveals a significant dichotomy between Romantic and Christian images: we could connect their elusiveness and instability with Romanticism and their strength and stability with Christianity.

We might question whether this masculinity within femininity is simply a projection of the male protagonists (in a *Doppelgänger* perspective) or whether the creative process – a productive confusion, as it were, as I shall try to demonstrate – necessitates gender confusion. From a Kantian perspective, this would mean that the subject needs an androgynous awareness to long for the origin of a transcendental call, which is at the heart of Romantic creation. Herein lies a crucial difference from the way in which androgyny is presented in *Wilhelm Meister*; here, it is the heroes who yearn for a form of androgyny in women as well as in men.

[25] *Taugenichts*, p. 531.

2. The androgynous male and the homoerotic aesthetic

Androgynous women characters are presented through the eyes of male protagonists, who are also androgynous. There is a sort of inter-reflection of masculine and feminine characteristics within the main protagonists, who are, let us recall, poetic figures. Therefore, as we have seen in *Wilhelm Meister*, androgyny does not seem to concern a simple gender conflict but rather an artistic one. I have already mentioned that the names of the protagonists evoke an element of femininity; some other features confirm this idea. Florio is described at the beginning as such: 'Florio, noch im Nachklange der Lust, ritt still wie ein träumendes Mädchen zwischen beiden [Fortunato and Donati]'.[26] Similarly, Taugenichts is mistaken for a woman when he arrives at the castle in Italy; the housekeepers are expecting Guido (the male disguise of Flora) and think Taugenichts is a woman dressed like a man. They are quite surprised when they see how skilled Taugenichts is at the violin and find this unusual for a woman.

The gender 'changes' arouse what could be seen as a homoerotic response. Taugenichts is solicited by a male student who thinks he is a woman, and for a time, as already mentioned, Taugenichts sees in this 'weiße Gestalt' student, his beautiful lady. In a similar way in *Das Marmorbild*, Florio seems at times attracted by Fortunato who is for him a real inspiration. One striking example comes after the masked ball; Florio talks in the garden with the woman dressed as a Greek and sees her as if in a dream ('Lasst das', erwiderte sie träumerisch'),[27] associating her with the marble statue. Yet, it is the call of Fortunato that brings Florio back to reality. Realising the turmoil of his friend, Fortunato starts to sing the song 'Still in Luft' where we can read an ambiguous, homoerotic discourse: 'Liebchen ruft' could be read as Fortunato calling Florio and 'Liebster schweift' presents Florio wandering in his dreams and responding to that call. Moreover, the neutral and masculine marks could be seen to refer to the two men. Then, by erasing the gender difference, the final lines 'Luft in Luft/Bleibt Liebe und Liebste, wie sie gewesen!'[28] come to characterise

[26] *Das Marmorbild*, p. 394.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 411.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 412.

both lovers as feminine.[29] Although more real that Venus, Fortunato is another *enchanting* figure for Florio. The extent to which these examples might be called homoerotic is questionable since we have already explained that the very idea of gender is itself confused. We might talk, rather, of autoerotic discourse, especially because the call from Fortunato is a self-reflection, a recognition in the other. Florio returns to reality (to himself) because of the (musi)call of his friend.

Perhaps more than a homosexual relationship, it is the confrontation of Florio with himself that is described, which would be a narcissistic reflection. This narcissism reveals a union of the masculine and the feminine within the subject. There would be an androgynous primal union, as Plato explains in his *Symposium*.[30] The subjectivity of the male protagonists in Eichendorff would first suggest a sort of incorporation of female characteristics within male characters. However, we could say that, as in Aristophanes' speech, the androgynous here stands at the origin of separated genders, and is therefore not a movement of adjoining the two genders (*accouplement*) but of disjoining (*dé-couplement*) an original (artistic) figure. The union of feminine and masculine forces in the androgynous figure is not a reconciliation but a conciliation *tout court*. Fundamentally, for the artistic figure to be productive there must be a renunciation of the self: each 'gender' constituting the androgynous cannot concretely realise itself but must participate in producing an androgynous artistic work. The idea of the androgynous does not reveal strong independent artists but rather characters that must vanish in androgyny.

3. The incorporeal and the role of music

As suggested in the introduction, the perspective offered by Eichendorff is not one of creator figures; neither Taugenichts nor Florio wants to create art. However, they wish to understand their desires and the impulses behind their quest for fulfilment. They believe that their longing for conciliation can be fulfilled through women, while women are in fact merely a representation of the facets of the male protagonists. As in

[29] Helfer goes further in the homoerotic analysis by giving a different example: 'Florio bolts from the palace with his hair standing on end, passing the phallicized Fortunato, who stands "hoch aufgerecht" in his boat, fingering his guitar. (That the sexual threat represented by the minstrel replaces the sexual threat embodied by Venus is underscored by the text itself. The narrative explicitly scripts Fortunato in the same structural position as the heathen goddess, standing in the still pond in which Florio had first seen the marble statue)', 'The Male Muses of Romanticism', p. 313.
[30] See Chapter 1.

Hoffmann's texts, women are not flesh and blood characters; instead, they seem to be spectral, part of the haze mentioned earlier, dematerialised. The androgynous figures (including the male ones) constituted by the different facets of the protagonists seem to be formless. The incorporeality of the androgynous is echoed by the soundscape that carries the idea of infinity. Music in nature is often heard from a distance or fading away. Taugenichts hears the sounds of a guitar 'tief aus dem einen Garten',[31] while Florio notices 'Währenddes ließen sich draußen Waldhörner aus der Ferne vernehmen. Bald näher, bald weit, gaben sie einander unablässig anmutig Antwort von den grünen Bergen'.[32] The notions of depth and distance, contained in the recurrent word *rauschen*, also illustrate the gap in the quest for fulfilment.[33] *Rauschen* relates to distant sounds and weakness, and can even be linked to an anxiety, as the following passage from *Marmorbild* illustrates:

> Er verließ schnell den Ort, und immer schneller und ohne auszuruhen eilte er durch die Gärten und Weinberge wieder fort, der ruhigen Stadt zu; den auch das Rauschen der Bäume kam ihm nun wie ein verständiges, vernehmliches Geflüster vor […][34]

By expressing desire, fear, and the idea of a distance, *rauschen* can be linked to longing. And yet *rauschen* can be understood as the sounds of nature, or even music from nature. We might therefore say that the soundscape serves the incorporeality of the androgynous figure as well as the narrative confusion.

In fact, one might see incorporeal androgyny as an allegory of the creative process. As I mentioned before, Eichendorff's texts are not explicitly about artist 'creators'; and yet in both stories the imagination of the protagonists is at work, entwining music and words, as if they were figures of poets. Bewilderment is the work of the imagination in progress. The confusion at stake in both texts, the blurred

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[31] *Taugenichts*, p. 522.
[32] *Das Marmorbild*, p. 415.
[33] Adorno explains the importance of the term *rauschen* in the work of Eichendorff: 'Ein Wortwerden des Fleisches, bildet der Sprache den Ausdruck von Natur ein und transfiguriert ihre Bewegung ins Leben noch einmal. Rauschen war sein Lieblingswort, fast seine Formel', *Noten zur Literatur,* in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann, 20 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Surhkamp, 1970-1986), XI, p. 83.
[34] *Das Marmorbild*, p. 397. ('He left the place quickly; walking faster and faster, without pausing for rest, he hurried back to the gardens and vineyards towards the peaceful city. For now even the rustling of the trees seemed to him like a clearly audible, intelligible whispering [...]', p. 144.)

limits and the androgynous figures in which music participates, are part of the creative process. In other words, androgyny could be conceived of as an allegory of artistic creation. However, if Eichendorff uses the allegory to talk about creation it means that there is no proper creation and that it must be compensated. As I said earlier, allegory highlights the absence of something rather than its presence. The allegorical androgynous points towards unity and meaning but remains a failure because it is based on a lack that needs to be compensated. Besides, by presenting a union that is in fact a division, the androgyne enacts in itself the Romantic problem of allegory. It is music as a structuring device that comes to complete the unstable allegorical androgynous in the quest for meaning. Through the repetition of songs, music structures the narrations. For example, every time Taugenichts leaves a place to travel he takes his violin from the wall and starts to sing a little religious song. Moreover, the song of the beautiful lady – 'Wohin ich geh' und schaue,/In Feld und Wald und Tal,/Vom Berg' ins Himmelsblaue,/Vielschöne gnäd'ge Fraue,/Grüss' ich dich tausendmal' – is also repeated several times. The 'musical' vocabulary is also redundant; Taugenichts keeps saying that his heart sounds, or that sounds resonate in his heart, 'weil mein Herz so voller Klang war'.[35] Similarly, in *Das Marmorbild,* the word 'Verhallen' is repeated – 'Fortunato war still und alle die Übrigen auch, denn wirklich draußen waren nun die Klänge verronnen und die Musik, das Gewimmel und alle die gaukelnde Zauberei nach und nach verhallend untergegangen'.[36] Both the androgyne (as an allegory of artistic creation) and music (as artistic creation) point towards a unity without being able to reach it, as Paul de Man explains.[37] We can see how allegory and music are complementary: while the allegory generates the confusion experienced by the protagonists (and the reader) through the image of androgyny, music offers a common thread in the narration. German Romantic literature uses both an image (allegory) and a rhythmic element (music within literature and repetition) to articulate the unattainable absolute unity.

To conclude, as heritors of the Kantian tradition of primal origin, Hoffmann and Eichendorff see the origin of artistic creation through gender and establish the significance of music. However, the two authors envision gender in different ways. For Eichendorff, the origin is an androgynous unity, which is problematic in itself

[35] *Taugenichts*, p. 448.
[36] *Das Marmorbild*, p. 392.
[37] See introduction.

because androgyny never returns to the primal unity. Contrarily, the primal calling that is present in the German Romantic conception is figured by Hoffmann as a primordial feminine. We shall now see that Berlioz offers a different approach yet again; women musicians are no longer ethereal feminine figures, but rather more empowered characters; even though his writings are very much anchored in German Romanticism, female artists are, for once, provided with subjectivity.

Berlioz's prose: bodies subjected to the 'musical ensemble' in *Les Soirées de l'orchestre* (1853)

'Par le génie, Berlioz est d'origine allemande' claimed Joseph D'Ortigue in a review of the *Symphonie fantastique*.[1] As a composer and admirer of Gluck, Beethoven and Weber, Berlioz wanted to expand their expressive instrumental style, particularly in his symphonies. As a writer, Berlioz showed a similar interest in Germany. In *Les Soirées de l'orchestre*, he places the utopian musical city Euphonia in Germany and contrasts it with the heavy and ornamental style of Italian music. German music – in the large sense, comprising music from all the different German speaking states in Europe in the nineteenth century – exerts a strong influence on the aesthetic of Berlioz, as a musician and a writer. As in the texts of Hoffmann and Eichendorff, the programme of the *Symphonie fantastique* and the *Soirées de l'orchestre* contain the themes of uncontrollable passion, disenchanted love, unattainable femininity, and the infinite. Referred to as the mouthpiece of musical Romanticism in France,[2] Berlioz seems to fit particularly well into this chapter, his texts being in line with the treatment of women musicians and their connection with the yearning for artistic creation in the works of Hoffmann and Eichendorff.

It is in relation to literary and music criticism that the connection between Berlioz and German Romanticism is most perceptible. German Romanticism was formally introduced to France by Germaine de Staël *De l'Allemagne* (first printed 1810 and reprinted in England in 1813). In 1803-1804, Mme de Staël fled Napoleon and travelled to Germany with Benjamin Constant where she met Goethe and Fichte. In 1808, she attended the lectures of August Wilhelm Schlegel in Vienna on dramatic literature,[3] which had a strong influence on her. Goethe even qualified *De l'Allemagne* as a 'Schlegelisch-Staelischen' book.[4] In *De l'Allemagne*, Mme de Staël presents German authors, philosophers and artists little-known to the French public as intellectuals of the highest importance. She also introduces the term 'romantic' by

[1] Joseph d'Ortigue, 'Deuxième concert de M. Hector Berlioz', *La Quotidienne,* 4 janvier 1833, p. 1.
[2] Théophile Gautier wrote about *La Damnation de Faust*: 'Berlioz nous paraît former, avec Victor Hugo et Eugène Delacroix, la trinité de l'art romantique', *La Presse*, 7 décembre 1846, p. 2.
[3] Germaine de Staël, *De l'Allemagne* (Paris: GF-Flammarion, 1968), II, p. 70.
[4] Goethe, *Briefwechsel zwischen Goethe und Knebel (1774-1832)*, 18 May 1814, (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1851), II, p. 151.

distinguishing classic poetry from romantic poetry: 'Le nom de romantique a été introduit nouvellement en Allemagne, pour désigner la poésie dont les chants de troubadours ont été l'origine, celle qui est née de la chevalerie et du christianisme'.[5] It is interesting to note that she makes a connection between poetry and music through the medieval figure of the troubadour. Mme de Staël establishes literature and music as a tangled kernel of the definition of Romanticism. Although her definition is far from complete and was contested by her contemporaries,[6] her work introduced the question of German Romanticism and triggered discussion from a new European perspective on literature in France. Until the early 1820s, *De l'Allemagne* remained the keystone of the discussion of German Romanticism in France.[7] It is in this context that translations of E.T.A. Hoffmann's writings created a craze for the German author. Hoffmann's texts were first accessible to the French public in the *Revue de Paris*[8] (which also published poems by Eichendorff in translation) and then in *La Revue musicale*. When *La Revue musicale* became *La Revue et gazette musicale* in 1835 and was taken over by the German publisher Maurice Schlesinger, the musico-literary tales of Hoffmann became an aesthetic line to follow, as Katharine Ellis states:

> Instead, Schlesinger created an alliance between music and literature which emphasised the fusion of the arts and put into practice an idea attributed to Hoffmann by Janin: that critics should be artistically creative themselves, and that creativity in a different field was a lesser impediment to judging an artist's work than a purely theoretical relationship, however intimate, with the art in question.[9]

Schlesinger saw an affinity between the artistic message of Hoffmann and French philosophers of the time, as Ellis further explains:

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[5] Staël, *De l'Allemagne*, I, p. 211.
[6] Xavier Marmier, for example, saw in Stael's *De l'Allemagne* a lack of rigour and preferred Quinet's precision, in '*Allemagne et Italie* par M. Edgar Quinet', *La Revue de Paris*, vol. 4, 49-55 (p. 52).
[7] In 1824, Desmarais' *Essai sur les classiques et les romantiques* moves away from the pure distinction between Classicism and Romanticism, as Ian Allan Helling explains in *L'Allemagne de Madame de Staël et la polémique romantique* (Paris: Champion, 1929), p. 333.
[8] Elizabeth Teichmann, *La Fortune d'Hoffmann en France* (Geneva, Paris: Librarie E. Droz: 1961), p. 32.
[9] Katharine Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France, La Revue et gazette musicale de Paris 1834-1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 50.

> Hoffmann's theories of artistic nobility and of the musical genius as an undervalued figure struggling against traditional social hierarchies found a partial corollary in French social philosophies of the 1830s in which the artist had recently been raised to priestly status: Fourierism and Saint-Simonism.[10]

Thus, Schlesinger encouraged his contributors to write musical tales in the style of Hoffmann. And yet, it is in this periodical that Berlioz published his own musical tales. Hoffmann's fantastic became a genre to develop, and of which Berlioz took advantage. The reception of German Romanticism is inseparable from the style and reception of Berlioz in the 1830s, as Ellis concludes: 'Contemporary composers who were to benefit from being judged in a Hoffmannesque light included Berlioz and the self-consciously alienated Chopin'.[11] The music and writings of Berlioz are therefore anchored in the French reception of German Romanticism and of Hoffmann's work.

It is therefore not surprising to find similarities between the German writer and Berlioz. In the same way that *Die Serapionsbrüder* is a literary circle telling different stories*, Les Soirées de l'orchestre* is a collection of short stories framed by a main narration. The musicians of an orchestra of a 'théâtre lyrique', that is to say of an Opera, in Northern Europe share stories during performances of operas they do not like, which correspond to most of the performances of the twenty-five evenings. Weber, Spontini, Rossini, Mozart, Gluck and Meyerbeer are exceptions; the musicians remain concentrated and do not speak while playing their music. Narratives and music are therefore antagonistic: stories are told when 'bad' music is played and 'silenced' when 'good' music is played. In this case, the text only mentions which evening it is taking place on (for example 'troisième soirée'), and gives brief information on the composer and the music being played. Music is the setting of the *récit-cadre* and also the subject of each story that is told during the orchestra's evenings. Unlike Hoffmann and Eichendorff, Berlioz does not present music from one perspective (the musician creator in Hoffmann and the popular singer in Eichendorff) but offers a large overview of musical life. The *récit-cadre* and the *récits-encadrés* coalesce to form a proper 'musical ensemble'. All aspects of musical life are explored, from the orchestra to the audience, the composer to the interpreter, and even the administration and reception.

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[10] *Ibid.*
[11] *Ibid.,* p. 252.

Within this musical ensemble, women musicians occupy a particular place; although they are not part of the 'frame-orchestra', and therefore of the narrators, they can be distinguished in the narratives, notably: Vincenza in the first evening, Hortense in 'Le Suicide par enthousiasme', or Mina-Nadira in 'Euphonia'. They are all loved and idealised by a male musician. As in the texts of Hoffmann and Eichendorff, women, music and the ideal are inter-connected and form a unity in the imaginary of the male musician. Anchored in Romanticism, this interconnection is nothing other than the expression of longing. Here again, music and women are at stake in the tension between the abstraction and materialisation of an ideal. In the texts of Berlioz, and his music, the ideal is intensified by its obsessive and repetitive nature as well as its expression through corporeal images.

The obsessive ideal was instantiated in Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* (1830) with the notion of the *idée fixe*, a musical motif repeated throughout the symphony that represents the passion of a young musician for the beloved woman. In the programme offered to the audience before the performance, Berlioz explained that the image of the beloved is bound to a musical thought in the mind of the obsessed musician: 'Ce reflet mélodique avec son modèle le poursuit sans cesse comme une double idée fixe'.[12] The duplicity of the Ideal – woman and music – is expressed as an obsession. This obsession is equally represented in *Les Soirées de l'orchestre,* particularly in the narratives where the themes of love, passion, music and creation are entwined. These narratives not only expose the obsession of a male musician but also show that the theme of the Ideal structures the collection; the stories thus 'perform' themselves as a repetitive obsession. As in the *Symphonie fantastique*, the *idée fixe* is a structural motif in Berlioz's writings.

Berlioz is considered as the epitome of French Romantic musicians, and his prose writings can also be seen as Romantic. Given that Berlioz was a musician before he started to write (which he did to assure financial security), it can be argued that his first inspiration was the musical one and that he transposed some of the themes present in his music into his texts. Hence, the Romantic themes of the *Symphonie fantastique* enumerated by David Cairns are also present in 'Le Suicide par enthousiasme' and 'Euphonia'. He states: 'on the surface the work is ultra-Romantic effusion, with its dramatization of the artist's tumultuous state of soul, its

[12] Berlioz, Programme autographe de la Symphonie fantastique (1830), Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, département musique, LA-BERLIOZ HECTOR PAPIERS-37.

topical themes of the ideal woman, hopeless love, the consolations of nature, the guillotine, opium, and the phantasmagoria of the tortured mind'.[13] In addition, as in the German texts, the particularity of the Ideal is that the artists attempt, in vain, to attain it through its materialisation. However, the main difference is that in Berlioz's texts, women musicians are no longer elusive figures. Rather, their bodily presence is central. Male artists deceive themselves into thinking that a woman can be the embodiment of their Ideal in the organic sense. The association of women with music in the minds of the artist gives him the impression of the possibility of reconciling abstraction and that which is tangible, impulse and reason. Music is often characterised through corporeal metaphors, particularly through physical pain, showing the impossibility of its materialisation. Berlioz repeatedly uses metaphors of sickness to describe musicians, such as 'c'est avec le choléra qu'il [Paganini] entra dans Paris',[14] or 'une de ces œuvres chargées de contagion cholérique'.[15] He also mentions sickness to denounce the attitude of some singers:

> Car la maladie étrange qui semble s'être emparée du peuple entier des chanteurs de théâtre […] maladie dont vous connaissez tous les symptômes, n'a pas pour cause, dans la plupart des cas, l'amour de la gloire […] mais le plat amour du lucre, l'avarice, ou la passion du luxe […].[16]

Among the corporeal imagery, the violence imposed on the female body delineates the impossibility of materialising the Ideal. First presented as sublime, women musicians are, as it were, successively fleshed out and unfleshed. Unlike in the texts of Hoffmann and Eichendorff, women musicians are here flesh and blood characters. We shall see that if the female body resists subjection it is because female musicians also have an artistic subjectivity and agency, with their own ideals.

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[13] David Cairns, 'Introduction' in *Berlioz and the Romantic Imagination: an Exhibition: Organized by the Arts Council and the Victoria and Albert Museum on Behalf of the Berlioz Centenary Committee in Cooperation with the French Government, 17 October to 14 December*, ed. by Elizabeth Davison (London: Arts Council, 1969), p. xi.
[14] Hector Berlioz, 'Seizième soirée: Paganini', in *Les Soirées de l'orchestre* (Lyon: Symétrie, 2012), p. 217.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 212.
[16] 'Epilogue', *Ibid.*, p. 340.

1. The artistic ideal: sublime and grotesque women in 'Le Suicide par enthousiasme' (1834)

In his preface to *Cromwell* (1827) Victor Hugo provides a definition for the 'drame romantique', presenting the combination of the 'grotesque' and 'sublime' as one of its principles: 'Revenons donc, et essayons de faire voir que c'est de la féconde union du type grotesque au type sublime que naît le génie moderne, si complexe, si varié dans ses formes'.[17] The notion of drama can easily be linked to the study of Berlioz's works, as Katherine Kolb explains: 'In *Les Soirées de l'orchestre,* the Balzacian voice of high drama is accentuated by the prominence of three melodramatic short stories, all of which feature idealistic artist heroes at odds with the prosaic world around them'.[18] 'Le Suicide par enthousiasme' is dramatic in character and combines the grotesque and the sublime. It is the story of a musician, Adolphe D., who quits his orchestra in the south of France to go to Paris to listen to *La Vestale* by Spontini. Before leaving, he receives a letter from a woman who wants to take piano lessons with him. He accepts, and is rapidly fascinated by the beauty and talent of the woman, until he realises her lack of consideration for the music of Spontini. In Paris, Adolphe attends the performance of *La Vestale* twice and kills himself immediately after, out of passion for the opera. The exaggerated passion of the musician, which leads to his suicide, as well as his contempt for women, combine the sublime and the grotesque in the text. This is where Berlioz differs the most from Hoffmann and Eichendorff; his sense of the grotesque is more crude than poetical.[19] Berlioz also uses irony in his depiction of women characters, presenting their conflict between beauty and personality or, in other words, between the body and identity. In the eyes of the male musician, women and music are antithetical; the idealisation of women, notably in terms of the physical, falls flat when women encounter music. In this short story, women and music are therefore presented as rivals.

[17] Victor Hugo, 'Préface de Cromwell', in *Cromwell,* ed. by Anne Ubersfeld (Paris: GF-Flammarion, 1968), pp. 61-109 (p.70).
[18] Katherine Kolb, 'The short stories', in *The Cambridge Companion to Berlioz*, ed. Peter Bloom (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 146-156 (p.146).
[19] Berlioz's second literary work, *Les Grotesques de la musique* (1859) continues in that direction.

1.1 The limit of the Romantic sublime

From the beginning of the story, Adolphe is presented as an artist guided by an ideal that obsesses him and which can be seen as his *idée fixe*: 'Adolphe D*** était, comme on le voit, un de ces artistes prédestinés à la souffrance qui, portant en eux-mêmes un idéal du beau, le poursuivant sans relâche, haïssant avec fureur tout ce qui n'y ressemble pas'.[20] Three elements successively correspond to the Ideal for Adolphe: the love for Hortense, the music of *La Vestale*, and Madame Branchu interpreting Julia in that same opera.[21]

Hortense is first presented as a gracious character the sight of whom bewilders Adolphe: 'La grâce originale et mordante d'Hortense, sa mise élégante et recherchée, ce je ne sais quoi enfin qui fascine dans la démarche, dans tous les mouvements d'une beauté de la Chaussée-d'Antin, produisirent leur effet sur Adolphe'.[22] The description is not without irony and continues by distinguishing her beauty from her vile personality:

> Mme N*** était une des ces femmes *adorables* (comme on dit au café de Paris, chez Tortoni et dans trois ou quatre autres foyers de dandysme) qui, trouvant *délicieusement* originales leurs moindres fantaisies, pensent que ce serait *un meurtre* de ne pas les satisfaire, et professent en conséquence une sorte de respect pour leurs propres caprices, quelques absurdes qu'ils soient.[23]

The separation between appearance and personality shows that the artist is not idealising a person but simply an impression of beauty. Berlioz reveals that the ideal cannot be embodied by women since their personalities eventually subdue their appearances. The use of italics not only demonstrates irony but also shows a desire to annihilate the presence of women (as we will see in 'Euphonia') through a death wish, by associating appreciative remarks with 'meurtre'. Yet, Adolphe is mystified by the physical attraction exerted by Hortense, and his response, a physical one, makes him forget his ideal:

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[20] 'Douzième soirée: le Suicide par enthousiasme', in *LSO*, p. 155.
[21] This is one of the examples where Berlioz mixes fiction and reality: Madame Branchu (1780-1850) was the first interpret of Julia in the performances of *La Vestale* in Paris.
[22] 'Le Suicide par enthousiasme', *LSO*, p. 158.
[23] *Ibid.*, p.159, emphasis of the text.

> Continuez à me mystifier ainsi, madame, je vous en conjure […] et je vous devrai les plus enivrantes jouissances qu'il m'ait été donné de connaître de ma vie'. […] les larmes qui roulaient dans ses yeux, le spasme nerveux qui agitait ses membres, étonnèrent Hortense […]. Les arpèges, les traits, les harmonies pompeuses, les mélodies découpées en dentelle, […] causaient à Adolphe une sorte d'asphyxie d'étonnement […].[24]

The vocabulary of sensuality employed here illustrates that Adolphe's response to the mystification of Hortense is not artistic but physical in nature, and is not therefore connected to his Ideal.

His reaction to *La Vestale* is also physical; he cries after playing it with his orchestra (even if he judges the quality of execution to be limited), and Madame Branchu '[lui a] brisé la poitrine' after the Parisian performance.[25] However, the exclamations and the metaphors of elevation or nature (for example 'je la contemple du haut de mon bonheur', 'redescendre?', 'le goût delicieux de ce fruit que je viens de cueillir')[26] that Adolphe uses in his suicidal note show that musical passion is superior to love and closer to the sublime. It is indeed a subjective Kantian sublime directed towards the subjective aesthetics that is expressed here, rather than a romantic sublime directed towards the aesthetic object. According to Kant, the subjective experience of the sublime solicits reason in a violent process:

> Die Stimmung des Gemüts zum Gefühl des Erhabenen erfordert eine Empfänglichkeit desselben für Ideen ... weil es eine Gewalt ist, welche die Vernunft auf jene ausübt, nur um sie ihrem eigentlichen Gebiete (dem praktischen) angemessen zu erweitern, und sie auf das Unendliche hinausgehen zu lassen, welches für jene ein Abgrund ist.[27]

Adolphe experiences the sublime in a subjective (violent) way. Once the artist realises that women do not correspond to his Ideal of love and music, because they do not have the same musical tastes as Hortense, who claims that Spontini's opera is a

[24] *Ibid.*, p.161.
[25] *Ibid.*, p.172.
[26] *Ibid.*, p .170.
[27] Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *KW*, V, p. 337. ('The mental mood appropriate for the sublime requires the mind's susceptibility for ideas, ... arising from the fact of its being a domination which reason exercises over sensibility with a view to extending it to the requirements of its own realm (the practical) and letting it look out beyond itself into the infinite, which for it is an abyss.' *Critique of Judgement*, trans. by James Creed Meredith, p. 95.)

monotonous and boring psalmody, the physical attraction is discarded and women become grotesque characters. The narrator first highlights their different understandings of music: for Adolphe, music is 'un écho de son bonheur profond', while for Hortense it is 'un délassement sur lequel elle était blasée dès longtemps';[28] before finally presenting her as a repulsive person: 'l'ange devenait une femme vulgaire […] Hortense n'était plus qu'une forme gracieuse sans intelligence et sans âme; la musicienne avait des doigts agiles et un larynx sonore… rien de plus'.[29] Hortense becomes a mere body, and her personality is discarded, unable to meet Adolphe's artistic desires. Hortense reveals to Adolphe that his ideal love does not exist and she therefore becomes a monstrous figure in his eyes. She becomes a monstrous body because Adolphe denigrates her personality, and yet she is presented as a talented musician, with a strong identity.

1.2 Empowered female musicians

Contrary to Hoffmannian texts, if the female musician cannot embody the Ideal, this is not because of her ethereal or fragile nature but because she is in fact a strong character. Hortense is described as displaying great strength when she plays the piano and a beautiful voice; she is even presented as a better musician than Adolphe: 'Dès la première leçon, la supériorité musicale de Mme N*** se montra dans tout son éclat; au lieu de recevoir des conseils, elle en donna presque à son maître'.[30] Similarly, more so than in the texts of Hoffmann and Eichendorff, women are recognised as talented and genius musicians. Adolphe says, for instance, that Madame Branchu is 'le génie incarné de la tragédie lyrique'.[31] Berlioz seems to confer artistic talent upon women more than his German counterparts. Although women are empowered musicians in his texts, the narrator deplores the fact that their musical intelligence is used to bolster their ego or for malice rather than for the love of art. Hortense is described as manipulative; she decided to take piano lessons with Adolphe because she wanted to fire him after having 'joué de lui comme d'un nouvel instrument'.[32] Interestingly, this musical metaphor is echoed by Adolphe, who wonders: 'Trouverais-je jamais une femme dont l'organisation fût montée au diapason de la mienne?'[33] Both metaphors

[28] 'Le Suicide par enthousiasme', *LSO,* p. 162.
[29] *Ibid.,* p. 164.
[30] *Ibid*., p. 160.
[31] *Ibid*., p. 172.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 160.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 171.

place the two characters on an equal level, where they each feel superior to the other, demonstrating that neither of them in fact is, and that they are each the instrument of the other. This confrontation of the male and female ego is probably where the grotesque truly lies.

If women are as empowered musicians as men, this undermines the gender dichotomy in a certain manner; there is no clear difference between the abilities of male and female musicians. In this confrontation of egos, male and female characters seem interchangeable and Adolphe could be seen as a feminine character and therefore as his own embodiment of the Ideal. Adolphe does not commit suicide so much *for La Vestale* as *for* himself. More than Hortense or Madame Branchu, he *is* La Vestale. It is important to recall here what a vestal is. It was a priestess doomed to chastity who had to look after the sacred fire of the goddess. Yet, the narrator mentions twice that Adolphe wants to save his 'virginité musicale' for the opera of Spontini. Besides, he is an 'enthousiaste', the etymologically of which means possessed by a god and inspired. His body is possessed by his own inspiration, the ideal is not to be sought in the other, in the ideal female body, but within himself. Adolphe's suicide is less a passionate gesture towards music and towards the feminine incarnated by *La Vestale* than the realisation that he is the origin of his own Ideal and that he cannot reconcile this ideal with real life. One way of doing so would be through artistic creation, but, as mentioned earlier, he may lack the musical abilities to achieve this. Suicide is the only option that brings his ideal into the infinite, and indeed his final letter ends with 'j'irai… ruminer mon Bonheur dans l'éternité'.[34]

Like in the texts of Hoffmann and Eichendorff, it is the notion of the double that is at stake here. The female musician turns out to be a reflection of the male subject who recognises himself in her. Although the woman musician is more acknowledged, as it were, in Berlioz's novella, due to her bodily presence, she does not constitute a proper other, she is still very much part of the male subject. This could explain why women musicians pass from sublime to grotesque images in the hero's imagination. He envisages them as sublime when he sees an ideal other, but turns them into grotesque figures when he gains self-awareness and realises that his artistic ideal is his own imagination, himself.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 172.

2. 'Euphonia': female fragmentation and the grotesque male

Published in 1844 in the *Revue et gazette musicale*, 'Euphonia' is an epistolary short story told by the frantic Corsino who presents a musical city, the utopian Euphonia, set in the future (precisely in 2344, so 500 years after the publication of the story). Situated on the slopes of the Harz in Germany, the city Euphonia is portrayed as an immense music conservatoire where the inhabitants, all musicians or working in different musical areas, are grouped together in neighbourhoods according to their function within the musical city.[35] In addition to describing the organisation of the city in detail,[36] particularly by contrasting the German musical perspective with the criticised Italian one, the story stages a triangular love story. The singer Mina leaves the composer Xilef, goes to Euphonia and changes her name to Nadira in order to start a new life with the composer Shetland. Like in 'Le Suicide par enthousiasme', the appearance of women is repudiated by their frivolous musical tastes, and the grotesque aspect of their personalities is pushed to an extreme through an amplification of their monstrosity. Here, the woman musician is not only mocked but tortured and dismembered. In the impossibility of finding an embodiment for their ideal in women, the mad composers annihilate the female body in a musical massacre. In opposition to the fragmented female body stands the assembled musical mass; the gigantic orchestral mass is another attempt to embody the ideal, which nonetheless fails.

Similarly to the programme of the *Fantastique*, 'Euphonia' has been interpreted as a reference to a woman Berlioz loved. As Julia Irmgard recalls: 'one may certainly read this novella as a belated literary transposition of Berlioz's bitterness and grudge towards Camille Pleyel'.[37] The pianist Camille Moke left Berlioz to marry Pleyel, provoking a desire of revenge.[38] This biographical exhibition,

[35] This corresponds to Berlioz's idea, as a conductor, of making the orchestra rehearse by sections first and not as a whole.
[36] This echoes the organisation presented in his famous *Grand traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes* (first published in 1843 and reedited in 1855).
[37] Effertz, 'the Woman Singer', p. 219.
[38] In the first publication of Euphonia, Mina was named Ellimac, Camille spelled backwards. In his *Mémoires*, Berlioz tells how he thought about killing Camille, (Paris: GF-Flammarion, 1969), I, pp. 203-4. As Inge van Rij sums up: 'In this context, Euphonia reads as an even more exaggerated and dramatic revenge fantasy', in 'Back to (the music of) the future: Aesthetics of technology in Berlioz's Euphonia and Damnation de Faust', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 22/3 (2010), pp. 257-300 (p. 271).

typical of the time,[39] shows the importance of fidelity for Berlioz – the fidelity of women and that of the interpretation of music according to the will of the composer. In the programme of the *Fantastique* the young musician already worries: 'mais si elle le trompait!' Berlioz's conception of music and of women, as it appears in the novella 'Euphonia', seems to follow the same principles: fragmentation and fidelity.

2.1 'Femelle d'homme!!!…Femelle de singe!!!'

The first description of Mina appears in the letter by Xylef where he describes modern Italian music. Xylef has been sent to Italy by the Euphonian minister of choirs to find new singers and describes the country as a barbarian place for music where 'le chef d'orchestre a l'air d'un sourd conduisant des sourds'.[40] It is in this decrying context that Mina is introduced. The juxtaposition of Italy with Mina (who is not Italian but Danish and living in Paris) shows that she represents what Xylef hates in music. Similarly to Hortense in 'Le Suicide par enthousiasme', the mind/body dichotomy corresponds to a distinction between musical taste and feminine appearance. Like Hortense, Mina has 'une organisation vulgaire',[41] that is to say Xylef considers her as musically inferior. When he learns that their musical tastes differ, Xylef does not leave Mina but experiences this as a heartbreak and insults her:

> Elle préfère le chant orné aux grands élans de l'âme; elle échappe à la rêverie; […] elle trouve les adagios de Beethoven *trop longs*!... Femelle d'homme!!! Le jour où elle me l'avoua, je sentis un glaçon aigu me traverser le coeur […] elle rit, la malheureuse, des chansons d'Ophélia, qu'elle trouve très inconvenantes, rien de plus. Femelle de singe!!!'[42]

For Xylef, 'la rêverie' is the expression of the soul, and Mina is not interested in this musical reverie. Does this suggest that she is more anchored in reality than Xylef, who lives in his fantasy? For Xylef, Mina's music is too ornamented and superficial, like Italian music, yet he is fascinated by her way of walking, her eyes and voice, in a

[39] François Sabatier, *Miroirs de la musique*, *la musique et ses correspondances avec la littérature et les beaux-arts*: 'On n'aurait cependant garde de minimiser la prééminence de l'Allemagne dans la genèse de cette mode autobiographique qui fait le meilleur accueil aux sentiments exacerbés, aux interrogations métaphysiques et aux abîmes dépressifs', (Paris: Fayard, 1998), II, p. 108.
[40] 'Vingt-cinquième soirée : Euphonia, ou la ville musicale, nouvelle de l'avenir', in *LSO*, p. 302.
[41] *Ibid.*, p. 299.
[42] *Ibid.*

word, by physical characteristics. We could draw a parallel between Mina, who has no interest in the songs of Shakespeare's Ophelia, and Aurelie in *Wilhelm Meister,* who also claims that the songs do not suit Ophelia, and for that matter asks the hero to explain the character to her. Yet, Wilhelm Meister explains that Ophelia has an innocence of insanity ('der Unschuld des Wahnsinns') and that after her father's death 'das schöne Gebäude stürzt völlig zusammen'.[43] Female insanity seems to be explained by men in terms of fragmentation. Mina, in the lineage of Ophelia and Aurelie, appears to us as a character presenting the signs of madness and on whom fragmentation is imposed, as we shall see.

Contrary to Hortense in 'Le Suicide par enthousiasme', Mina is not an instrumentalist, but her instrument is her body. In the mind of Xylef, her body is connected to her musical tastes, therefore when he realises that she has other tastes than him, he no longer finds her attractive. While Hortense was seen as a body empty of any satisfying music, since her music was 'external' on the piano and hostile to Adolphe, Mina is still envisaged as a possible ideal for Xylef, although his doubts – 'Est-elle malade ou morte, ou infidèle?'[44] – announce that the composer is allowing himself to be lured.

Mina is not presented as a very talented musician. When the composer Shetland first hears Mina's voice (who introduced herself as Nadira), he describes it as follows:

> une voix de femme stridente, pure cependant, et dont l'agilité extraordinaire, dont les élans capricieux et les charmantes évolutions semblaient, en retentissant ainsi au milieu des airs, être le chant de quelque oiseau merveilleux et invisible.[45]

The oxymoron 'stridente, pure' reveals that Shetland is not attracted by her musicality but by the ethereal nature of her voice. He is first seduced by the fact that it is a voice without a body, in other words, a musical physical element without a proper embodiment. Moreover, Mina-Nadira is singing his symphony, which shows that he is attracted more by his own music being sung by a disembodied voice than by the musical quality of the interpretation. Shetland finds her beautiful but refuses to allow

[43] Goethe, *WM*, p. 262, p. 253.
[44] Berlioz, 'Euphonia', *LSO*, p. 299.
[45] *Ibid.,* p. 312.

her to sing at the Gluck celebration, inasmuch as her singing is seen as unsuited to the epic, magnificent character of the ceremony. By refusing her performance he thereby controls her musicality and her appearance. When he finally chooses her to be the one to place the crown on the statue of Gluck, he confirms that physical beauty and art cannot coexist in one body: 'la beauté vaincue, éclipsée par l'art'.[46]

2.2 Actress and singer

Mina-Nadira nonetheless shows that no one can control her when she disobeys Shetland and decides to sing at the ceremony, taking control of the Euphonian gigantic orchestra. When she enters on stage, she rips off the 'perles et joyaux qui ornaient sa chevelure',[47] symbolising her renunciation of the ornaments of her voice, but above all showing that she controls her body, its presentation, and constructs her own performance. She also proves that she can sing sumptuously when she is in charge: 'd'une voix sublime d'accent et de timbre, elle commence l'air d'Alceste'.[48] She somehow changes the artistic model that the Euphonian are used to following: she shifts the performance from a composer-centred music to a performer-centred one.[49] The response from the Euphonians shows that they are fascinated by this new model: 'sans que le préfet des choeurs ni moi nous ayons fait le moindre signe pour designer l'harmonie, un cri de dix mille âmes s'est élancé spontanément sur un accord de septième diminuée, suivi d'une pompeuse cadence en ut majeur'.[50] Mina manages to trouble the musical (patriarchal) order of Euphonia and to negate the figures of the composer and the conductor. Shetland stops this 'enthousiasme' by starting the march of *Alceste,* confessing that he is 'déjà jaloux peut-être'.[51] Here again, the idea of infidelity appears; Shetland not only thinks that Mina cannot be a faithful figure to his Ideal but understands that she could be his rival. Mina appears as a *femme fatale* who not only arouses desire but also fear; she is dangerous because she could have the power to artistically dominate the male figure, as Hortense did.

[46] *Ibid.*
[47] *Ibid.,* p. 316.
[48] *Ibid.*
[49] As Van Rij points out, Euphonia is a 'régime despotique' and the inhabitants are more devoted to the figure of the composer than to music itself, p. 271.
[50] 'Euphonia', *LSO,* p. 317.
[51] *Ibid.*

By saying that Mina's voice is rendered sublime by its timbre, Shetland is admitting that Mina is too anchored in reality to be a full embodiment of his love/music ideal. An opposition is established here between the notions of the sublime and timbre, conveying an opposition between Romantic and real figures. In music theory, the notion of 'timbre' is what refers most closely to the physics of music.[52] Timbre is what distinguishes the instruments from one another when they are playing the same note and gives them their quality of sound. It is the number of 'waves' (or harmonics) that constitute a same note; each note corresponds to a frequency, which is nothing other than the physical process of air pressure and displacement (vibrations). In this contradiction (between the non-physical sublime and the physical timbre) Mina becomes the new *idée fixe* of Shetland, who tells her 'tu m'as fait voir hors de l'art un idéal sublime'.[53] Love and music cannot coexist as one ideal. Like Adolphe, Shetland has not found *the* ideal but *an* ideal and decides to kill himself 'par enthousiasme' with his beloved. However, Mina refuses, showing one more time that she cannot be controlled and presenting herself as an empowered actress and singer. Like the figure of the beloved in the *Symhonie fantastique*, the figure of Mina undergoes a metamorphosis in the male perspective. Both Xilef and Shetland understand that they cannot immure her in a fixed ideal (because of her autonomy) and see her instead as a monster.

2.3 'Songe d'une nuit de Sabbat': Violence and annihilation

In the last movement of the *Symphonie fantastique,* called in the programme 'Songe d'une nuit du Sabbat', the young musician, who has taken too many narcotics (not enough to kill him but enough to make him hallucinate), thinks he attends his own funeral. The programme states:

> Il se voit au milieu d'une troupe affreuse d'ombres, de sorciers, de monstres de toute espèce réunis pour ses funérailles. Bruits étranges, gémissements, éclats de rire, cris lointains auxquels d'autres cris semblent répondre. La mélodie aimée reparaît encore, mais elle a perdu son caractère de noblesse et de timidité; ce

[52] Timbre is 'The frequency spectrum of a sound, and in particular the ways in which different partials grow in amplitude during the string transient, are of great importance in determining the timbre', *New Grove dictionary of music and musicians.*
[53] Berlioz, 'Euphonia', *LSO*, p. 317.

> n'est plus qu'un air de danse ignoble, trivial et grotesque; c'est elle qui vient au sabbat… Rugissement de joie à son arrivée… Elle se mêle à l'orgie diabolique… Glas funèbre, parodie burlesque du Dies irae, ronde du sabbat. La ronde du sabbat et le Dies irae ensemble.[54]

The 'mélodie aimée' becomes a grotesque figure, a monster. This description corresponds to the final 'danse macabre' in 'Euphonia', where Xilef elaborates a plan to execute Mina. Realising that she has betrayed him and that she is not faithful to his friend Shetland, Xilef thinks of an atrocious revenge: 'dès lors, le dénouement du drame fut arrêté dans son esprit'.[55] Mina is then slaughtered, compressed with her guests in a shrinking mechanical pavilion activated by a 'piano-orchestre' played by Shetland. The description of the massacre is very similar to the 'nuit de Sabbat', combining music and monstrosity:

> En effet, aux cris d'horreur et d'angoisse, sous l'étreinte toujours plus vive des cloisons d'acier, vient se succéder un bruit hideux de chairs froissées, un craquement d'os qui se brisent, de crânes qui éclatent; les yeux jaillissent hors des orbites, des jets d'un sang écumant se font jour au-dessous du toit du pavillon ; jusqu'à ce que l'atroce machine s'arrête épuisée sur cette boue sanglante qui ne résiste plus.[56]

Mina, disembodied by dismemberment in this musical massacre, reveals more the monstrosity of the composers than her own. The metamorphosis of the character in fact reflects a metamorphosis of the composers unable to deal with their ideal.

Shetland ending up mad and Xilef killing himself attest that they are the grotesque characters. They are as much part of the 'danse macabre' as Mina and her friends are. The dismemberment of Mina is a fantasy of control by the male characters. In the absence of finding an embodiment of their ideal in Mina, the composers tear her apart, as if they wanted her to still be their work of art, something they can (artistically) work on. Just after meeting Nadira for the first time, Shetland already had the desire to torture her:

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[54] Programme Symphonie fantastique.
[55] Berlioz, 'Euphonia', *LSO*, p. 329.
[56] *Ibid.*, p. 332.

> Je rêvai même en dernier lieu que je la maltraitais, que mes mauvais traitements, mes brutalités, l'avaient rendue horriblement malheureuse; je la voyais à mes pieds, brisée, en larmes, pendant que je m'applaudissais froidement d'avoir dû dompter ce gracieux mais dangereux animal.[57]

This fantasy to break or fragment someone who is already fragmented – Nadira is a multiple figure who has decided to assume several identities, play several roles, sing with or without ornamentations, and play the dislocated theme of Shetland's symphony on the piano ('le thème reparaît fugué, disloqué, brisé')[58] – underscores the impotence of the composer, who wanted to control someone who was already under control, her own.

2.4 The orchestral mass

With twelve thousand inhabitants devoted to music, Euphonia is another embodiment of Berlioz's *folie des grandeurs.*[59] In front of the feminine figure, already dislocated and uncontrollable, the orchestral mass is another artefact for the male musicians. The bigger the mass, the more important the feeling of controlling music and approaching the ideal. For want of finding an embodiment of the artistic ideal, the male artist (here mainly Shetland) sculpts his own 'figure'. The orchestral body is assembled while the female body is dismembered.[60] Paradoxically, the orchestral body appears not as an animated body but a mechanical one. The individual is suppressed in favour of the mass, as Inge von Rij observes: 'Individual bodies are sacrificed to the body of Euphonia itself, which is dedicated to transmitting the masterwork'.[61] As opposed to the Italian musicians (of the future), the Euphonians cannot show a bodily response to music: 'Tout movement du corps indiquant le rythme pendant le chant est sévèrement interdit aux choristes'.[62] Moreover, the mechanisms of the orchestra are thoroughly

[57] *Ibid.* p. 313.
[58] *Ibid.* p. 310.
[59] As stated in his *Mémoires,* Berlioz ordered four hundred musicians and four brass orchestras to be allocated to the four corners of the Eglise des Invalides for his *Requiem* (1837), *Mémoires*, pp. 311-12. Another example is the Festival de l'Industrie (1844) that Berlioz was preparing while finishing 'Euphonia'. The concert gathered more than a thousand musicians, and the *Ménestrel* of 21 July 1844 called it 'le festival-monstre de M. Berlioz'.
[60] The interests in the female figure and in that of the orchestra do not occur successively in the story but rather in parallel.
[61] Inge von Rij, pp. 257-300 (p. 270).
[62] Berlioz, 'Euphonia', *LSO*, p. 322.

described: there is a mechanical metronome, several diapasons, and the conductor uses telephony and telegraphy to communicate his gestures. The orchestra is a monstrous mechanical body, as demonstrated by the superlatives: 'orgue gigantesque', 'le grand ensemble', 'cet immense instrument intelligent', 'merveilleux conservatoire de la musique monumentale'.[63] The city is in fact more visual than aural, and Berlioz uses spatial characteristics to present his ideal musical order. However, this embodiment of music, like that of the feminine, does not 'function' either. After the death of Shetland and Xilef, the city remains silent; only the giant mechanical organ still seems alive, and is even personified: 'l'orgue de la tour élevait seul au ciel d'heure en heure une lente harmonie dissonante, comme un cri de douleur épouvantée'.[64] The 'suffering' organ brings us back to the idea of organicism in music. The mechanical orchestra, composer-centred, fails while the organ plays on indefinitely.[65] Euphonia remains a utopia because it is visually centred, it is a visual body before a sounding one. The performance of the giant organ is dissonant, monstrous, in a word grotesque, and yet its sound is elevated to the sky, that is to say to the sublime. The ideal music, between grotesque and sublime, cannot be controlled, performs itself. If the feminine figure and the orchestra are presented as monstrous, it is because they are artefacts, creations of the monstrous male musicians.

3. The musical space: Unity and fragmentation

All the attempts to find an embodiment for the artistic ideal as it is envisioned by the male protagonists fail. However, at the same time they reveal music in a different light. Music, therefore, transcends form, but in order to do so it needs to be embodied at some point. Berlioz uses the grotesque to characterise women musicians, then male artists, but above all music. This characteristic of music of being both form and formless constitutes the grotesque and responds to the Hugolian thought: 'tout dans la création n'est pas humainement beau, que le laid y existe à côté du beau, le difforme

[63] *Ibid.*, pp. 321-26.
[64] *Ibid.*, p. 333.
[65] We cannot help but think here of John Cage's project *As slow as Possible*, or Organ^2/ASLSP, which is a 640-year musical project taking place in the church of Burchardi in Halberstadt, Germany. It consists of an organ playing a dissonant chord, of which notes are changed in certain years (the last change was the 05.10.13 and the next one will be the 05.09.20), alternating continuous playing and silences. The performance started in 2001 and will finish in 2640. <http://www.aslsp.org/de/das-projekt.htm>. The Euphonian organ is perhaps not a complete failure of the musical city but another kind of musical project (a futuristic one), centred on the performance rather than the composer.

près du gracieux, le grotesque au revers du sublime, le mal avec le bien, l'ombre avec la lumière'.[66] It also echoes Berlioz's conception of music, according to which there is an impulse of control on the one hand (that he mainly finds in conducting) and the desire to have a freedom of expression and emotion (the result of the execution) on the other. This tension is represented in the *Symphonie fantastique* by a juxtaposition of unity (the structure of the symphony, the *idée fixe*) and fragmentation (the dissonances). *Les Soirées de l'orchestre* follows the same relation to form: unity and fragmentation.

By presenting all the different imaginable aspects of musical life, *Les Soirées de l'orchestre* forms a coherent whole. However, Berlioz seems to dissect the whole musical ensemble to present its different aspects in detail. In his review of the *Symphonie fantastique*, Schumann explains how Berlioz dissects music (while operating the same dissection himself): 'Berlioz kann kaum mit größerem Widerwillen den Kopf eines schönen Mörders secirt haben, als ich seinen ersten Satz'.[67] This comes back to the idea of the metaphor of sickness and confirms how the work of Berlioz is inseparable from the imagery of the body. In his 'zergliedernde Kritik', Schumann saw how 'dissecting' could provide a creative space. By dissecting the musical life, Berlioz nonetheless provides a finite space for music; does not dissection take place after the death of its subject of analysis? Music would therefore be a corpse in the eyes of Berlioz the anatomist,[68] a finite (and finished) body. This finite body is also limited by its content, notably the repetition of the quest for the ideal in women and music, the *idée fixe*. The nature of the *idée fixe* is that of diversity within unity, as Hugh Macdonald states: 'Unity is imposed by the identity of the artist and by the use of a theme, which Berlioz described as the 'idée fixe', that recurs in different guises in all five movements […] the theme is the same yet different'.[69] The repetitive obsession towards women and music offers a unity as well. Dissecting the musical body confounds literary and musical space and shows that, for Berlioz, music is not dissociable from a limited form, attesting his controlling impulse.

The different associations of music with bodies are always 'painful', and highlight forms of torture. We have seen that the torture of Mina is a fantasy of the

[66] 'Préface de Cromwell', p. 69.
[67] Robert Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker* (Leipzig: Wigand, 1854), I, p. 123.
[68] Panofka called Berlioz 'the music anatomist', in Ian Bent, *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), II, p. 174.
[69] Hugh Macdonald, *Berlioz Orchestral Music* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969), p. 32.

composers, and that their idea of music is not a pure, beautiful one, but as Hugo asserts in relation to Romantic drama, it confounds beauty and ugliness. I would argue that the tortured embodiment of music reflects not only the tension of its inner process – the embodiment is never complete, it is not fixed, the formal limitations it offers are always in flux – but also sets out an imagery of suffering that is creative for Berlioz. The tortured body is a space for creation. As Schumann explains in his review: 'aber man bedenke, daß er ja gar keinen großen Gedanken hinstellen wollte, sondern eben eine festhängende quälende Idee in der Art, wie man sie oft tagelang nicht aus dem Kopfe; das Eintönige, Irrsinnige kann aber gar nicht besser getroffen werden'.[70] The *idée fixe* (both in the symphony and as I have defined it in *Les Soirées*) is the artistic principle that provides coherence within the limited space and transcends that very space through its 'haunting', obsessive nature.

On the tenth evening, Berlioz presents his literary *idée fixe* once more through the allegory of music. Music, personified as a female victim and representing the French musical institution, addresses the 'Ministre de l'intérieur' to request more subventions. The female body of Music is presented as weak and tortured, as illustrated by 'les mouvements fébriles de ses mains'.[71] Above all, however, she is subjected to the Minister's insults, directed at her appearance: 'vous êtes une prostituée sans esprit', 'pâle et ridée, vous en êtes venue à vous peindre le visage en bleu, en blanc et en rouge, comme une sauvagesse', 'triple sotte', 'vous êtes atteinte d'une phtisie au troisième degré', 'muse dégénérée'.[72] The same confrontation of powers as in the other short stories can be observed: the male character has a fantasy of controlling and torturing the female characters, who nonetheless claim their emancipation. Music replies to the insults with a 'feminist discourse': 'on me bâillonne, on m'oppose des préjugés dignes du moyen-âge', 'je crus un instant à mon émancipation', 'je dois être une esclave soumise à la corvée'.[73] Music is defending herself, demonstrating her strength, as do Hortense and Mina. This allegory of music confirms the need for Berlioz to find an embodiment of his love/music ideal but also shows that his desire to contain music and love is criminal and impossible. To return to the idea that allegory is a figure of duplication but also of lack (see section on

[70] Schumann, p. 134.
[71] Berlioz, 'Dixième soirée: Quelques mots sur l'état présent de la musique, ses défauts, ses malheurs et ses chagrins', *LSO*, p. 139.
[72] *Ibid.*, p. 140, p. 141, p. 142.
[73] *Ibid.,* pp. 144-45.

Eichendorff), we could in fact see the female fragmented body as the allegory of music in literature. By placing women at the creative centre of two of his important novellas ('Le Suicide' and 'Euphonia'), Berlioz shows us that a way to materialise his musical ideal is through the female fragmented body in literature.

Conclusion

Despite being anchored in Romanticism, Berlioz's music and writings present an organic concern with the female body resembling that of realist texts, as we shall see in the next chapter. The Berliozian ideal is more linked to reality than that of Hoffmann and Eichendorff because women musicians have a fuller status and are actually proper subjects that male artists have to confront. By using the grotesque, Berlioz questions the Romantic idea of the ideal. The ideal woman musician is still present but does not help the male artist to envision an absolute unity, making him question the very primal unity. Moreover, music and violence are entangled in Berlioz's texts, as if the artist were realising the destructive nature of the unattainable absolute unity. And yet, we have seen that the Romantic longing for a primal order ties in with artistic creation. The women musicians presented in this chapter are singers or instrumentalists but they do not compose; essential to the pursuit of the ideal and the restitution of a primal order, they are in fact links in the chain of male artistic creation. Music and the feminine thus represent the male creation. Women are not so much envisioned as muses here but as the link between abstraction and realisation generated by the creative process. According to Effertz, the subversion of the muse figure in Hoffmann's texts denotes an irony against the Romantic tradition shared by Hoffmann and Berlioz: 'Hoffmann's singers appear less as victimized women artists than as conveyors of the author's ironic scepticism of Romantic aesthetic'.[74] Finally, it could be said that the relationship between music and the feminine in literature (and all the connected notions of artistic creation) has contributed to the creation of Romantic music. Authors theorising about music in their texts and creations through the role of feminine figures have created an aesthetics that is linked to the works of Berlioz, Chopin, Schumann or Liszt.

The analysis of the texts of Hoffmann, Eichendorff and Berlioz has shown us

[74] Effertz, 'E.T.A. Hoffmann revisited', p. 178.

that the primary concern of Romantic literature is the search for a lost unity. This search is anchored on the relation of the female body to music, but differs in nature for the three authors: for Hoffmann, it takes the form of pure feminine elusiveness; for Eichendorff, it relates to the issue of androgyny; and for Berlioz, it is a question of violent bodily fragmentation. In this sense, the novellas of Berlioz are an appropriate transition to the next chapter, where the female body, in its clinical meaning, is at stake.

Chapter 3: Musical pathologies and sound minds: Melomania in Balzac's *Béatrix* (1839), Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1857) and Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862)

'La musique est innocente de leur monomanie' Berlioz, *Les Grotesques de la musique*

Introduction: the clinical discourse on monomania

In French and German Romanticism, women musicians are elusive figures; they are presented through the imagination of male characters, and although the narration gravitates around their interaction with male characters, they are never fully developed for themselves. Through this 'dematerialisation', Romantic authors praise a dematerialised music and divulge a poetic ideal at the intersection of femininity and music. In French Realism and Victorian sensation fiction, women musicians are flesh and blood characters, the heroines are fully developed and music is a fundamental characteristic that follows their evolution throughout the narration. However, they are not stable characters: their identities are disturbed by madness. The progress of psychiatry and the development of asylums during the nineteenth century precipitated a discourse on women and madness. The practice of music in bourgeois households and the institutionalisation of madness are therefore two parallel discourses on women that meet in the narratives of the three fictional characters that form the main focus of this chapter. I will analyse the role of music in obsessive behaviours, particularly monomania. In France, the works of Philippe Pinel, Jean-Etienne Esquirol and Etienne-Jean Georget were predominant in this field; they defined monomania as an obsession with a fixed object which provokes delirium but occurs in a subject that is otherwise sane and able to reason[1] – this is also called, not without a rich imagery for this chapter, a sound mind.[2] As shown in the previous chapter, the concept of the *idée fixe* had already been instantiated by Berlioz in his *Symphonie fantastique*, where the

[1] Philippe Pinel, *Traité medico-philosophique sur l'aliénation mentale* (Paris: Brosson, 1809); Etienne Esquirol, *Des maladies mentales* (Paris: Baillère, 1838); Jean Georget, *De la folie* (Paris: Crevot, 1820).

[2] Jan Goldstein explains that monomania originally 'denoted an idée fixe, a single pathological preoccupation in an otherwise sound mind', in *Console and Classify: The French Psychiatric Profession in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 155. 'Sound mind' is an image particulalry rich for this chapter, indicating the relation between sanity and music, intelligence and music.

beloved woman associated with a musical phrase represents the obsession of a young musician. In the texts of Balzac, Flaubert and Braddon women are not the purpose of the obsession but rather the obsessive characters themselves. Their obsession is the urge to escape their realities: living an independent life for Camille Maupin; finding recourse against boredom and marriage for Emma Bovary; building a new life and erasing her old identity for Lady Audley. Imagining a different reality is their monomania. As the bridge between reality and the imagination, music is an integral part of their obsession, hence the association with 'melomania'. The women characters in the three texts all play the piano: some are presented as committed, talented musicians and *mélomane* (music lovers), while others like music for what it provides them with, rather than for music in itself. *Mélomanes* or not, they all have a mania of melodies connected to their obsession: they are melomaniacs.

In the nineteenth century, all types of afflictions (also intellectual ones) came to be seen as being rooted in the body. Madness was generally called 'maladie nerveuse', denoting the physical origins without specifying them. In his essay *De la folie* (1820), Georget denounced the vagueness of the term and advocated the specific determination of the *siège* of madness, its physical origin. At the beginning of the century, Pinel claimed it was in the stomach:

> Les préludes de l'invasion et du retour des attaques de manie peuvent être très variés; mais il semble en général que le siège primitif de cette aliénation est dans la région de l'estomac et des intestins, et que c'est de ce centre que se propage comme par une espèce d'irradiation le trouble de l'entendement.[3]

Later, Georget refuted this thesis by saying that the physical origin of madness is in the brain: 'la folie est une affection cérébrale idiopathique'.[4] The body is therefore the centre of madness and obsessive behaviours. Although some modern critics insisted on the prevalence of women affected by madness – Elaine Showalter calls this 'the female malady'[5] – contemporary discourse showed that the difference between mad men and women is subsidiary, as Esquirol concludes in relation to the gender difference:

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[3] Pinel, pp. 141-42.
[4] Georget, p. 73.
[5] Elaine Showalter: 'in the most obvious sense, madness is a female malady because it is experienced by more women than men', in *The Female Malady* (London: Virago, 1987), p. 3.

> 1- la différence des hommes aux femmes est bien moins considérable qu'on ne le croit communément; 2- que cette différence se rapproche beaucoup de la proportion qui existe entre les deux sexes, dans l'état général de la population; 3- que la différence n'est point la même dans tous les pays; 4- qu'en France, la proportion des femmes est plus forte qu'en Angleterre.[6]

However, he adds that women yield to madness for reasons that are specific to their gender. Hysteria, for example, was thought to have its origins in the uterus, as shown by the Greek etymology *hystera* (womb), until the mid-nineteenth century; yet Georget associated it with the brain.[7] The female body thus occupies a particularly important place in the discourse on madness, and gender difference itself becomes pathological.

It is not surprising that it is through the body of female characters that authors impart a discourse on madness. The *androgynous* Camille Maupin in *Béatrix*, the *physical crises* of Madame Bovary, and the *double identity* of Lady Audley are all features that place their bodies in the foreground of the narration; they are flesh and blood characters, hyperbolised women. The role of the body is manifold in their texts: physical characteristics are external manifestations of the characters' obsessions; the body interacts with music, and music itself participates in the obsessions. The body is not only an intermediary between the obsessions of the imagination and the physical world; with music, it creates a closed circle that enchains women characters to their obsessions. Music is part of the obsession that is expressed through the body and has an effect on the body that can rekindle the obsession. Literature and medical essays seem to both express the same discourse on women and monomania; they are both narratives about pathological individuals. Balzac himself offers a definition of monomania in *La Peau de chagrin* that resembles that of Pinel:

> L'altération progressive de l'épigastre, centre de la vie, a vicié tout le système. De là partent des irradiations constantes et flagrantes, le désordre a gagné le cerveau par le plexus nerveux, d'où l'irritation excessive de cet organe. Il y a

[6] Esquirol, I, pp. 37-38.
[7] Georget, p. 46.

> monomanie. Le malade est sous le poids d'une idée fixe. Pour lui, cette Peau de chagrin se rétrécit réellement.[8]

If medicine and literature articulate the same narrative, each author borrows from medicine what can serve them for their literary discourse. For example, the significance of the body in Balzac's texts cannot be dissociated from the social body; the vitiated system is the vitiated society; the female body in *Béatrix* becomes an image of the social body. The similarities between medical and literary works are striking: the works of French psychiatrists could even be read as short stories. Henri Ellenberg notes than many of Pinel's case histories might easily have come from Balzac's novels,[9] and Georget proudly says that previous physicians wrote novels rather than medical reports.[10] This chapter will borrow examples from medical reports to draw parallels with the obsessions of the three fictional women characters and their connection to music.

Excessive intellectual stimulation, especially reading, is one of the supposed causes of monomania that creates another link between medicine and literature. Esquirol mentions that an excess of education can provoke madness:

> Les vices de l'éducation adoptée par nos jeunes filles, la préférence accordée aux arts de pur agrément, la lecture des romans qui donne aux jeunes personnes une activité précoce, des désirs prématurés, des idées de perfection imaginaire qu'elles ne trouvent nulle part; la fréquentation des spectacles, des cercles, l'abus de la musique, l'inoccupation, sont autant de motifs suffisants pour rendre la folie plus fréquentes chez nos femmes.[11]

This description corresponds particularly well to Emma Bovary, who creates, in her imagination, an ideal of life based on her Romantic readings. Both music and literature are intellectual pursuits which, when overstimulated, provoke an obsessive imagination for the female characters. In *The Economy of Health* (1837), James Johnson claims that music can have a disastrous effect on the nerves of young women 'whose sensitive nerves, susceptible feelings, exquisite sympathies, tender affections,

[8] Honoré de Balzac, *La Peau de chagrin,* ed. by Nadine Satiat (Paris: Flammarion, 1996), p. 305.
[9] Henri Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: the History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (London: Allen Lane, 1970), p. 283.
[10] Georget, p. 84.
[11] Esquirol, I, p. 35.

and delicate organization, are excited, stimulated, electrified'.[12] James Kennaway uses the term 'the piano plague'[13] to describe this contradiction of music being both a requirement in the education of middle and upper-class women and a danger leading to madness and disease. For Esquirol, monomania is in fact a general exaggeration of the passions:

> Cette maladie présente tous les signes qui caractérisent les passions: le délire des monomaniaques est exclusif, fixe et permanent comme les idées de l'homme passionné. Comme les passions, tantôt la monomanie se manifeste par la joie, le contentement, la gaité, l'exaltation, l'audace et l'emportement ; tantôt elle est concentrée, triste, silencieuse, timide et craintive ; mais toujours exclusive et opiniâtre.[14]

The causes of monomania are vague and include any kind of behaviour that, if perceived as excessive, can be diagnosed as pathological. Monomaniacs could be sent to an asylum if a member of the family, with the consent of a doctor, requested it. In England, the 'Madhouse Act of 1828' vindicated the commitment of private patients with a certificate signed by two doctors, or two magistrates, or an overseer and a doctor for pauper patients.[15] In France, during the same period, there was either a voluntary commitment requested by a parent and approved by a doctor or an official commitment requested by the prefect.[16] If Lady Audley is actually committed to a 'maison de santé' by a family member and a doctor, we can see that Emma Bovary is also judged and diagnosed by Charles Bovary and Homais, two medical professionals, although they do not find the source of her affliction and the outcome is not a madhouse but suicide.

Marina van Zuylen explains that monomania is a response to a hypersensibility to the dangers of the world and obsession is a measure for monomaniacs 'to stabilize their universes and expel indeterminacy from their

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[12] James Johnson, *The Economy of Health, or the Stream of Human Life from the Cradle to the Grave, with Reflections Moral, Physical and Philosophical on the Successive Phases of Human Existence* (London: Highley, 1836), p. 48.
[13] James Kennaway in fact translates Eduard Hanslick's expression 'Klavierseuche', in 'The Piano Plague: the Nineteenth-Century Medical Critique of Female Musical Education', *Gesnerus*, 68/1 (2011), 26-40.
[14] Esquirol, I, p. 400.
[15] Showalter, *The Female Malady*, p. 26.
[16] Yannick Ripa, *La Ronde des femmes, folie et enfermement au XIX^e siècle* (1838-1870) (Paris: Aubier, 1986), p. 11.

worlds'.[17] The *idée fixe* is a source of comfort for monomaniacs. This chapter will show that music is a controlling constituent of obsession, giving female characters a sense of agency. In *Les Obsessions et la psychasthénie* (1903), Pierre Janet insists on the repetitive nature of obsession. The obsessive has an impulse to repeat situations and sometimes to return to the start of a situation. By giving clinical examples, Janet associates impulse and repetition: 'Un phénomène n'en reste pas moins une impulsion automatique parce qu'il est continue et régulier'.[18] In other words, Janet coined the idea of repetition-compulsion that was developed two decades later by Freud. I would like to argue that, because of its repetitive nature (beat is the foundation of music and repetitive practice is a sine qua non condition to create), music is at the heart of the repetitive phenomenon of obsessions. Music sustains the obsession by participating in its activation and being developed in the *idée fixe*. Monomania, to which Camille Maupin, Emma Bovary and Lady Audley are subjected, is ruled by repetition-compulsion, which itself cannot be dissociated from music. The musical repetition-compulsion is the controlled framework of disturbed characters looking for agency. Marina van Zuylen explains that Janet 'without voicing it clearly, implies that a great deal of his case-studies are superior women, who are not allowed to cultivate their minds and are going mad'.[19] The disturbance of the three women characters would be their intelligence, their obsessive need to find a new reality and the creation of a sense of comfort in this obsession would denote a sound mind. By hyperbolising their bodies and exposing complex intellectual beings, French Realism and Victorian sensation fictions stage fully-fledged women musician characters.

[17] Marina van Zuylen, *Monomania: The Flight from Everyday Life in Literature and Art* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 2.
[18] Pierre Janet and Fulgence Raymond, *Les Obsessions et la psychasthénie* (Paris: Felix Algan, 1903), vol. 2, p. 422.
[19] Zuylen, p. 36.

Balzac's monstrous and genius Camille Maupin

The character of Camille Maupin

Camille Maupin is a character who appears in several novels of *La Comédie humaine* – including *La Muse du department* (1832-37), *Honorine* (1843) and *Illusions perdues* (1837-43) – but it is in *Béatrix* that she plays the most important role. Camille Maupin is the pen name of Félicité des Touches, a famous writer and an accomplished musician. She chooses a name that is both masculine and feminine to be able to publish her books, just as George Sand adopted a masculine first name – Balzac incidentally highlights several times in the novel the resemblance of the fictional author with George Sand. The particularity of Camille Maupin is to live an unmarried, independent life in her house in Brittany, *le domaine des Touches.* She is one of the Balzacian 'superior women': 'une artiste, elle a du génie, et mène une de ces existences exceptionnelles que l'on ne saurait juger comme les existences ordinaires'.[1] But she is also presented as a monstrous character. Despite the title of the novel, Camille Maupin is the pivot around which the narration gravitates.

Béatrix is the story of a love affair, set up and supervised by Camille Maupin, between Béatrix and Calyste, a young Breton. Thanks to Camille's manoeuvre, Calyste falls in love with Béatrix, who also shows an interest, although she is in a relationship with the musician Conti. Soon Béatrix realises she has been manipulated by Camille, and leaves Brittany to go back to Paris. Trying to help the young man in his despair, Camille arranges his marriage with the Parisian woman Sabine de Grandlieu. Calyste follows Camille's plan and gets married while she retreats in a convent and leaves him an inheritance. While he is living in Paris with his wife, Calyste later meets Béatrix and they become lovers but Sabine's mother conspires to bring an end to their love story. Calyste finally realises Béatrix was never really in love with him and goes back to live with his wife, as Camille had planned.

[1] Honoré de Balzac, *Béatrix,* ed. by Madeleine Fargeaud (Paris: Gallimard, 1979), p. 93.

This (complex) plot summary is essential for understanding the role of Camille Maupin.[2] She is the first character introduced in the text and all the other characters unfold around her. With Camille Maupin at the centre of the narration, the story appears to be a play establishing a proper human comedy. If Béatrix is the heroine of the 'play', Camille Maupin is the stage director, embodying the figure of the author twofold: by being both a famous writer and the motor of the action. Balzac accordingly divides the text into three sections called 'les personnages', 'le drame', and 'un adultère retrospectif', highlighting its dramatic aspect. Music is key in this human comedy. First, it emphasises the theatrical aspect of the story by being part of the decor and settings; then, Camille Maupin plays the piano to gather the characters together and create romantic situations; and, finally, it participates in Camille's power of creation. Moreover, music is always mentioned through clear references to composers and pieces; it is mostly operatic music of the late eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century such as *Robert le diable* by Meyerbeer, *Guillaume Tell* by Rossini, *Romeo et Juliette* by Zingarelli, and *Il matrimonio segreto* by Cimarosa. Yet, opera is the meeting of music and drama.

Contrary to most of the women musicians presented in this thesis, Camille Maupin is a composer; she improvises on the piano and composes two operas (for which she is not publically recognised). By creating a human comedy around herself and composing opera music, Camille Maupin repeats a unique obsession: constructing a fictive world. Her imagination is not a way to escape reality but to create a new one: 'inventing' is her *idée fixe*. Camille Maupin uses her house as a theatre where all the characters interact; the *domaine des Touches* is the materialisation of the entrapment of the characters in Camille's game. This section of the chapter aims to show that the obsession of Camille Maupin can be seen as a re-enactment of Balzac's writing process. With music, Camille's comedy becomes a performance of the text itself; as if the text were performing its own construction.

To do so, Balzac emphasises from the beginning the ambiguities of Camille Maupin: she is both a musician and a writer, but she is also both a character and a dramatist (if we consider that she stages her own comedy), and above all she is

[2] I will use the name Camille Maupin throughout this chapter to remain consistent and to highlight her role as a figure of the author, since it is her pen name.

androgynous.[3] These characteristics make her an in-between character who bridges reality and fiction. Her unstable status is even highlighted in some of the characters' comments, pointing out her monstrous nature, as the first sub-section will show. To some extent, the ambivalence of her physical characteristics and the human comedy occurring around her could be seen as the ambivalence of the 'social body' Balzac wanted to represent.

Camille Maupin's lifestyle establishes her as a marginal character in Balzac's *Comédie humaine*. After having lived a Parisian life, she retreats into her house in Brittany where she lives (in appearances) a secluded life; she invites friends to her house but rarely goes to visit others. This type of marginalisation could be seen as a sign of mental disorder in the nineteenth century.[4]

A mad writer and musician: the case of Hersilie Rouy

The lifestyle of Camille Maupin recalls that of the (mad)woman Hersilie Rouy. Hersilie Rouy (1814-1881) was an independent pianist, not of great reputation but talented enough to give lessons and concerts in France. In her memoirs, she explains how she was falsely committed to an asylum by her brother who wanted to be the only one to receive the inheritance, and who condemned her independent and unmarried life as signs of madness. [5] From 1854 to 1868, she was confined in different asylums: Charenton, la Salpêtrière, Orléans, among others. She recounts how she wrote to authorities and politicians to denounce the conditions of confinement. She fought for her freedom and was released in 1868. If it was easy for her brother to send her to the asylum, this is because her way of life was perceived as abnormal; a single independent woman was seen as suspicious. The first part of Rouy's memoirs displays lucidity and makes the reader think that she was wrongly committed; she even describes the apparition of a man who forced her to go to the

[3] In *Illusions perdues*, she is described an 'hermaphrodite': 'Coralie joua dans la pièce de Camille Maupin et contribua beaucoup à ce succès de l'illustre hermaphrodite littéraire', *Illusions perdues,* ed. by Antoine Adam (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 1961), p. 461.

[4] Living alone or being single was perceived as deviant behaviour for women and was considered as a cause of madness, as Claude Lachaise notes 'L'état de célibat influe tellement, chez la femme, sur le développement des altérations complètes de l'organe de la pensée, que dans le rapport fait au conseil général des hospices civils de Paris, pour l'année 1822, on voit que sur mille sept cent vingt-six femmes aliénées, retenues au premier janvier 1822, à l'hospice de la Salpêtrière, trois cent quatre-vingt-dix-sept seulement étaient mariées, tandis que douze cent soixante et seize se trouvaient dans l'état de non-mariage', in *Hygiène physiologique de la femme, considérée dans son système physique et moral* (Paris: Méquignon Marvie, 1825), p. 192.

[5] Hersilie Rouy, *Mémoires d'une aliénée* (Paris: Paul Ollendorff, 1883).

asylum in terms of an 'enlèvement'. She also claims that the fact that she lives on her own does not mean she is sequestrating herself:

> M. Kinkelin savait de moi ce qu'on lui avait raconté de ma prétendue séquestration ; et moi, malgré la visite du commissaire de police, venant peu de jours auparavant constater mon décès, je n'avais pas supposé un instant que, sortant toute la journée, on pût me dire enfermée et m'enlever sous ce prétexte.[6]

This quotation highlights the importance of comments from neighbours and families in the decision to commit a woman to an asylum. Her passion for music is heavily present in her writings and, in a century where any excessive behaviour was pathologised, was seen as monomania. For example, she says that she used to play the piano for hours and could lose all notion of time: 'j'aurais passé ma nuit entière au piano si, sortant de son lit à minuit, il [son père] n'était venu régulièrement m'avertir qu'il était temps de laisser dormir les voisins et de dormir moi-même'.[7] When she arrives at the asylum, she is in fact first diagnosed as a 'religious monomaniac'[8] and later as 'ambitious monomaniac'.[9] Playing the piano for the other inmates confirms her monomania to the psychiatrists. Although she includes letters and testimonies in her memoirs, the second half presents some inconsistencies that may lead readers to question her sanity, at least after she has been committed; for example, she signed some letters as the sister of Henri V. With all their mysteries, we could see Rouy's memoirs as a literary work. In other words, she was a musician and a writer who has been diagnosed as monomaniac because of her lifestyle. Rouy's life is the model on which I would like to ground Camille Maupin's monomania. Although Balzac does not specifically designate her character as such, he uses obsessive patterns that were considered at the time as monomaniacal. Camille's closed musical practice (within the house), her entrapment of others and her religious tendencies are manifestations of

[6] Hersilie Rouy, p. 53.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 5.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 57.
[9] In his notes on 'monomanie-homicide', Esquirol explains the different names for monomania : 'Les espèces de monomanie prennent leur nom de l'objet du délire. Ainsi nous disons, monomanie hypocondriaque, lorsque le délire a pour objet la santé du malade ; monomanie religieuse lorsque le délire roule sur des sujets religieux…', in *Note sur la monomanie homicide* (Baillère: Paris, 1827), p. 5. The *Dictionnaire des dictionnaires de médecine français et étrangers* replicates Esquirol's typology, and specifies: 'la monomanie présente de nombreuses variétés; elle peut rouler sur des idées agréables, expansives, et les aliénés se croire dieux, inspirés, rois empereurs, savants distingués, possesseurs d'immenses trésors, etc. (monomanie ambitieuse)' François Antoine H. (Bruxelles: Société encyclographique des sciences médicales, 1842), I, p. 142.

her monomania. Moreover, her obsession with controlling the persons around her, with playing music and creating a melodrama (a drama marked by music) is a *mise en abyme* of Balzac's writing process. The music of Camille Maupin is at the centre of the dramatic performance, and links her comedy to Balzac's human comedy.

1. The monstrous Camille Maupin

Although she is not the heroine of the novel, Camille Maupin is certainly the central character; her abnormalities single her out within the text. Unlike that of the Romantic figures presented in the second chapter, her androgyny is not poetical and abstract, but is anchored in the reality of social conventions. She is rejected by the society of Brittany who sees in her a monster, a deranged mind. It is through this ambivalent nature that Balzac presents an ambiguous narrative structure,[10] displaying at the same time the brushstrokes of his painting of society.[11]

1.1 An androgynous character

Camille Maupin is presented as a character full of contradictions. For some of the characters in the novel, her androgyny is monstrous, while for others it is a sign of genius. Camille is orphaned at an early age and is raised by an elderly uncle who does not watch closely over her. Indeed, the narrator mentions several times that Camille's education contributed to her androgyny: 'Félicité s'éleva toute seule, en garçon'.[12] Camille's behaviour is perceived as masculine; she smokes and dresses like a man, but she also has some masculine physical characteristics. For example, the narrator ironically comments on her light moustache: 'Il est nécessaire de dire que le dessous du nez est légèrement estompé par un duvet plein de grâce. La nature aurait fait une faute si elle n'avait jeté là cette suave fumée'.[13] Here, irony is used to question the role of nature in her androgyny. The description of Camille Maupin's duality continues; she has feminine hands (playing the piano is also a feminine characteristic) but a masculine walk. Moreover, she is presented as a strong woman whose dark hair

[10] Balzac alternates the third-person narrator with discourse and letters.
[11] In the *Avant propos de la Comédie humaine*, Balzac refers several times to his painting of society, and compares the writer with the painter.
[12] *Béatrix*, p. 100.
[13] *Ibid.,* p. 108.

and eyes associate her with an animal: 'Chez Camille, l'animal est si complet […]'.[14] The two names for Camille Maupin are alternated all the way through the twenty pages of description; 'Camille' appears to be used when it is question of her strength, and 'Félicité' when her femininity is displayed. Balzac plays with her two facets to highlight her instability as a character. Throughout the text, the narrator plays with the two names, even within the same scene, for example when Camille is improvising on the piano:

> Félicité jouait pour elle seule, elle s'entretenait avec elle-même. […] Rien de plus mystérieusement mélancolique que l'improvisation de Camille: vous eussiez dit d'une âme criant quelque *De profundis* à Dieu du fond de la tombe. […] Camille avait étendu, varié, modifié l'introduction à la cavatine de *Grâce pour toi, grâce pour moi*, qui est presque tout le quatrième acte de *Robert-le-Diable*. Elle chanta tout à coup ce morceau d'une manière déchirante et s'interrompit. Calyste entra et vit la raison de cette interruption. La pauvre Camille Maupin ! la belle Félicité lui montra sans coquetterie un visage baigné de larmes […][15]

This passage is framed by the name Félicité. When she starts and finishes playing she is Félicité, but the act of improvisation – which is a form of composing music – is played by Camille, as if the latter were the artistic, creative side of the character. Camille corresponds to the painful act of creation whereas Félicité is the natural, feminine side, as shown by the last opposition ('La pauvre Camille! La belle Félicité').[16]

Camille is a double character whose two facets are conflicting forces. Calyste's father says : 'Elle ne peut pas être à la fois des Touches et Maupin'; while his wife answers: 'Elle se nomme Maupin au théâtre'.[17] Camille Maupin is a character she has created for herself; her double identity corresponds to a conflict between fiction and reality. The narrator continues the theatrical imagery by affirming:

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[14] *Ibid.,* p. 110.
[15] *Ibid*., p. 127.
[16] The duality between strength and weakness is already present in the opera of Meyerbeer mentioned in the quotation. The passage on which Camille improvises is the one where Isabelle begs Robert to spare her. Isabelle's singing alternates between ascendent and descendent melodies, piano and forte nuances, and finishes on an almost hysterical impression with the changes of octaves and the fermatas allowing the singer to perform tremolos (this is particularly clear in the interpretation of Beverly Sills).
[17] *Béatrix*, p. 92.

‘Camille Maupin fut le masque sous lequel se cacha pendant longtemps une charmante fille […]’.[18] Theatrical metaphors and music are ways for Balzac to insist on the duality of Camille Maupin. However, despite the reference to the mask and the fact that she presents masculine physical features as well as cross-dressing, her androgyny does not seem to denote a perpetual performance or to present her as an actress, as is the case in *Wilhelm Meister* for example. Her androgyny is linked, rather, to her inadequacy in the bourgeois world, due to her intellectual skills.

This instability of the character is qualified by Calyste’s family (who represent conventional society) as monstrous. The vicar is the one who most clearly presents her as an abnormality within society: ‘cet être amphibie qui n’est ni homme ni femme’.[19] She is, for him, a ‘sorcière’, a ‘monstrueuse créature, qui tenait de la sirène et de l’athée’.[20] Her musical abilities are perceived as a danger, and associate her with a mermaid attracting innocent men. The vicar even blames her artistic activities:

> une gaupe, une gourgandine, s’écria le curé, une femme de mœurs équivoques, occupée de théâtre, hantant les comédiens et les comédiennes, mangeant sa fortune avec des folliculaires, des peintres, des musiciens, la société du diable, enfin ![21]

Camille is first presented to the reader through the negative comments of neighbours, placing her as an outsider from the beginning. Then, the narrator recognises that she is unconventional, and presents her as dysfunctional: ‘Il est nécessaire de donner ces détails pour justifier les anomalies qui distinguent Camille Maupin’.[22] Balzac anchors Camille’s androgyny in the conventions of the social body: in the same way that androgyny is perceived as a physical oddity, Camille Maupin is an oddity of the social body. The physical description of Camille Maupin is essential for the establishment of a contrast with the social body and the human comedy taking place, as we shall see. She appears as a still, almost motionless character. In fact, the physical description presents her as a painting. The narrator decomposes her body, in the same way that a painting could be analysed. All the parts of her face are dissected, particularly her eyes, revealing the contradictions of her character: ‘Dans un moment de passion,

[18] *Ibid.,*p. 98.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 82.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 84, p. 97.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 81.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 104.

l'oeil de Camille Maupin est sublime […] mais au repos, il est terne, la torpeur de la méditation lui prête souvent l'apparence de la niaiserie […]'.[23] If Camille is still like a painting, this does not mean that she is passive. On the contrary, it is because she analyses people and situations, in order to create her own drama, staging the other characters: 'Aussi Mlle des Touches écoute-t-elle plus qu'elle ne parle. Elle effraie par son silence et par ce regard profond d'une profonde fixité'.[24] The final chiasmus insists on the mystery and stillness of her look, in the way that the gaze of a painted character looking at the viewer can seem indefinite. In fact, Balzac presents her as an image to insist on her physically distinctive feature, her androgyny and her peculiar place in the narration.

As a figure of a painting, she recalls another Balzacian androgynous musician: Zambinella. Appearing in *Sarrasine,* the androgynous singer is also connected to the story of *Béatrix* through the character of Béatrix herself. Introduced as Mme de Rochefide, Béatrix is the friend of the narrator in *Sarrasine*; she is scared of the old Zambinella and appears as a frivolous and capricious woman. La Zambinella is a castrato perceived by the sculptor Sarrasine as a beautiful woman. It is interesting to note that both androgynes, Zambinella and Camille, are musicians; it is as if music reunited the masculine and the feminine sides. Sarrasine exclaims about la Zambinella: 'C'était plus qu'une femme, c'était un chef-d'oeuvre'.[25] This could just as easily be applied to Camille Maupin. By presenting them as paintings, Balzac exposes not subsidiary but superlative women. They are characters of illusion and reality. Moreover, *Sarrasine* develops the thematic of artistic representation. Sarrasine creates a sculpture of Zambinella that was reproduced into a marble statue and copied into a painting that influenced a painting by Girodet. These series of imbrications point out the importance of 'representation of representation' in art, just as we have in *Béatrix*. Camille's comedy can be seen as a representation of Balzac's human comedy. The French term *représentation* does not simply mean 'copy' but carries the notion of performance, and yet the presence of music in *Béatrix* reinforces the 'representational performance' of Camille's comedy. As he does for la Zambinella, Balzac presents Camille at the same time as a creature and a creation (the narrator even remarks that

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 107.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 110.
[25] Balzac, *Sarrasine* (Paris: GF-Flammarion, 1989), p. 40.

Camille would be an 'admirable statue de la Bretagne')[26]. However, by setting a drama Camille is also a creator. This ambivalence between creator and creation expressed by androgyny is in the lineage of Goethe's Mignon. In Wilhelm Meister's eyes, the androgynous Mignon is both the creator of the *Marmorbilder* and a marble statue herself; therefore, androgyny is more an artistic and creative ambivalence than one purely about gender.

The fluctuation between the creative process and the creation would not be possible without music. Music reinforces the illusion around Zambinella; and in the same way it makes her a beautiful woman for Sarrasine. It is an indication of illusion and performance around the life of Camille Maupin, although she is not the actress, as explained earlier. Furthermore, Camille is not the creation when she plays music but rather creates a play around her. Let us recall that Sarrasine first sees Zambinella on stage and observes her as an aesthetic object, as a painter would do; but it is her singing that provokes his passion: 'Quand la Zambinella chanta, ce fut un délire. L'artiste eut froid; puis il sentit un foyer qui pétilla soudain dans les profondeurs de son être intime, de ce que nous nommons le coeur, faute de mot!'[27] To the contrary, Camille is the illusionary performer who uses music to create drama. Here stands the distinction between the singer Zambinella and the composer Camille. The picturial presentations of Zambinella and Camille highlight their physical (visual) distinction; they are artistic androgynes but music marks their difference. Zambinella remains a creation, a painting, whereas Camille re-composes her own musical tableau.

1.2 The monomania of Camille Maupin

Camille Maupin does not only stand apart from the 'social body' because of her androgynous appearance, but also because of her lifestyle. She lives mostly in isolation in her house *le domaine des Touches* and regularly retreats from social situations, to 'meditate with herself'.[28] Thus, when she decided to become a musician when she was younger, she confined herself: 'elle rentra dans sa profonde retraite et se mit à étudier avec obstination sous la direction du meilleur maitre de la ville. Elle était riche, elle fit venir Steibelt pour se perfectionner, au grand étonnement de la ville

[26] *Béatrix*, p. 111.
[27] *Sarrasine*, p. 40.
[28] 'Félicité jouait pour elle seule, elle s'entretenait avec elle-même.', *Béatrix*, p. 127.

[...]. Elle est, depuis, devenue musicienne consommée'.[29] Like Hersilie Rouy, who could play the piano for hours, Camille practises in an obsessive way; she consumes music just as music consumes her. She is a solitary character, and even when she goes outside to walk on beach rocks with her friends she prefers to step aside:

> Il est inutile d'expliquer pourquoi Camille s'était sauvée en avant. Comme une bête sauvage blessée, elle aimait la solitude; elle se perdait dans les grottes, reparaissait sur les pics, chassait les crabes de leurs trous ou surprenait en flagrant délit leurs mœurs originales.[30]

Her solitude is presented as that of an animal or a hermit, emphasising the fact that she is a marginal creature. Her house is a place of marginalisation and artistic creation. The description of her house demonstrates the importance of artistic decoration, almost like a theatre stage. The interior is artificially constructed so as to turn the house into an artistic space. Thus, Balzac uses numerous artistic and musical metaphors to describe it, such as 'Les tons grisâtres de cette maison s'harmonient admirablement avec le paysage qu'elle domine', or highlighting 'les harmonies sauvages' of the landscape of Brittany.[31] Camille decorates her house with art to make it a place of creation: 'Elle voulut avoir dans cette sombre et mélancolique habitation, devant ce sombre et mélancolique paysage, les créations les plus fantasques de l'art'.[32]

Her house is also a musical place; she has two pianos, a grand piano and 'un petit piano droit qui lui venait d'Angleterre rapporté par Conti et placé dans son salon d'en haut'.[33] This quotation emphasises the notion of the domestic sphere; pianos were mainly manufactured in England at the time, and upright pianos were especially designed for domestic practice. The presence of both upright and grand pianos in Camille's house supports the claim of the construction of a closed (domestic) place and at the same time the will to create an open artistic space. Music is therefore central to the domestic theatre created by Camille, but hints at the same time at an open artistic creation.

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[29] *Ibid.*, p. 101.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 270.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 124.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 121.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 127.

In addition to living an isolated life, Camille Maupin displays other characteristics that can be seen as monomaniacal. Just like Emma Bovary (as the next section will show), Camille is a voracious reader:

> Ce cerveau bourré de connaissances ni digérées ni classées, dominait ce cœur d'enfant. Cette dépravation de l'intelligence, sans action sur la chasteté du corps, eût étonné des philosophes ou des observateurs, si quelqu'un à Nantes eût pu soupçonner la valeur de Mlle des Touches.[34]

Intellectual over-stimulation was perceived as a cause of monomania, as Georget states: 'Les causes qui tendent à déranger l'organisation du cerveau par l'exercice même de ses fonctions, sont les plus fréquentes, on pourrait presque dire les seules susceptibles de produire l'aliénation mentale'.[35] Camille's intellectual activity even generates some health problems. She writes three archaeological works for her uncle, who thinks he has written them himself, but this intellectual production exhausts her, causing her to become ill. Yet mental and physical states are closely linked here: 'De si grands travaux, en désaccord avec les développements de la jeune fille, eurent leur effet: Félicité tomba malade, son sang s'était échauffé, la poitrine paraissait menacée d'inflammation'.[36] In line with contemporary medical discourse, Balzac shows that considerable intellectual activity can be dangerous for young women. It is not simply her readings, writings and artistic practice that affect her mentally, but also her liking for passionate stories:

> Elle souffrait et analysait sa souffrance, comme Cuvier, Dupuytren expliquaient à leurs amis la marche fatale de leur maladie et le progrès que faisait en eux la mort. Camille Maupin se connaissait en passion aussi bien que ces deux savants se connaissaient en anatomie.[37]

By drawing a parallel between Camille's mania for passion and the medical discourse both of the anatomist Georges Cuvier (1769-1832) and of the surgeon Guillaume

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[34] *Ibid.*, p. 100.
[35] Georget, p. 160. At the end of the eighteenth century, Clément Tissot already highlighted the notion that reading was dangerous for women in *De l'influence des passions de l'âme dans les maladies* (Paris: Amand-Koenig, 1798).
[36] *Béatrix*, p. 101.
[37] *Ibid.*, p. 131.

Dupuytren (1777-1835), Balzac pathologises Camille's behaviour. Through her comparison to doctors, Camille also becomes a sort of proto-psychiatrist, analysing her own suffering; she appears as a doctor of the mind as well as a patient. More than an analogy between artistic endeavours and the work of doctors, a parallel is drawn here between alienism and art.

Camille's monomania is not directed at a personal, passionate love but at dramatic love stories in a more general way. Thus, she provokes situations that generate such passions. And yet, Georget specifies that passion can be an object of monomania:

> Les idées qui forment le caractère du délire monomaniaque, sont relatives à l'action vive d'une cause mentale, ou plus souvent tiennent au caractère même de l'individu […], l'exaltation de la passion amoureuse, telles sont les variétés qui tiennent à un dérangement dans les idées ordinaires de l'homme.[38]

Camille's monomania is also perceptible through her practice of music, which is an intermediate in her creation of passions. As we have seen earlier, music reveals her double personality, representing the tension between fiction (the dramatic passions) and reality. The passages where she plays the piano always show an almost schizophrenic nature, as is clear in this passage:

> Camille se mit négligemment au piano, comme une femme sûre de son amie et de l'adorateur qu'elle s'attribuait, en leur tournant le dos et les laissant presque seuls. Elle improvisa des variations sur quelques thèmes choisis à son insu par son esprit, car ils furent d'une mélancolie excessive. La marquise [Béatrix] paraissait écouter, mais elle observait Calyste, qui, trop jeune et trop naïf pour jouer le rôle que lui donnait Camille, était en extase devant sa véritable idole. Après une heure, pendant laquelle Mlle des Touches se laissa naturellement aller à sa jalousie, Béatrix se retira chez elle.[39]

This scene not only reveals that Camille plays music to gather her friends and create a passion between them, but also shows her double nature. She is both a character and a stage director. She turns her back on them to allow them to initiate a love story,

[38] Georget, p. 109-10.
[39] *Béatrix*, p. 213.

moving aside from the situation to become passive and leave the 'actors' to carry out their performance. This double role is indicated in the way music is chosen; it is not her but 'her mind' that chooses melancholic variations. Once again, Camille is improvising, therefore composing, at the same time that she is composing a tableau vivant of her friends. Finally, music seems to be the only 'place' where Camille reveals her feelings; she does not take part in the human comedy, but shows emotions (to herself) through music. Thus, the final litotes ('se laissa naturellement aller à sa jalousie') suggests that playing music is a way for Camille to express her jealousy. Although the quality of the music is not detailed, the fact that she starts playing distractedly could mean that she is not playing seriously or that what she plays is not high-quality music. Esquirol presented the case of a pianist who played at the asylum in an unusual way, which, according to him, denoted her monomania:

> Une dame qui avait été passionnée pour la musique, commençait par jouer et chanter des airs qui lui étaient familiers; mais quelques instants après, le chant cessait et la malade continuait à toucher quelques notes sur le piano, répétées sur le ton le plus monotone et le plus fatigant pendant plusieurs heures de suite, à moins que l'on n'eût le soin de la distraire et de lui faire quitter l'instrument.[40]

Esquirol does not give any precise detail about the music she plays but the fact that she does not play animated, lively music is for him a sign of monomania. Similarly, we could argue that Camille's flippancy and the melancholic themes played for an hour could have been perceived, by physicians like Esquirol, as monotonous and therefore monomaniac.

Furthermore, Camille suffers from a schizophrenic nature that is not shown externally but appears when she plays music or when she mentally talks to herself: 'Fume ton houka, ma pauvre Camille, tu n'as pas même la ressource de faire une poésie de ton malheur […]'.[41] This inner dialog seems to be a conversation between Félicité and Camille, where Félicité blames Camille for not creating. Moreover, Camille's attraction to religion – she is often described as meditating, particularly through music, as when she improvises on *Robert-le-diable* like a 'soul singing *de profundis* to God', not to mention the fact that she ends up in a convent – can be

[40] Esquirol, I, p. 583-84.
[41] *Béatrix*, p. 222.

perceived as an *idée fixe*, just as Hersilie Rouy was first diagnosed as a religious monomaniac.

Without spelling it out, Balzac stages a monomaniac character. Camille's unusual habits fit the criteria of the monomaniac as it was presented by the medical discourse of the time. Although it involves several elements, such as music, passions and confinement, Camille's monomania consists of staging a dramatic passion.

2. Camille's comedy

Music is a vehicle of Camille's monomania that is associated with closed spaces. First, it reveals Camille's inner conflict and tendency to meditate; it is also what allows her to gather the characters of her comedy. In both cases, the music played by Camille always takes place within her house.

2.1 *Le domaine des Touches* as a place of play

Camille's house occupies a particular position in the narration. I have already mentioned that it is a place of creation, but this creation also carries the idea of a play. It is interesting to note that Balzac draws a parallel between Camille's play and society. Once again, Calyste's family plays the role of conventional society, representing the 'norm' with its prejudices. Calyste's family often plays a card game called 'la mouche'. This game clusters Calyste's family together, giving them the possibility to discuss and slander the neighbourhood, particularly concerning Camille: 'Ce coup, gagné sans qu'on jouât, atterra Mlle de Pen-Hoël, qui cessa de s'occuper de Calyste et de Mlle des Touches'.[42] The mention of this game establishes an opposition between Calyste's family and Camille. It also carries the idea of a social game, or of a human comedy. Calyste's family plays a human comedy just as Camille tries to create a human comedy based on passion in her house. The rhyme between 'touches' and 'mouche' is probably the main clue as to the similarities between the two 'games': 'Evidemment son cher enfant s'ennuyait, le corps était dans cette salle où jadis il se serait amusé des plaisanteries de la mouche, mais l'esprit se promenait aux Touches'.[43] Playing music in Les Touches is also a way for Camille to imagine the

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 79.
[43] *Ibid.*, p. 212.

rules of her game or her staging, and, like Calyste's family, she speculates on the lives of others. For example, she plays a sonata by Beethoven when Claude Vignon (a literary critic) asks her about the nature of the situation between Béatrix and her lover, the musician Conti.

More than a stage where the game is performed, the house is a closed space. It is described several times as a Charterhouse. Before starting the description of the house, the narrator highlights: 'Voici maintenant la Chartreuse de Camille'.[44] This shows the spiritual tendency of Camille, her solitude, and can be linked to her monomania. She controls the house and creates a social microcosm. She needs a closed space to create. The fact that Camille ends up in a convent shows that her obsession is of a spiritual nature. Although she is not present in the third part of the novel (because she has retreated to a convent), Camille's influence is still perceptible. Besides, her retreat does not necessarily correspond to failure, but inevitably means that she chooses silence over music. Perhaps she repeats her obsession of creating a (silent) drama in the convent in opposition to the love (and musical) drama she creates with Calyste and Béatrix. When she was living in Paris, Camille was already playing with social conventions and performing a role. To sum up, in Paris, in *le domaine des Touches* and perhaps also in the convent, Camille repeats a social comedy.

Another association of *le domaine des Touches* that reveals the dominant role of Camille is that of the house of Bluebeard. From her convent, Camille warns Sabine (Calyste's wife) not to go to *les Touches* – although Camille gave the house in inheritance to the married couple – fearing that it would remind Calyste of his love for Béatrix: 'Enfant! Les Touches sont pour toi le cabinet de Barbe-Bleue, car il n'y a rien de plus dangereux que de réveiller une passion qui dort'.[45] In Perrault's tale, Barbe-Bleue is a rich man who is rejected by the people of his village because of his appearance, specifically his blue beard, which makes him unconventional and repulsive. Camille is also marginalised by society because of her appearance and lifestyle. Besides, just as Bluebeard was married several times, Camille has several lovers. In Perrault's tale, Bluebeard's castle is presented as being finely decorated, another parallel that might be drawn with *le domaine des Touches*. By forbidding his wives to open a secret room, Bluebeard can be seen as a gaoler; he imprisons his wives, wanting to control and test them. In a way, we could see the test of the

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 117.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 336.

mysterious room as a game he is playing, a play he is setting up. In that sense, Camille Maupin is Bluebeard and her house is Bluebeard's castle. Camille imprisons men and women, tells them what to do and what not to do and plays with them to see how far they will obey her. In a letter to her mother, Sabine says: 'Enfin, joignez aux raisons de Mme Barbe-Bleue le désir qui mord toutes les femmes de savoir si leur pouvoir est précaire ou solide'.[46] Here, Sabine is *Madame Barbe-Bleue* and consequently Camille is *Monsieur Barbe-Bleue*. Even from a distance, from her convent, Camille manages to continue the dramatic manipulation. By forbidding Sabine from going to her Bluebeard castle, Camille knows she will increase her desire to go there and provoke a dramatic situation. *Le domaine des Touches* is therefore a place subtly thought to keep the characters closed in this house and create a drama.

2.2 A musical comedy

Having explained the stage and decor, I can now proceed to develop the principle of Camille's comedy and the role of music. It is indeed through music that Camille positions herself as a stage director. Camille reproduces in her house what she created on paper. She has written two volumes of plays, novels and composed two operas (that she gave to Conti). Writing plays and composing operas seem to be the first step in Camille's creation. She has always seen the world 'comme il est', meaning, for Balzac, as a comedy: 'Mlle des Touches entourée de tant d'intérêts, put donc étudier les différentes comédies que la passion, l'avarice, l'ambition font jouer à tous les hommes, même les plus élevés'.[47] Music intervenes to develop interactions and emotions between the characters. For example, when Camille accompanies Conti on the piano, playing the opera *Romeo et Juliette* by Zingarelli, Béatrix notices Calyste crying. Music provokes and dissimulates emotions between all the characters:

> Quand le duo fut terminé, chacun était en proie à des sensations qui ne s'expriment point par de vulgaires applaudissements […] Non seulement la Musique s'était dressée devant Calyste, l'avait touché de sa baguette divine, l'avait lancé dans la création et lui en avait dépouillé les voiles, mais encore il était abasourdi du génie de Conti.[48]

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 339.
[47] *Ibid.*, p. 112.
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 182.

Noticing the reaction of Calyste, Béatrix feels drawn towards him: Camille's staging is a work. The description of the characters, listeners and interpreters in this musical performance even takes the form of stage directions. Each character has a specific place on the 'stage': 'Calyste, assis dans le fauteuil où Félicité lui avait raconté l'histoire de la marquise, écoutait religieusement. Béatrix et Vignon étaient chacun d'un côté du piano'.[49] Camille even gives real orders to her actors, as shown by the authoritative voice of the simple future. The piano is also often the object at the centre of the stage; when Camille gives directions to Calyste on how to seduce Béatrix, she uses the piano as a central object of the scene: 'Toutes les fois que vous verrez un livre de musique ouvert sur le piano, vous me demanderez à rester'.[50] Similarly, Calyste makes the piano resonate as a sign of happiness when he thinks that Béatrix loves him. The vocabulary of theatre is omnipresent in the description of the interactions between the characters within Camille's house. The narrator refers to the 'scenes' between Camille and Béatrix when they have a discussion about love and Calyste, and the place of the characters in the narration is referred as 'roles'. For example, Calyste is 'trop jeune et trop naïf pour jouer le rôle que lui donnait Camille'.[51] The narrator even admits that the narration is Camille's comedy: 'Camille sortit et alla jouer l'atroce comédie de son faux bonheur'.[52]

Finally, it is visible that the characters are creations of Camille because they are often presented as 'declensions' of her. Thus, Calyste seems to be as androgynous as Camille and is often presented as an innocent young woman. We might also note a similarity between their names, which start with the same syllables. Béatrix is another facet of Camille, and the blond Béatrix and the dark-haired Camille also have similar names. 'Félicité' means bliss, happiness, and Béatrix can be associated with 'béatitude', which is a religious bliss. Here again there is a connection with religion, and yet we have seen that Camille's monomania includes religion. Moreover, Calyste's mother and Camille are often paralleled. Camille is presented as Calyste's intellectual mentor, teaching him music and giving him books to read. At the end of the novel, Calyste's mother intervenes to separate Béatrix from Calyste, and acts symmetrically from Camille who had set them up.

[49] *Ibid.*
[50] *Ibid.*, p. 216.
[51] *Ibid.*, p. 214.
[52] *Ibid.*, p. 223.

Maternity is incidentally a recurrent theme in the novel. Camille claims several times that she is not made to have children, and yet treats Calyste as her spiritual child. The numerous texts she writes and the music she composes show that she prefers to engender art rather than engender *tout court*. Therefore, through the references to maternity, and with the final role of Calyste's mother in the dramatic comedy, Balzac rethinks artistic creation by presenting it through creative maternity rather than paternity.[53] Lastly, Camille's madness seems to be reflected in some of the characters. In love with Béatrix, Calyste is also a monomaniac, who has 'un désir unique' to be with Béatrix. Sabine also becomes mad when she becomes aware of Calyste and Béatrix's affair: 'La crise qu'elle avait annoncée comme prétexte eut lieu. Ses cheveux devinrent dans sa tête autant d'aiguilles rougies au feu des névroses. Son sang bouillonnant lui parut à la fois se mêler à ses nerfs et vouloir sortir par ses pores !'[54] This physical crisis recalls that of Camille whose blood has also 'warmed up'. Béatrix does not escape madness either. At the end of the novel, she and Calyste go to the theatre to listen to Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*. When the opera finishes, Calyste does not go outside with Béatrix, fearing that he will be seen by his wife. Béatrix is therefore left on her own in the middle of the crowd waiting for a carriage; this situation sparks comments from the crowd since it was not common for a woman to wait alone. Béatrix is simmering with resentment and is perceived as an outsider by the public. Her reaction can be paralleled with the opera that is played. Donizetti's opera is based on Walter Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor*, where the heroine Lucy is in love with Edgar but marries another man; when Edgar blames her for it she becomes mad, kills her husband and dies of despair. Edgar kills himself when he learns about her death. As we shall see in this chapter, this opera makes recurrent reference to mad women musicians in literature. Being also a madwoman, Béatrix appears as a variation of Camille. With Camille as the referential character, the other characters seem to be interchangeable in her comedy.

We have seen that Camille Maupin, like Hersilie Rouy, is a monomaniac because of her marginalisation. Balzac presents this marginalisation in a positive light; she is an artist, even a genius. Her rejection from the social body makes her a

[53] 'Balzac s'accorde donc, sinon s'arroge, les pouvoirs de la féminité en ce qu'elle a de plus spécifique: la maternité créatrice'. Francoise van Rossum-Guyon, 'Portrait d'auteur en jeune femme. Balzac-Camille Maupin, George Sand, Hélène Cixous', in *Du féminin,* ed. by Mireille Calle-Gruber (Sainte-Foy, Québec: Le Griffon d'argile, 1992), pp. 167-184 (p. 183).
[54] *Béatrix*, p. 367.

'physical' aberration. Her androgyny represents the union of the monstrous and the genius and belongs to the tradition of the androgyne (between creator and creation) as I have presented in Chapter 1 with *Wilhelm Meister*. Balzac presents creation as a maternal process without giving it a full status since the creation is carried out by an androgyne. In fact, the androgynous Camille Maupin is a double of the Balzacian creator reflecting on the figure of the author and the writing process. If anything, Camille Maupin embodies the creative process. Because Camille is both a writer and a musician, the focus on her character is doubly that of artistic creation. The love story between Béatrix and Calyste is presented as a creation of Camille Maupin. Balzac, like a magician revealing his tricks while performing the very act, reveals the threads of his writing. Music helps him to stretch his artistry and the creative process beyond the act of writing and to anchor creativity within a social context.

As a conclusive word, it might be remarked that the presentation of Camille's monomania as an obsession that intertwines drama and music around her – what I have called her human musical comedy – in a certain sense highlights the preponderant role played by women, music and the body in Balzac's own human comedy. The creation of a social comedy by Camille is an obsession for her: unlike many women characters, she is not presented as an actress but as a monomaniacal creator figure. Her comedy would not be possible without music helping to create passions; implicitly, music is therefore one of the threads Balzac is trying to show in his own human comedy. Finally, music is what makes the social comedy of Camille a real performance, framing the settings and the stage. However, Camille's creative agency needs to be moderated; she is not entirely recognised as a genius, as demonstrated by the fact that the operas published by her lover and her retreat into silence. Rather, she remains a creative character somewhere between a genius and a monstrous figure.

The unmusical obsession of Emma Bovary

Emma Bovary is not a woman musician. She 'touches' the piano,[1] sings, but above all listens to music: she is a listener rather than a musician. The orchestra at the Vaubyessard ball, the barrel organ, the sounds of nature, the ringing bells, the Opera, the songs of the blind man[2] are among the examples that create an acoustic veil around the character of Emma Bovary. Flaubert does not offer precise details about the type of music or sounds exposed (we do not know for examples what Emma Bovary plays on the piano); music remains vague and even oneiric, and yet it is pervasive. The quality of the music played is often poor, it is rather dissonant: the strings of the violin 'grind' at Emma's wedding and she dances on the 'son furieux des trombones' at the masked ball. [3]

Describing music is also a means for Flaubert to play with music itself; what could be seen as discrediting music is in fact a revaluation of it. For example the analogies, assonances and alliterations used to describe the tuning of the instruments at the opera show that music is a source of narrative play: 'ce fut d'abord un long charivari de basses ronflant, de violons grinçant, de pistons trompettant, de flûtes et de flageolets qui piaulaient'.[4] Music is used to establish an image of the mental state of Madame Bovary: it is disharmonic. It is clearly associated with her constant dissatisfaction, her emotions and physical condition. Her physical condition is indeed at stake with her *tedium vitae.* As I mentioned in the chapter introduction, during the nineteenth century, most of the intellectual or emotional afflictions were seen as being rooted in the body. Yet, the omnipresence of medical discourse in Flaubert's novel, through Charles Bovary and the pharmacist Homais, reinforces the significance of the

[1] The French verb 'toucher' was commonly used in the nineteenth century to mean 'to play the piano'. Already in the eighteenth century, Couperin wrote a method entitled *L'Art de toucher le clavecin*, 1716.
[2] Damien Dauge specifies that the musical reference contributes to the realism of the text since 'Chaque forme musicale est reliée à un milieu social spécifique dans le roman', in 'Mélodies et sentiments: l'empoisonnement musical d'Emma Bovary', *Revue Flaubert*, 8 (2008) <http://flaubert.univ-rouen.fr/revue/article.php?id=78> [accessed 10 May 2013].
[3] Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary,* ed. by Thierry Laget (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), p. 380.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 301. We could draw a parallel between the 'charivari' of the orchestra and the repetition of the name 'Charbovari' in the first chapter, bridging dissonant music to the doctor; everything seems to be dysfunctional, and Charles is himself a dissonant being.

afflicted body as one of the *maux du siècle.*[5] I would argue that music is an integral part of Emma's 'maladie nerveuse'.[6] Although Flaubert uses the general term of 'maladie nerveuse' to designate the madness caused by physical conditions (see introduction), we can detect some monomaniac tendencies.[7] Emma Bovary is obsessed with an ideal of life based on her Romantic literary readings. Her obsession manifests itself through recurrent dissatisfaction, intellectual activity (daydreaming and thinking), and physical crises. Esquirol gives an example of 'monomanie raisonnante' with a young married woman who became unkind to her husband, started to neglect her children and revealed secrets that a woman is supposed to keep for herself.[8] The boredom of Emma and her neglect of the household (although she alternates between taking care of the house and neglecting it) could be signs of monomania. Imagining another reality seems to be her *idée fixe*. Music is part of her obsession because it is one of the elements that trigger those manifestations as well as being an element that is re-developed in her imaginative process.

This section aims to show that, by participating in her obsessive behaviour, music is one of Emma Bovary's attempts to control the instability of her world. Thus Emma Bovary is not only a monomaniac, but can be qualified as 'melomaniac', since music is part of the 'mania of melodies' that constitutes her imagination. Therefore, she is not an artist in the proper sense, but rather a sentimental dilettante, as the narrator highlights: 'elle rejetait comme inutile tout ce qui ne contribuait pas à la consommation immédiate de son coeur, – étant de tempérament plus sentimentale qu'artiste, cherchant des émotions et non des paysages'.[9] By opposing 'emotions' and 'landscapes', Flaubert opposes feelings and technique, as if Emma Bovary did not have the technique of an artist. She is not a real musician and yet she 'works' with music: sounds are transformed and projected by her imagination. After exposing the role of music in Emma Bovary's obsession, this section will show that, as a medium of her obsessive patterns, her body interacts with the acoustic world.

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[5] Even non-physical afflictions were represented through bodily metaphors.
[6] Charles accepts the fact that it is a 'maladie nerveuse' after his old master of Rouen makes this claim. The occurrence comes back several times without being questioned (p. 122, p. 260, p. 376).
[7] Some interpretations have shown that Flaubert was inspired by the reading of clinical reports on hysteria. For example, Florence Vatan evokes that Baudelaire was the first to call Emma Bovary a hysterical woman, 'Emma Bovary: parfaite hystérique ou "poète hystérique"?' in *Madame Bovary et les savoirs*, ed by. Pierre-Louis Rey and Gisèle Séginger (Paris: Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2009), pp. 219-230 (p. 219).
[8] Esquirol, II, p. 51.
[9] *MB*, p. 86.

1. Music listening as an obsessive form of behaviour

In *Le Bovarysme*, Jules de Gaultier defines the eponymous affliction as follows: 'il est apparu que la tare dont les personnages de Flaubert sont marqués suppose chez l'être humain et à l'état normal l'existence d'une faculté essentielle. Cette faculté est *le pouvoir départi à l'homme de se concevoir autre qu'il n'est*'.[10] Madame Bovary's affliction is exactly to unremittingly imagine herself in another reality, an ideal and unreachable one. Through Flaubert's complex use of the omniscient narrator,[11] Emma's imagination is never presented simply as what she thinks, but the very imaginative process is exposed. As Auerbach explains:

> It is not, however, a matter – as it is in many first-person novels and other later works of a similar type – of a simple representation of the content of Emma's consciousness, of *what* she feels *as* she feels it. Though the light which illuminates the picture proceeds from her, she is yet herself part of the picture, she is situated within it.[12]

1.1 Musical daydreaming

Emma's main occupation is daydreaming, as the narrator repeatedly highlights: 'elle inventa toute une histoire […] elle imaginait des hasards, des catastrophes'.[13] We can find a similar case in Pierre Janet's *Les Obsessions et la psychasthénie*. Here, the author refers to a patient, Sim… who has a weak will and who is constantly daydreaming. The French phrase he uses in his description, 'la rêvasserie perpétuelle',[14] holds negative connotations with the suffixe -asser (originally present in the verb rêvasser), and carries the idea of a troubled dream but also of useless occupation. Similarly, Emma's *rêvasserie* is triggered by music and literature.

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[10] Jules de Gaultier, *Le Bovarysme* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1921), p. 13.
[11] The analysis of the narrative viewpoint by Clothilde Gothot-Mersch shows that, from the introductory 'nous', that disappears, to the internal focalisations, the omniscient narrator is never neutral, 'Le point de vue dans *Madame Bovary'*, *Cahiers de l'association internationale des études francaises*, 23 (1971), 243-259. </web/revues/home/prescript/article/caief_0571-5865_1971_num_23_1_986> [accessed 10 May 2013].
[12] Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, 50th anniversary edition (Princeton, N.J.; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 484.
[13] *MB*, pp. 168-69.
[14] Janet, p. 404.

Hearing music or sounds acts as a strong 'imaginative agent' and sounds arouse images, as the passage of the singing fish merchants shows:

> La nuit, quand les mareyeurs, dans leurs charrettes, passaient sous ses fenêtres en chantant la Marjolaine, elle s'éveillait ; et écoutant le bruit des roues ferrées, qui, à la sortie du pays, s'amortissait vite sur la terre :
> - Ils y seront demain ! se disait-elle.
> Et elle les suivait dans sa pensée, montant et descendant les côtes, traversant les villages, filant sur la grande route à la clarté des étoiles.[15]

Her mental picture here is vague and poetical. Similarly, her imagination sometimes follows the music progressively; in those cases, the narrator does not specify the imagery but highlights the role of music, like when she listens to the barrel organ: 'sa pensée bondissait avec les notes, se balançait de rêve en rêve, de tristesse en tristesse.'[16] However, her imagery is at times much clearer, such as at the beginning of Donizetti's opera, *Lucia di Lammermoor:* 'Il lui semblait entendre, à travers le brouillard, le son des cornemuses écossaises se répéter sur les bruyères'.[17] The expression 'il lui semblait' introduces the process of the imagination – other occurrences such as 'elle croyait entendre' are also used throughout the text to demonstrate a transformation of the original sounds; what she hears is different from reality. Esquirol recounts the case of several musicians who, during their sicknesses, 'n'entendaient plus que des tons faux',[18] meaning in fact that they were hearing something different from reality. Music allows Emma to create this other reality, confusing sound and image. The expression 'il lui semblait' also hints at the fact that she is somehow aware that what she hears is not reality; she does not hear bagpipe sounds but it seems to her that she does.[19] Knowing that she 'seems to hear' something would mean that Emma Bovary is conscious of her obsessive imagination. The pharmacist Homais is the one who recommends Donizetti's opera to distract Emma. Before suggesting the opera, he mysteriously says to Charles: 'ne pensez-vous

[15] *MB*, p. 111.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 120.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 302.
[18] Esquirol, II, p. 583.
[19] There are no bagpipes in the opera, but the wind instruments imitate bagpipe sounds at the end of the first act.

pas qu'il faut peut-être frapper l'imagination?'[20] Like in the reports of Esquirol and Pinel, music is envisaged as a treatment.[21] Homais senses that the 'imagination' is at the heart of Emma's *maladie nerveuse,* and the verb 'frapper' denotes a certain violence, as if Emma's 'imagination' needed to be shaken back into place; however, he does not see that music is one of the causes of her affliction and cannot be the treatment. The similarity with Georget's works is striking; the psychiatrist suggests: 'N'est-ce pas en frappant fortement l'imagination de jeunes filles, que Boerhaave arrêta une affection convulsive qui devenait contagieuse parmi elles?'[22]

Over and above triggering daydreaming, music also has a mnemonic effect. Listening to music (or sounds) often activates Emma's memory. For example, she remembers her childhood when hearing the Angelus bell: 'A ce tintement répété, la pensée de la jeune femme s'égarait dans ses vieux souvenirs de jeunesse et de pension'.[23] Similarly, at the opera, she remembers Walter Scott's novel, but also thoughts or feelings she had before without being able to grasp them: 'd'insaisissables pensées lui revenaient, se dispersaient, aussitôt, sous les rafales de la musique'.[24] Music can also be part of her memory without activating it; when she realises Rodolphe is her lover, she feels like a heroine of novels and remembers her readings: 'Alors elle se rappela les héroïnes des livres qu'elle avait lus, et la légion lyrique de ces femmes adultères se mit à chanter dans sa mémoire avec des voix de soeurs qui la charmaient.'[25] Marina van Zuylen explains, with a Romantic conception, that obsessions are a way for monomaniacs to find an ideal that they thought was lost and needs to be found again: 'each one of its [monomania] enactments is part of an abstract, autonomous desire to reorganize the world according to a long-lost model of wholeness'.[26] From her Romantic readings and music lessons, Emma creates an ideal that she thinks once existed and has to be reached. She is also aware of the difficulties of reaching this lost ideal: 'C'était cette rêverie que l'on a sur ce qui ne reviendra plus, la lassitude qui vous prend après chaque fait accompli, cette douleur enfin que vous apportent l'interruption de tout mouvement accoutumé, la cessation brusque

[20] *MB*, p. 286.
[21] Pinel and Esquirol do not have conclusive results on music as a treatment for madness, but Esquirol notes: 'Si la musique ne guérit pas, elle distrait, et, par conséquent, elle soulage ; elle apporte également quelque allégement à la douleur physique et morale', I, p. 586.
[22] Georget, p. 254.
[23] *MB*, p. 171.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 302.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 232.
[26] Zuylen, p. 5.

d'une vibration prolongée'.[27] Here, Flaubert expresses nothing other than the Romantic *Sehnsucht* I exposed in Chapter 2. Moreover, the analogy between 'rêverie' and 'vibration' shows that music is a driving force for a lost ideal. Listening to music and remembering sounds are therefore part of Emma's main occupation, which is her imagination, transporting her into the past or into a presumable future. Music therefore has a double role in her imaginative obsession. It can activate a flow of thoughts, in this case Emma does not listen to the music for itself but transfers the sounds into imagery where sound and image are mingled; or music is imagined without an original sound and developed through her imagery. Emma's imagination is in any case overstimulated.

1.2 Emma's musical practice

The music Emma imagines seems to be more creative than the music she actually plays. Although she can play the piano, she is never presented as a talented musician: 'Elle frappait sur les touches avec aplomb, et parcourait du haut en bas tout le clavier sans s'interrompre. Ainsi secoué par elle, le vieil instrument, dont les cordes frisaient, s'entendait jusqu'au bout du village […]'.[28] She plays loudly, heavily and her vigour even wears down the instrument. It is mentioned later that she plays waltzes to her husband but the lack of precision highlights once more that it is not the technicality of music that matters but what it evokes for Emma. She is not an interpreter but she 'shapes' her own kind of music in her imagination. Similarly, when she is at the convent, the songs she learns make her see phantasmagorias, particularly through the inanity of the style and the approximation of the notes.[29] When she sings, emotions and imagery particularly coincide; she can even appear as a finer musician, for example when she sings 'Le Lac' by Lamartine, her voice, although weak, is harmonious.[30] Moreover, when Emma's mother dies, the narration already highlights her passion for Lamartine: 'Elle se laissa donc glisser dans les méandres lamartiniens, écouta les harpes sur les lacs, tous les chants de cygnes mourants, toutes les chutes de feuilles, les vierges pures qui montent au ciel, et la voix de l'Eternel discourant dans

[27] *MB*, p. 186.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 92.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 88.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 341.

les vallons'.[31] So before singing 'Le Lac' to Léon, she has already mentally (re)produced the melodies of Lamartine's poems and associated them with Romantic images.[32] Madame Bovary is therefore a 'silent musician' above all; the music she makes takes place in her head; she likes music for the imagery with which it provides her. Referring to music is a way for Flaubert to point out Emma's obsession and to develop her mental state. That is why musical references follow her emotions. When she realises that her husband and her are not invited again to the Vaubyessard ball, she abandons music:

> Pourquoi jouer? Qui l'entendrait? Puisqu'elle ne pourrait jamais, en robe de velours à manches courtes, sur un piano d'Erard, dans un concert, battant de ses doigts légers les touches d'ivoire, sentir, comme une brise, circuler autour d'elle un murmure d'extase, ce n'était pas la peine de s'ennuyer à étudier.[33]

Music is again a source of imagination here; she pictures herself performing publically, and being acclaimed (showing that it was possible at that time for a woman to give public concerts). The comma interruptions show that the narrator follows exactly the thinking process of Emma – with her hesitations and feelings – that tends towards hallucination. Oppositely, when she starts seeing Léon, she develops 'une grande ardeur musicale'.[34] Playing music corresponds to the exaltation of getting closer to the Romantic lost ideal, and stopping music reflects an access of melancholy.

1.3 Performing a domesticated life

Even if music is constantly present 'in her head' – occasionally playing music to others allows Emma Bovary to create the illusion that she is satisfied with her domestic life – it also hides her obsessions. When she plays to her husband, she takes on a role and acts out the requirements of the bourgeois marital life. She 'pretends' to play the piano for the love of music and manipulates her husband with it. When she wants to see Léon more often, she makes Charles believe she needs piano lessons, to be able to have some time out of the house. Thus, she performs like an actress; she

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 89.
[32] The poem 'Le Lac' was incidentally set to music by Louis Niedermeyer.
[33] *MB*, p. 117.
[34] *Ibid.*, p. 343.

complains (‘Ah mon pauvre piano’) and pretends to play badly. The narrator ironically recounts her subterfuge: ‘Et voilà comment elle s’y prit pour obtenir de son époux la permission d’aller à la ville, une fois la semaine, voir son amant. On trouva même, au bout d’un mois, qu’elle avait fait des progrès considérables’.[35] By exploiting the domestic use of music, Emma Bovary transgresses the requirements of a woman’s life. Music allows her to create a different reality in which she pictures herself, and that constitutes her obsession. Jules de Gaultier argues that Madame Bovary has an inner drive that pushes her to choose among environmental circumstances the ones that would respond to her obsession:

> Aussi, plutôt que de penser que M^me^ Bovary soit le produit de circonstances, nous faut-il juger que la nécessité interne qui la régit choisit, parmi les circonstances qui l’environnent, celles qui sont propres à satisfaire sa tendance. Ce besoin de se concevoir autre qu’elle n’est constitue sa véritable personnalité, il atteint chez elle une violence incomparable et s’exprime par un refus d’accepter jamais aucune réalité et de s’en contenter.[36]

Even though Madame Bovary creates different realities, music is always part of them, constituting the common thread in the manifestations of her obsession. Music has an effect on Emma Bovary on different levels: the music she listens to repeatedly triggers her imagination, she mentally makes her own music, and she pretends to play to fit the bourgeois lifestyle.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 344, p. 345.
[36] Jules de Gautier, pp. 30-31.

2. Music and physical crises

Emma Bovary's mental activity cannot be dissociated from her body; physical crises are the 'visible' manifestations of her obsessions. Several occurrences underline 'les vapeurs d'Emma';[37] yet the vapours seem to be the first physical symptom of her monomania. Due to their elusive and yet tangible nature, Emma's vapours can be seen as a bridge between her imaginary reality and the physical world, between the abstract and the material. Through Emma's body, music is also a link between the imaginary and the physical. Her ears obviously constitute the first medium between reality and imagination, but sometimes her whole body reacts to music. Conversely, her obsessive imagination is also manifested through her body. Therefore, stimulated by a musical environment, her body is the meeting point of opposite forces, where the imaginary and the real interfere.

2.1 Bodily stimuli

Emma has numerous physical crises (a fast heartbeat, dizziness, nausea, fatigue) that are explained by Charles as a *maladie nerveuse*. These crises occur when her imaginary worlds fall apart: for example, when Rodolphe leaves her she is sick and weak for several weeks. Nerves are presented as being both the cause and the symptoms of her affliction. In a discussion with Homais, Charles highlights the gender difference and its pathological consequences: 'Vous savez, les femmes, un rien les trouble, la mienne surtout! Et l'on aurait tort de se révolter là contre, puisque leur organisation nerveuse est beaucoup plus malléable que la notre'.[38] When Emma Bovary tells her maid that her crises are due to her nerves, the latter recounts the story of a woman living in Dieppe who was always sad until she got married ('Son mal, à ce qu'il paraît, était une manière de brouillard qu'elle avait dans la tête, et les médecins n'y pouvaient rien, ni le curé non plus'),[39] but Emma replies in despair that for her it started after her marriage.[40]

[37] 'Si elle était comme tant d'autres, contrainte à gagner son pain, elle n'aurait pas ces vapeurs-là, qui lui viennent d'un tas d'idées qu'elle se fourre dans la tête'; 'la vapeur des passions' *MB*, p. 190, p. 347.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 184.
[39] *Ibid.*, p. 170.
[40] According to Yannick Ripa, given the age of the inmates in French asylums, it seems that specific times in women's lives were more favourable to the manifestation of madness; that is puberty, pregnancy and the menopause. *La Ronde*, p. 62.

Music also has a strong effect on her nerves, as if, like the ears, they were music transmitters. This brings to mind once more a case of Esquirol, when he describes the musical skills of a girl called Quéneau who can reproduce melodies but is unable to speak or communicate. He describes her as 'une imbécile' and is surprised at how her body reacts to music: 'Le passage des sons graves aux sons aigus provoque une contraction soudaine de tous les muscles de Quéneau, comme si elle était atteinte par une décharge électrique'.[41] Emma's body has such reactions; like electricity, music appears to be a current that flows through her body. When she is with Rodolphe for instance, she listens to the environment and is sensible to vibrations: 'elle l'écoutait silencieusement, se mêlant comme une musique aux dernières vibrations de ses nerfs émus'.[42]

The effect of music on Emma's body is particularly visible at the Opera: 'Elle se laissait aller au bercement des mélodies et se sentait elle-même vibrer de tout son être comme si les archets des violons se fussent promenés sur ses nerfs'. Here, her body becomes an instrument, she pictures herself 'within' the music and the opera and feels attracted by the male character, Edgar (played and sung by Lagardy). Her unrestrained body exults and a vocabulary of sensuality is even used: 'les notes s'échappaient de son cou nu, pleines de sanglots et de baisers. Emma se penchait pour le voir, égratignant avec ses ongles le velours de sa loge'. Moreover, she identifies with the heroine and confuses imagination and reality: 'La voix de la chanteuse ne lui semblait être que le retentissement de sa conscience, et cette illusion qui la charmait quelque chose même de sa vie'. Emma seems to be almost in a trance, having hallucinations caused by the opera until the farewell between Lucie and Edgar: 'et quand ils poussèrent l'adieu final, Emma jeta un cri aigu, qui se confondit avec la vibration des derniers accords'. While her scream resonates as an orgasm, the narration superimposes sensual images and the hallucinatory process itself to show that somehow Emma is aware of her hallucinations. At the end of the first act, Emma falls back on her seat 'avec des palpitations qui la suffoquaient', depicting the end of a sexual act.[43] When Léon appears she does not pay attention to the opera any more, as if her hallucinatory moment (and the creation of a different reality) were over; music then becomes less sonorous. She does not follow the mad scene of Lucie and

[41] Esquirol, I, pp. 306-7.
[42] *MB*, p. 231.
[43] All the quotations above refer to the same scene, *Ibid.,* pp. 302-6.

finds the performance of the actress exaggerated. As already explained, Donizetti's opera is the story of a mad woman who kills her husband. Interestingly, the scene that is the closest to Emma's reality (the madness of Lucie) does not interest her, but the passion between Edgar and Lucie (the ideal that Emma wants to reach) is what captivates her. So, Emma only responds to music when it creates a hallucinatory state far removed from reality. When the opera actually deals with a concrete issue, Emma turns towards another reality, the one aroused by the presence of Léon. At the end of the novel, her affliction moves from her nerves to her stomach, as she has 'des douleurs intolérables à l'épigastre'.[44] It is as if music and literature were first uncontrollable bodily stimuli that progressively led to the concentration of her affliction in one part of the body.[45]

Emma's monomania has other physical manifestations, particularly tics;[46] she is in the habit of tensing or biting her lips when she is nervous. Another form of (non-physical) tic is her obsessive lying. She has been lying since she was a child, having already had to invent sins at church, but lying becomes omnipresent in her life when she starts pretending she needs piano lessons: 'A partir de ce moment, son existence ne fut plus qu'un assemblage de mensonges, où elle enveloppait son amour comme dans des voiles, pour le cacher. C'était un besoin, une manie, un plaisir […]'.[47] A network of lies is created around music, showing one more time that music is an agent of her obsession. The manuscripts of *Madame Bovary* reveal that Flaubert had chosen 'infirmité naturelle', which indicates the idea of a physical disability, before replacing it with 'manie';[48] showing a will to root her obsessive lying in her body.

One final 'physical' manifestation of Emma's obsession is the appearance of the blind man; this vagabond musician can be seen as her double.[49] He is the allegory of Emma's physical deterioration leading to her suicide. Emma is captivated by his

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 415.
[45] In the *Dictionnaire des idées reçues*, Flaubert defines 'estomac' as follows: 'toutes les maladies viennent de l'estomac', ed. by Stéphanie Dord-Crouslé (Paris: GF-Flammarion, 1999).
[46] Tics are the mania of repetitions *par excellence* for Janet.
[47] *MB*, p. 356.
[48] Brouillons, V, p. 411, folio 184. <http://flaubert.univ-rouen.fr/jet/public/trans.php?corpus=bovary&id=3866&mot=manie&action=M> [accessed 10 May 2013].
[49] Damien Dauge develops the idea of the blind man as a double of Emma by using the image of 'musical poisoning' of which blindness is the external sign. <http://flaubert.univ-rouen.fr/revue/article.php?id=78> [accessed 10 May 2013].

song (‘Souvent la chaleur d’un beau jour/Fait rêver fillette à l’amour’)[50] in which she probably recognises herself in the ‘fillette’. More generally, Emma seems to identify with the image of the blind man. The first description of the vagabond intertwines the quality of his voice and the impact it has on Emma, superimposing both characters:

> Sa voix, faible d’abord et vagissante, devenait aiguë. Elle se traînait dans la nuit, comme l’indistincte lamentation d’une vague détresse; et, à travers la sonnerie des grelots, le murmure des arbres et le ronflement de la boîte creuse, elle avait quelque chose de lointain qui bouleversait Emma. Cela lui descendait au fond de l’âme comme un tourbillon dans un abîme, et l’emportait parmi les espaces d’une mélancolie sans bornes.[51]

The sentence is framed by the pronoun ‘elle’ (referring to the vagabond’s voice) and Emma merges both characters together. They become interchangeable insofar as ‘elle’ could also refer to Emma. The music of the vagabond transports Emma and points at her own melancholy. When Emma is dying, the figure of the blind man appears again and he sings the same song, adding the verses ‘Pour amasser diligemment/Les épis que la faux moissonne,/Ma Nanette va s’inclinant/Vers le sillon qui nous les donne’.[52] He is this time the allegory of death (with his scythe) coming to take Emma away. In her death throes she hallucinates and sees his face – even though the arsenic has made her blind – as the ultimate image triggered by music; and, as if realising her madness, she laughs, falls back on the bed, and dies. Emma’s last moment corresponds to her body’s reaction to music, almost like a corpse’s reflex. We could again draw a parallel between music and electricity; when she hears the song of the blind beggar, she raises ‘comme un cadavre que l’on galvanise’.[53] Galvani (1737-1798) was an Italian physician who experimented with electricity on dead animals, notably on frogs. Music functions therefore as electricity on Emma’s body. Her body is a conductor of music. From reality to the imagination (through the ears and the nerves) and the imagination to reality (through the tics and the physical deterioration), music is the conducting force that animates her body and leads to her death. Music is what

[50] *MB*, p. 352. The blind man is also described as ‘un idiot’, and yet Esquirol highlighted the fact that ‘certains idiots retiennent des airs’, Esquirol, p. 339.
[51] *MB*, pp. 352-53.
[52] *Ibid.*, p. 420.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 419.

provides a repeated, controlled framework, offering a unity to a body that loses its harmony.

2.2 Emma's rhythmical body

Because of its connections with music, Emma's obsession lies in her body. If music acts on her body, the latter is also a vehicle of the musical text. It is through Emma Bovary's body that Flaubert plays with music itself; the musical metaphors, repetitions and sonorities pass via her body. Therefore, music in the text emanates from her body, which becomes an instrument for Flaubert, as shown by the metaphor of the body-instrument after Emma swallows arsenic: 'Elle avait les membres crispés, le corps couvert de taches brunes, et son pouls glissait sous les doigts comme un fil tendu, comme une corde de harpe près de se rompre'.[54] Emma's body is a musical instrument for Flaubert, from which his disharmonic music resonates. He also uses her body to give rhythm to the narration, notably through the numerous repetitions linked to music. In addition to the song of the blind man at the end of the novel, who announces the deterioration of Emma and then her death, her suicide is also announced in a musical context. When Emma is trying to have piano lessons, she says that if she cannot play it would be better to sell the piano, but Charles refuses this idea: 'le voir s'en aller, c'était pour Bovary comme l'indéfinissable suicide d'une partie d'elle-même!'[55] Killing music would be like killing herself.

Another way of giving rhythm to the narration is to actually develop references about musical rhythm. For example, Emma is often attentive to the pace and cadence of the horses; her body follows the rhythm and she starts to daydream, like when she is with Rodolphe: 'La figure un peu baissée, la main haute et le bras droit deployé, elle s'abandonnait à la cadence du mouvement qui la berçait sur la selle'.[56] Similarly, the rhythm of the cab driving in Rouen denotes Emma's abandonment to Léon and their first sensual act. Finally, the repetitive dancing body is the incarnation of narrative rhythm. At the Vaubyessard ball, Emma's body responds to music almost without control: 'se balançant au rythme de l'orchestre, elle glissait en avant, avec des mouvements légers du cou. Un sourire lui montait aux

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 412.
[55] *Ibid.*, p. 345.
[56] *Ibid.*, p. 227.

lèvres à certaines délicatesses du violon […]'.[57] Emma's body is *entrained* by music.[58] Just after this episode, the dance with the viscount foreshadows her adulteries. Later at the masked ball, the music and dance also have an effect on her: 'elle avait le front en feu, des picotements aux paupières et un froid de glace à la peau. Elle sentait dans sa tête le plancher du bal, rebondissant encore sous la pulsation rythmique des mille pieds qui dansaient'.[59] Here the rhythmical effect is presented as almost pathological. *Madame Bovary* is, as I have tried to show, replete with repetitions about music, which act as prolepses and echoes in the narration, themselves creating a musical effect.

To sum up, Flaubert 'plays' with music and 'plays' with the discourse on monomania. The rhythmical repetitions, the musical veil, the *maladie nerveuse* are clichés of the representation of women in the nineteenth century. Flaubert ironically laughs, as it were, at this image and sets up numerous layers of representation of women, intellectuals, artists and mad people. In other words, Emma is a literary cliché of the monomaniac artist. Her suicide is not a denunciation of artistic stimulations but, as it were, her ultimate creation. The music she has heard stimulates her body and mind until this final creative performance which makes her the tragic heroine she has always wanted to be.

[57] *Ibid.*, p. 103.
[58] That is to say, Emma's body adapts itself to external rhythms. Entrainment theory started to be applied to music in the 1990s. It can be defined as 'the process by which independent rhythmical systems interact with each other', Martin Clayton, 'What is Entrainment? Definition and applications in musical research', *Empirical Musicology Review,* 7/12 (2012), 49-56 (p. 49).
[59] *MB*, p. 380.

‘You have conquered – a MADWOMAN!’: Music, madness and female performing identities in Braddon’s *Lady Audley’s Secret*

At the centre of Lady Audley’s story are her multiple identities resulting in her confession of being mad and her incarceration in a *maison de santé* in Belgium. While she is first presented as a calm housewife with a great talent for piano playing, she turns out to be a strong manipulative woman. In nineteenth-century England, insanity was perceived as a common disease and even designated as the ‘English malady’.[1] In parallel with medical discourse and the institutionalisation of madness, newspapers were frequently exposing cases of mad individuals confined in asylums.[2] After the ‘Lunacy Act’ of 1845 and the increase in incarcerations, many cases of wrongful commitments were recounted.[3] One such case was that of Rosina Bulwer Lytton, whose story created a sensation among the public. Falsely incarcerated by her husband, she received the support of the public, notably through newspapers such as *The Daily Telegraph*, and was liberated three weeks after her commitment in July 1858.[4] Interestingly, Mary Elizabeth Braddon dedicated *Lady Audley’s Secret* to Edward Bulwer Lytton (Lady Lytton’s husband), whom she consulted in the process of her writing. Braddon could not have been unaware of Lady Lytton’s case, as revealed by the similarities between Lytton and Lady Audley, notably their tenacity. The theme of dubious incarceration present in *Lady Audley’s Secret* therefore reflects the public fascination with madness and its restraint.

Lady Audley’s internment in a *maison de santé* does not stand at the heart of the action but rather encloses it, as well as the identity threads that are woven by the heroine and disentangled by Robert Audley. The heroine becomes Lucy Audley after marrying Sir Michael Audley, who falls in love with her while she is a governess

[1] ‘Since the eighteenth century, the links between an “English malady” and such aspects of the national experience as commerce, culture, climate, and cuisine have been the subject of both scientific treatises and literary texts. The English have long regarded their country, with a mixture of complacency and sorrow, as the global headquarters of insanity’, Showalter, p. 7.
[2] ‘The sane people confined in lunatic asylums under the easy facilities of the Lunatic Act are ghosts of newspaper raising. They cannot be brought to the bar as tangible realities’, John Charles Bucknill, *Journal of Mental Science* (London: Longman, 1859), vol. 5, p. 152.
[3] Jill L. Matus, *Unstable Bodies: Victorian Representations of Sexuality and Maternity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 200.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 201.

teaching the piano, known as Lucy Graham. Robert Audley, Sir Michael's nephew, plays the role of a detective trying to find out what has happened to his friend George Talboys who has disappeared; by doing so, he at the same time discovers the true identity of Lady Audley. She used to be Helen Talboys, the wife of George Talboys. Committing bigamy and changes of identity as well as attempting to discard anyone on her way, Lady Audley is eventually unmasked and sent to an asylum. However, she is presented throughout the text as an empowered woman who displays a sense of agency through her manipulations. She uses social expectations, particularly about middle-class women who are often presented as musicians and/or mad (among other characteristics), in order to achieve her own social agenda.

Anchored in the context of the 'English malady' evoked above, the text echoes the medical discourse on madness, particularly monomania and the works of James Cowles Prichard (1786-1848) and Henry Maudsley (1835-1918). [5] Madness was also considered in nineteenth-century England as a 'female malady', although numerous reports by psychiatrists show the quasi-inexistent difference between the number of male and female inmates.[6] Madness is therefore a common feature in the representation of women, just as music is a common characteristic of middle and upper-class women. Lucy Audley uses music to 'fit' the criteria of the well-educated woman, like Emma Bovary, as well as madness to find an excuse for her bigamous and criminal acts. It could be said that she is in any case a musician and somehow a madwoman (since she can be perceived as a monomaniac) but she takes advantage of these common features to reach a better social position and excuse her offenses. Both music and madness are deliberately overused by Lady Audley as a cover for her 'crimes'.

Monomania is explicitly present in the novel and Lucy Audley can be perceived as a monomaniac because she is obsessed with the idea of securing a higher social status. Music contributes to her monomania since it is what helps her to find a

[5] Prichard extended in England the ideas of the French psychiatrist Esquirol; he dedicated his *Treatise on Insanity and other disorders affecting the mind* (London: Sherwood, Gilbert and Piper, 1835) to the French psychiatrist.

[6] Prichard, exposing the results of European psychiatrists like Esquirol, reveals that the numerous differences are minimal: 'Thus the proportion of males to that of females is, a fraction being neglected, 37 to 38. This difference is so much the less considerable, as in the general population the number of males somewhat exceeds that of females', *Treatise on Insanity*, p. 164. However, Prichard concludes by saying that these statistics are not a reason to say that women are *less* subject to insanity than men, meaning therefore that women *can be* more subject to insanity and therefore contribute to the common representation of the madwoman.

position as a governess, to get noticed by Sir Audley and to assume the role of the perfect housewife. Monomania is also explicitly associated with Robert Audley, the 'detective'. He is designated as such by Lady Audley, who defends herself from his accusations, but also by other characters through common analogies. I will show that Robert appears in fact as a double of Lady Audley and his monomania duplicates that of the heroine. Other characters appear as doubles of Lady Audley, particularly the musician Clara Talboys, who eventually marries Robert. Clara is presented as a true artist and embodies the perfect housewife after marrying Robert. The fact that a man (Robert) is also associated with madness and monomania, and that another female artist (Clara) is a musician and a 'happy' housewife shows that Braddon presents 'music' and 'madness' not specifically as female features but rather as constructed artifices. The author shows the fabrication of women's roles in society first by attributing characteristics supposedly of upper-class women to different characters, and then by presenting a woman who is originally from a modest milieu succeeding in marrying a wealthy man thanks to the display of her 'feminine' features.

Leaning on Judith Butler's idea of the performativity of gender, the main argument here is that Lady Audley performs gender through music and madness in order to achieve her own social agenda. As Butler argues 'gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts'*.[7] Musical practice could be seen as an example of the 'stylized repetition of acts' of gender performativity. The associations of Lady Audley with the theatrical world, the significance of her body, and the musical practice together emphasise the idea of performance and role-playing in society. Music, a central element of Lady Audley's performance, also helps to create a textual performance. It is indeed a thread in the investigation of George Talboys's disappearance and Lady Audley's secret since it is one of the crucial clues of the detective.

[7] Judith Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory' (1988), in *The Art of Art History*, ed. by Donald Preziosi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 356-366 (p.356).

1. The discourse on madness

Before presenting the performative role of music in *Lady Audley's Secret*, it is important to decompose the theme of madness in the text and to introduce the medical and social contexts. The discourse on madness helps us to understand the importance of the female body and its examination by men. And yet if Lady Audley does perform gender, this is through physical characteristics, particularly when she plays music, as we shall see.

Although Lucy Audley declares herself mad (which is ostensibly her secret) and is sent to an asylum, madness is not simply a generic term coinciding with the denouement. Rather, it is present throughout the text as an indicator of identity development, as it were, and of instability. Lucy appears to be a monomaniac obsessed with securing a high social position. Already as a young girl, she thinks: 'I concluded that if I was indeed prettier than my schoolfellows, I ought to marry better than any of them. I left school before I was seventeen years of age with this thought in my mind…'[8] Lady Audley presents signs of monomania but is never called a monomaniac – it is in fact Robert who is designated as such – however she displays her fine knowledge of this disorder on several occasions. She even defines for her husband what monomania is:

> What is one of the strongest diagnostics of madness - what is the first appalling sign of mental aberration? The mind becomes stationary; the brain stagnates; the even current of the mind is interrupted; the thinking power of the brain resolves itself into a monotone. As the waters of a tideless pool putrefy by reason of their stagnation, the mind becomes turbid and corrupt lack of action; and perpetual reflection upon one subject resolves itself into monomania.[9]

Lady Audley seems to be particularly aware of the characteristics of madness. Although she insists on the fixation aspect, she does not say that the mind works perfectly normally on subjects outside of the fixed object. As Prichard argues:

[8] Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Lady Audley's Secret,* ed. by Lyn Pykett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 298.
[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 244-45.

> This form of insanity is characterised by some particular illusion or erroneous conviction impressed upon the understanding, and giving rise to partial aberration of judgement. The individual affected is rendered incapable of thinking correctly on subjects connected with the particular illusion while in other respects he betrays no palpable disorder of mind. [10]

According to Prichard, monomania is an 'intellectual' insanity; it is a modification of 'moral insanity' which is a disorder of the intellect without hallucination.[11] The fact that Lady Audley is able to define monomania and uses it in for manipulative ends to accuse her husband's nephew shows that she is affected by moral insanity and, more particularly, monomania.

1.1 Lady Audley's pretence of madness as monomania

Lady Audley's monomania pushes her to commit several crimes; she changes identity on multiple occasions (Helen Talboys, Lucy Graham, Lady Audley); thinking that her first husband George will never come back from Australia, she marries again; and finally she tries to kill George and later Robert to secure her position as the wife of Sir Audley. Although she never clearly calls herself a monomaniac, she does use the generic term 'madness' to anticipate accusations upon her and defend herself. When Robert destabilises her by exposing the results of his investigation, she first accuses him of being mad and a monomaniac. Facing his determination she claims that he is driving her mad with these accusations and exclaims: 'do you know what it is to wrestle with a madwoman?'[12] Madness is a cover for Lady Audley; she thinks that by using madness she will be able to escape the consequences of Robert's accusations, namely a trial, and stay married to Sir Audley as a madwoman.

When Robert escapes the fire Lady Audley set up to kill him, he confronts her with all her crimes and tells her: 'Henceforth, you must seem to me no longer a woman'.[13] For him, a woman cannot be a criminal. To re-establish her gender, as it were, Lady Audley replies: 'You have conquered – a MADWOMAN! […] When you say that I murdered him [George] treacherously and foully, you lie. I killed him

[10] Prichard, pp. 26-27.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 6.
[12] *LA*, p. 235.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 294

because I AM MAD!'.[14] She clearly uses madness as an excuse for her crimes: she is not immoral but mad and she prefers to be seen as mad rather than bad. The capital letters probably denote her supposedly loud voice and articulation, as if she were performing (acting) her madness at the same time as she declares herself mad. Lady Audley does not confess her monomania but uses the general sense of madness, which ties in with her femininity and seems to have more impact. To further accentuate the feminine specificity of madness, she confesses that her mother and grandmother were both madwomen. Her mother was sent to an asylum after giving birth and died there several years later. Similarly, Lady Audley says her madness started when she gave birth to her son. It was when she realised she did not love the child that she understood she was mad: 'The hereditary taint that was in my blood had never until this time showed itself by any one sign or token'.[15] Lady Audley suggests that, like her mother, she is suffering from 'puerperal mania'. Prichard explains that puerperal mania appears after the delivery of the child, or can be triggered by breastfeeding.[16] He also affirms that this form of madness stops when the individual dies or spontaneously recovers reason, implying that it is not a long-term affection but rather lasts for a short period following birth. Therefore, it seems unlikely that Lady Audley would have committed crimes several years after the birth of her son because of puerperal fever but she nonetheless uses this as a justification for her acts. Apart from her self-proclamation of madness, Lady Audley openly (and manipulatively) presents other signs of mental disorder. After her first confrontation with Robert, she returns to her husband and her agitation is characterised as hysterical by the narrator. Her 'hysterical sobbing' is specified as being 'no simulated grief' and 'real'.[17] However, the final comparison with a siren reveals the narrator's irony: 'It was the one wild outcry, in which the woman's feebler nature got the better of the syren's art'.[18] Lady Audley uses the feminine hysterical image to coax her husband into sympathising with her. By referring to the 'syren's art', the narrator ironically underlines that Lady Audley is acting out her 'hysteria'. This scene is a performance which highlights the subtle role of music; like a siren, Lady Audley entices and misleads men, and music is part of the subterfuge. The siren is a strong image of the

[14] *Ibid.*
[15] *Ibid*., pp. 300-1. We shall discuss the significance of the hereditary taint on women in Chapter 5 with *Nana*.
[16] Prichard, p. 310.
[17] *LA*, p. 241.
[18] *Ibid.*

dangerousness of women musicians, combining women's musical power with a deformed physical appearance (half-woman, half-fish, which somehow ties in with the ambiguous figure of the androgyne).[19] However, the siren Lady Audley does not charm with her voice but with the piano.

Another example of the heroine's disorder is when she realises George Talboys was secretly in her room with Robert and probably recognised her on a portrait. Trying to master her nervousness she starts playing the piano, revealing a certain destabilisation, as the following enumeration shows: 'now sitting down to the piano to trill out a ballad, or the first page of an Italian bravura, or running with rapid fingers through a brilliant waltz'.[20] If Lady Audley is affected by a *maladie nerveuse,* like Camille Maupin or Emma Bovary, it is particularly visible here through music. However, music is also a common activity that allows her to hide her inner agitation to society. In other words, she mutes her nervousness with music; thus music (sound) allows her to be silent (un-sound). Music is a sign of her unsound mind, not because it openly displays madness but on the contrary because it deliberately covers it up. Playing the piano is not a way to be heard but rather to remain soundless.

1.2 Playing music to be silent: Laura Fairlie in Collins' *The Woman in White*

Herein lies a paradox: silence and passivity seem as much female characteristics as playing the piano in the nineteenth century. Another sensation fiction character that fully embodies this idea is to be found in Laura Fairlie from Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* (1859). The novel follows the structure of a criminal trial where the protagonists testify about Laura Fairlie's story and her madness – she is, however, not one of the narrators. Laura Fairlie is sent to an asylum by her husband who wants her money; to do so, he exchanges her against her half-sister (the mysterious woman in white) who dies of a heart disease. Laura's other sister, Marion Halcombe, and the art teacher Walter Halright try to restore the truth and liberate Laura. Playing music is presented as one of Laura's main characteristics and denotes her aristocratic situation. Before marrying the calculating Sir Percival Glyde, Laura regularly plays the piano but stops once in the asylum. She plays especially for Walter Halright, her art teacher,

[19] For an account on the figure of the siren see: Gabriel Bessler, *Von Nixen und Wasserfrauen* (Cologne: DuMont Buchverlag, 1995); Arthur Waugh, *Sea Enchantress: The Tale of the Mermaid and her Kin* (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1961); *Music of the Sirens*, ed. by Linda Austern and Inna Naroditskaya (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).
[20] *LA*, p. 70-71.

who appreciates her 'tender feeling' and 'delicate womanly taste' for music.[21] His comment emphasises the idea that playing music in the domestic sphere is a feminine feature.

By her absence as a narrator, Laura Fairlie is presented as a passive character. Passivity and music are two of the main characteristics of Laura Fairlie. Yet, like for Lady Audley, music is a way to silence her feelings, to emphasise her passivity. Music is even 'her only refuge from herself',[22] that is to say a place to hide from external dangers. According to Yannick Rippa, passivity was a common feminine feature in the nineteenth century, particularly for madwomen:

> Passivité dans la recherche de la mort comme dans la folie: la femme se terre dans l'aliénation silencieuse, se tue en cachette. Cette passivité définit à elle seule l'idiosyncrasie féminine: voilà ainsi révélée la *constante*-clé du répertoire des conduites des aliénées.[23]

Music is therefore a way to hide, as it were, to openly wear a mask in society. The depictions of Laura Fairlie and Lady Audley playing the piano are quite similar. Through music, Laura Fairlie also expresses her nervousness without clearly voicing it, as the following passage shows:

> 'I am very sorry you are going,' she said, […] her fingers flying over the keys of the piano with a strange feverish energy which I [Walter Halright] had never noticed in her before. […]
> Her fingers wavered on the piano; she struck a false note; confused herself in trying to set it right; and dropped her hands angrily on her lap. […]
> Sometimes, her fingers touched the notes with lingering fondness, a soft, plaintive, dying tenderness, unutterably beautiful and mournful to hear – sometimes, they faltered and failed her, or hurried over the instrument mechanically, as if their task was a burden to them.[24]

[21] Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White,* ed. by Matthew Sweet (London: Penguin Classics, 1999), p. 65.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 123.
[23] Rippa, p. 96.
[24] *WW*, pp. 122-23.

Laura plays with the same 'rapid fingers' as Lady Audley and is unable to play confidently because she is disturbed by the announcement of the departure of Walter Halright who she secretly loves. The latter listens, observes the musician and decomposes her bodily performance. He detaches the fingers from the rest of her body as if she were an automaton playing. Her body seems to mechanically play the role of the woman musician. However, the difficulties of execution reflect the conflict between the *silence* of Laura's feelings and the *sound* of the piano. Laura tries to force her body to play despite her inner agitation, and the 'burden' of the fingers could be likened to that of a costume an actress wears and plays with even if she does not completely fit in it. To sum up, the description by Walter Halright emphasises the fact that playing music is a role women take on even if it does not always suit them. When Laura is released from the asylum, her husband dies and she can finally marry Walter Halright. However she does not practise music again. It is as if, as Phyllis Weliver suggests, music were merely an indicator of her identity as an upper-class lady that she loses by becoming the wife of an art teacher. [25]

The comparison between Lady Audley and Laura Fairlie helps us to understand how music can work as an indicator of role-playing in the middle and upper classes, notably through the idea of body performance. The main difference between both novels is that in *The Woman in White* music is associated with passivity whereas in *Lady Audley's Secret* it is associated with the deliberate manipulation of the heroine. In other words, music is presented as part of a role-playing in both novels but it is pointed out as such in Braddon's novel and presented as a constructed artifice of upper-class women.

In light of these observations and to come back to Lady Audley's monomania, it can be said that the heroine relies on the importance of the body in madness (female heredity, hysteria, *maladie nerveuse*) and in music (sitting still at the piano) to fulfil the role of Sir Audley's wife. The fact that she is one of the voices of the discourse on madness in the novel – she is the one who offers scientific information on monomania and on the heredity of madness – shows that she consciously uses madness to maintain her social position. She is nonetheless not the only 'voice' of madness in the

[25] Phyllis Weliver: 'it is significant that when she loses her memory she also loses her music and her class identity', 'Music and Female Power in Sensation Fiction', *The Wilkie Collins Journal,* 02 (1999) <http://wilkiecollinssociety.org> [accessed 15 April 2013].

text since she is judged and diagnosed by male characters who decide to incarcerate her.

I have made a distinction here between Lady Audley's madness – deliberately played – and her monomania – which she does not explicitly confess in the text but of which music and (mad) acting are signs.

1.3 The diagnosis of men and Robert's monomania

Robert is a paradoxical figure of madness, inasmuch as he is both a patient and a doctor. He observes Lady Audley and draws conclusions, even telling her: 'let me be the physician to strike to the root of your malady, Lady Audley'.[26] But it is Doctor Mosgrave who gives the final diagnosis concerning Lady Audley. Therefore, she (like Laura Fairlie) is diagnosed by two male physicians as required by law.[27] However, Mosgrave does not clearly acknowledge her madness. In this sense, he represents rather the broadness of the discourse on madness by evoking generalities. He enumerates 'latent insanity', dementia', 'acute mania', and heredity,[28] but concludes that she is more dangerous than mad. This is exactly what Lady Audley is trying to escape; she prefers to be seen as mad than as immoral. It is important to note that Mosgrave draws his conclusions after having heard Robert's version but above all after talking with Lady Audley for ten minutes; a short observation – that seems to rely more on her physical appearance than on her argumentation – is therefore sufficient to diagnose the madness of a female patient. Mosgrave's conclusion is: because Lady Audley behaves in a deviant manner – she does not succeed in fulfilling a woman's role – she must be dangerous. With Lady Audley's performance of madness, her discourse on it and the doctors' diagnosis, madness seems to be presented as a palliative measure specific to women. Mosgrave's lack of clarity as to Lady Audley's mental state leaves the matter open to interpretation. Although Robert drives her to the *maison de santé,* and she is declared dead by the narrator at the end of the story, nothing prevents us from thinking that Lady Audley has found a new trick to charm the personnel of the institution, to escape and build a new identity. Madness is not a point of closure in the narration but a point of unresolution.

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[26] *LA*, p. 226.
[27] The Madhouse Act of 1828 stated that two medical men had to sign the certificate for commitment, Showalter, p. 26.
[28] *LA*, p. 323.

Furthermore, Robert echoes the medical discourse throughout the text by using a scientific method to unveil Lady Audley's identity. And yet, the repetitive use of this 'inductive method' (that he regularly exposes to the other characters) shows that he is somehow obsessed with it. He is another voice for the medical discourse but also an example of a case of monomaniacal behaviour. He talks several times about 'the chain of circumstansial evidence' that unites George's disappearance with Lady Audley's identity. This method recalls the theory of Henry Maudsley who, a few years after the publication of *Lady Audley's Secret*, stressed the importance of observing the body as a means of discovering inner disorders, or mind disorders.[29] A very similar vocabulary is used by Maudsley in his essay and by Robert. The psychiatrist states:

> Surely it is time we put seriously to ourselves the question whether the inductive method, which has proved its worth by its abundant fruitfulness wherever it has been faithfully applied, should not be as rigidly used in the investigation of mind as in the investigation of the natural phenomena.[30]

As Maudsley suggests, Robert observes Lady Audley's body to discover her secret. A key scene where Lady Audley plays the piano illustrates this idea particularly well. The fact that she is performing places her body at the centre of the attention, and the audience is listening but also observing. While she is playing a sonata by Beethoven, Lady Audley is described as 'a pretty musician'. This scene becomes a moment of observation of the female body and beauty. Robert sits next to her on the piano and observes her hands:

> Robert Audley lingered by her side, and as he had no occupation in turning over the leaves of her music, he amused himself by watching her jewelled white hands gliding softly over the keys, with the lace sleeves dropping away from her graceful arched wrists. […] From the fingers his eyes wandered to the rounded wrists: the broad, flat, gold bracelet upon her right wrist dropped over her hand,

[29] Henry Maudsley: 'everything which is displayed outwardly is contained secretly in the innermost. We cannot truly understand mind functions without embracing in our enquiry all the bodily functions and, I might perhaps without exaggeration say, all the Bodily features', in *Body and Mind: An Inquiry into their connection and mutual influence, specially in reference to mental disorder* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1871), p. 29.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

> as she executed a rapid passage. She stopped to re-arrange it; but before she could do so, Robert Audley noticed a bruise upon her delicate skin.[31]

The music is not described at all; the focus is on Lady Audley's body and particularly the jewellery she wears, as if to denote the feminine artifices of her clothing. Like a doctor, Robert examines the bruise on her wrist and is shortly followed by Sir Audley. Under the lights of her performance, Lady Audley is therefore scrutinised by men. However, Robert's obsession with the induction method is itself a form of monomania. He prefers to slowly apply this scientific method rather than discovering the truth through other means, such as interrogating George Talboys's son. Although the child could tell him the truth, Robert pretends it would be immoral, but it would above all end his investigation and therefore obstruct his monomania. By being a monomaniac under cover, Robert appears to be a double of Lady Audley. The fact that he and Lady Audley are monomaniacs shows that it is not a gendered disease. The narrator even highlights some of Robert's habits that are usually seen as feminine. For example, Robert reads a lot of French novels; Balzac's *Peau de chagrin* is even mentioned, and yet a definition of monomania is given in this novel (as I have shown in the introduction to the chapter). Lady Audley also reads French novels, she mentions the story of a Parisian woman who committed a crime and went free for a long time before being charged. Like Camille Maupin and Emma Bovary, Lady Audley and Robert are passionate readers and, as I have already explained, reading was seen as a potential cause of monomania.

Robert's monomania, just like Lady Audley's, is an obsession about identity and finding a place in society. Lady Audley wants to be a housewife in an upper-class family and Robert needs to overcome his idleness (including reading or in other words his 'feminine' pastimes) to find a job. Their monomanias work symmetrically and characterise gender: Lady Audley wants to reach the place of the 'uttermost' woman and Robert has to find a more masculine position in society (i.e. by becoming an attorney and a husband). By presenting Lady Audley performing her madness, Robert trying to be a detective-doctor and both being affected by monomania, the novel shows that madness is not necessarily gendered but rather constructed by the medical discourse. The author deconstructs the discourse on madness (by highlighting

[31] *LA*, pp. 79-80.

its confusion through both patient and doctor figures) to show that it is 'artificially' constructed. The artifice is established by the interactions of role-playing in society. Hence the idea that Lady Audley acts out madness and her femininity through music, as I will now illustrate by developing the idea that she is above all a performer.

2. Music, madness and performance

2.1 Lady Audley's musical manipulations

To reach the social position she wants, Lady Audley changes her identity several times, therefore appearing as an actress with multiple facets. The notion of theatricality is indeed redundant in the text and the physical descriptions of Lady Audley are numerous. It is the intertwining of theatricality and music that sets the performance of the heroine in the foreground. Robert even says: 'What an actress this woman is. What an arch trickster – what an all-accomplished deceiver. But she shall play her pretty comedy no longer under my uncle's roof'.[32] The physical descriptions highlight her capacity to look different: as a helpless creature or a cruel one. She looks childish when she is in society but vile when she thinks she is alone. The pre-Raphaelite portrait in her room points out her 'wicked look' and 'the aspect of a beautiful fiend'.[33] This portrait is significant in the narration since its description corresponds to the moment of recognition by George of Lady Audley (who he has only heard of) as his wife. Instead of revealing the truth to Robert, George withdraws into silence. It is as if the physical exposition of Lady Audley's body (in her portrait) were silencing her spectators. She is at the centre of the stage and the male audience silently observes her. The bodily performance of the heroine is accentuated by the theatrical vocabulary, for example she is metaphorically described as wearing masks, and even compared to the Iron mask. She is a character of contrasts: possessing an apparent innocence and a hidden cruelty, posing to remain covered, playing music to pretend to be silent.

The narration centres on the idea of deceptive appearances, particularly as exposed through music and madness. Before visiting her mother in the asylum, Lady Audley imagines her as a monstrous figure but is surprised to find 'a golden-haired,

[32] *Ibid*., p. 219.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 65.

blue-eyed, girlish creature, who seemed as frivolous as a butterfly'.[34] Rather than madness, Lady Audley seems to have inherited from her mother her misleading physical features. The heroine is indeed presented several times as having a girlish face and golden hair. She is even described as ornamental by another governess of her former employer, who admits that she was 'a person to be shown off to visitors, and to play fantasias on the drawing-room piano'.[35] With music, Lady Audley takes the appearance of a decorative woman devoid of any profoundness or sense of agency. Music allows her to appear as a silent image, a *cliché*. However, this is only a cover for her social agenda and ability to manipulate. In the same way as Jill L. Matus describes her disclosure of madness as a 'cover-up', we could also extend this argument to music, inasmuch as music constitutes a form of artistic exposure that covers her up.[36] Sometimes the proximity of the piano suffices to create the illusion. For example, when Lady Audley is simply sitting at the piano and turning the leaves of 'some new music' the narrator describes her outfit: 'She twirled round upon this revolving seat, making a rustling with her silk flounces'.[37] Being at the piano, without playing, suffices to draw attention to her appearance; the emphasis on her 'physical' presence deceives her audience. Music is therefore on the side of seeing rather than of listening. Moreover, the music she plays is never fully described. We know that she plays Beethoven or Mendelssohn, but the pieces are always vague, like when she plays 'a pensive sonata' by Beethoven. It is not so much the sonata that is pensive but the way she plays, as if music were dissimulating her thoughts.

By contrast, Clara (George's sister) is presented as a musician who is heard before she is seen. Robert hears someone playing the organ in the village church, without knowing it is Clara: 'He stopped and listened to the slow harmonies of a dreamy melody that sounded like an extempore composition of an accomplished player'.[38] Clara is right away presented as a 'true' musician; first she plays in a sacred place, then she is able to compose, whereas Lady Audley only plays in the domestic sphere and is an interpreter. Clara's music is much more developed than that of Lady Audley. Without seeing the musician Robert can hear 'the monotonous melancholy'

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 298.
[35] *Ibid.*, p. 202.
[36] Jill L. Matus, 'Disclosure as « Cover Up »: The Discourse of Madness in *Lady Audley's Secret*', *University of Toronto Quarterly: A Canadian Journal of the Humanities* 62:3 (1993), 334-55.
[37] *LA*, pp. 76-77.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 218.

of the performance and the 'tones of the instrument, now swelling to their fullest power, now sinking to a low, whispering softness'.[39] Clara plays music for its own sake and does not use it as an artifice. The revelation of the musician's identity after the performance creates a gender ambiguity. Robert is surprised to find a woman (he says 'his talents'); as if Clara's talent, her ability to compose and the sacred place of performance were not to be expected of a woman musician. Clara's acousmatic performance[40] contrasts with Lady Audley's visual performances. The comparison of Clara and Lady Audley (who both play Mendelssohn) shows that music reflects women's social agendas. Lady Audley sees marriage as a means to succeed in life and uses music to don the costume of the perfect wife, whereas Clara seems to believe in marriage and in art for their own sakes.

Music is therefore not presented as a characteristic of the passive woman; whether it is used to manipulate others or to be sacralised, it is in *Lady Audley* on the side of intelligent women.

2.2 Music as textual performance

The musical reference becomes recurrent in the novel through the female body, notably Lady Audley's visual characteristics, and is woven into the (detective) narration. The repetitive presence of music through Lady Audley's (bodily) performance composes another performance, that of the text. Music is indeed one of the clues to the novel's outcome; it reinforces the text as a detective fiction. I would like to suggest that, although it is mainly connected to Lady Audley's idendity, music escapes the mere characteristic of the heroine to become another narrative voice. For example, Lady Audley's bruised wrist arouses Robert curiosity while she plays the piano. From that moment she appears as a suspicious and mysterious character. Similarly, Robert visits Lady Audley's former employer for whom she worked as a governess and a music teacher, and shortly after the village where George and his wife used to live. Robert learns there that George's wife (Helen) had left abruptly after her husband's departure for Australia and started to support herself by giving music lessons. These converging elements are confirmed by Helen Talboys's handwriting, which is recognised by Robert as Lady Audley's.[41] So, music implicitly

[39] *Ibid.*
[40] Which means being heard without being seen.
[41] Robert already associates Helen Talboys's handwriting with Lady Audley's in chapter one, volume two.

participates in this moment of identification, in the resolution of the investigation. It is also interesting to underline the role of female characteristics in this revelation, namely the heroine's handwriting and musical talents where her fingers are in the spotlight, which proves once more the significance of the female body in the narration.

Another implicit but striking example of music dubbing the narration is the mention of Bellini's *Norma*, as played in the residence of Lady Audley's former employer, where the 'Deh con te' is played on the piano. The opera was created in 1831 after Alexandre Soumet's tragedy *Norma ou l'infanticide*. Norma has two illegitimate children with her lover Pollione. When he leaves her she thinks about killing her children but leaves them with Adalgisa instead. The duet 'Deh con te!' is sung in the second act of the opera, when Norma wants to leave her children.[42] And yet after the departure of her husband Lady Audley (then Helen Talboys) also leaves her son to her own father. The mention of this opera is another clue to Lady Audley's identity that also highlights her deviance from her duty as a woman. However, by abandoning her son, she does exactly the same thing as her husband George when he left for Australia: she leaves her family to try to find a secure social position. Lady Audley transforms female attributes (she abandons her child to give piano lessons) for her own social purposes. These musical clues are, as it were, performative of the narration; they not only ornament the text or give a domestic context to Lady Audley, they also actively help to unfold the mystery of Lady Audley.

Thus, it is as if music escaped the narration, becoming an element in the performance between fiction and reality. Furthermore, Braddon presents her characters as artists performing a social comedy. Yet, fictional characters remind one of real artists; as Phyllis Weliver noted, we could associate the couple Clara Talboys/Robert Audley with the famous couple of musicians Clara and Robert Schumann, bridging fiction and reality once again.[43]

Lady Audley's comedy is no other than the social comedy of gender and class. The theme of theatricality is thus as central in *Lady Audley's Secret* as it is in *Béatrix*. While Balzac incorporates this theme to link it to his *human* comedy, Braddon directs it specifically towards the comedy of *gender*. Music and madness are exposed as two

[42] 'Deh! con te, con te li prendi, li sostieni, li defendi' ('Ah ! With you, take them with you, support them and defend them') Bellini, *Norma,* act 2, scene 1.
[43] <http://wilkiecollinssociety.org>

artifices of women's lives. With the social ascension of Lady Audley – thanks to her musical skills – Braddon shows how a woman can fake her status. Despite Lady Audley's talent, music is only a means to accomplish her social agenda rather than a genuine passion for art. The attempts to use madness to cover her crimes confirm that she deliberately takes possession of what are seen as female characteristics in order to climb the social ladder. Braddon emphasises the counterfeit aspects of music and madness in women's lives by presenting them as obsessive patterns in Lady Audley's life and, at the same time, repetitive elements of the narration. Music and madness are thus not only anchored in the medical context of monomania but also show that the author is unremittingly exposing those elements throughout the story as artifices.

Both music and madness draw attention to Lady Audley's physical appearance; she is observed and examined by her audience. Music and madness are indeed covers for Lady Audley in the gender comedy; and at the same time they place her at the foreground of the stage. It would seem that Lady Audley's real secret is not that she is mad but that she is a performer. In a word, *Lady Audley's Secret* is a novel about performing gender through music and madness with the female body at the centre.

Conclusion

The French Realist and Victorian sensation fiction texts exposed in this chapter present a more 'materialist' conception of women musicians than in Romanticism. Here, women are full-fledged and 'fleshy' characters. In the medical and artistic context of the mid-nineteenth century, the female body becomes the centre of attention. The body is the meeting point of the medical discourse and musical performance. More particularly, monomania appears as the most patent affliction for women musicians. It is indeed a condition that unites the body and the imagination: the 'imagination' because the individuals inwardly repeat the same thought, and the 'body' because their condition is physically pathologised.

In these three texts, the 'material' element connecting the female body, music, and monomania together is that of vibration. The feminine practice of music was seen in terms of nervous stimulation. In 1837, the British doctor James Johnson warned against the dangerous effects of music on the female body and mentioned that when 'nerves are ultimately unstrung by perpetual vibration, [and] the natural, the inevitable consequence is, depression of spirits, often approaching to hypochondriacism'.[1] This quotation helps us to link music and monomania through one crucial aspect: repetition. The repetitive nature of music and obsession meets in women's performances to create perpetual vibration. The image of the electric current (in the aftermath of Galvani's animal electricity) is used in the texts to materialise the effect of music on the female body. James Johnson further pointed out 'the galvanic fluid of harmony, which vibrates the ear – electrifies the soul – and thrills through every nerve in the body'.[2]

Similarly, playing music is connected to the *maladie nerveuse* of Camille, Emma and Lady Audley. The three heroines are victims of intellectual and artistic over-stimulation and appear as *mélomanes intellectuelles.*[3] Balzac, Flaubert and Braddon therefore introduce common medical and social views on the relationship

[1] James Johnson, *The Economy of Health,* p. 48.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 32-34.
[3] Since music is inseparable from our heroines' obsessions, they can be designated as 'mélomanes intellectuelles'. Esquirol defines intellectual monomania as follows: 'Les malades partent d'un principe faux dont ils suivent sans dévier les raisonnements logiques et dont ils tirent des conséquences légitimes qui modifient leurs affections et les actes de leur volonté. Hors de ce délire partiel, ils sentent, raisonnent, agissent comme tout le monde. Des illusions, des hallucinations, des associations vicieuses d'idées, des convictions fausses, erronées, bizarres, sont à la base de ce délire que je voudrais appeler monomanie intellectuelle', in *Des maladies mentales*, II, pp. 1-2.

between women and music. A striking example is the opera *Lucia di Lammermoor*, which appears in all three texts. Béatrix is left alone during the opera at the entrance of the theatre and is perceived as an immoral woman, Emma Bovary pictures the scenery of Donizetti's opera and sensually projects herself within it, and although it is not clearly mentioned in Braddon's novel the very name Lucy can be seen as an association with Donizetti's mad woman. The image of the mad Lucie is present in each text and reveals that the authors perpetuate the cliché of music and madwomen as well as laughing at it.

The medical discourse has led to a vision of pathogenic music strongly connected to the feminine practice.[4] In fact, there seems to have been a process of incorporation of the medical discourse in music theory. And yet this very incorporation has no other intermediate than the female body. In *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*, the music theorist Eduard Hanslick distinguished a pathological (subjective) vision of music from an aesthetic (objective) one. And yet the pathological appreciation of music was, for Hanslick, particularly feminine. He writes about the lack of women composers:

> Der Grund liegt – außer den allgemeinen Bedingungen, welche Frauen von geistigen Hervorbringungen ferner halten – eben in dem plastischen Moment des Komponierens, das eine Entäußerung der Subjektivität nicht minder, wenngleich in verschiedener Richtung erheischt, als die bildenden Künste. Wenn die Stärke und Lebendigkeit des Fühlens wirklich maßgebend für das Tondichten wäre, so würde der gänzliche Mangel an Komponistinnen neben so zahlreichen Schriftstellerinnen und Malerinnen schwer zu erklären sein. Nicht das Gefühl komponiert, sondern die speziell musikalische, künstlerisch geschulte Begabung.[5]

[4] James Kennaway, *Bad Vibrations*, *the History of the Idea of Music as a Cause of Disease* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), p. 51.

[5] Eduard Hanslick, *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen ein Beitrag zur Revision der Ästhetik der Tonkunst,* (1854) (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Hartel, 1922), p. 94. ('The cause, apart from the general reasons why women are less capable of mental achievements, is the plastic element in musical compositions, which like sculpture and architecture, though in a different manner, imposes on us the necessity of keeping ourselves *free* from all subjective feelings. If the composing of music depended upon the intensity and vividness of our feelings, the complete want of female composers, as against the numerous authoresses and female painters, would be difficult to account for. It is not the feeling but a specifically musical and technically-trained aptitude that enables us to compose.' *The Beautiful in Music, a contribution to the revisal of musical aesthetics*, trans by. Gustav Cohen (London: Novello and Company, 1891), p. 101.)

Furthermore, he exposes a connection between subjectivity, pathology and the imagination by distinguishing passive listeners from musicians. He says of the former: 'Ihr Verhalten gegen die Musik ist nicht anschauend, sondern pathologisch; ein stetes Dämmern, Fühlen, Schwärmen, ein Hangen und Bangen in klingendem Nichts'.[6] The heroines presented in this chapter are not only 'pathological listeners'; their will to constitute a new reality through musical performance confers upon them an artistic, if not creative, agency. Whether listeners or musicians, women, particularly through their bodies, contributed through medical and literary discourses to the development of a new aesthetics of music highlighting a conflict between the creative form of music and its material, physical interpretation.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 120-21.

Chapter 4: Women as guides in the musical travels of George Sand's *Consuelo* (1842-44) and George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876)

Introduction

Examining texts by George Sand and George Eliot in a same chapter allows us to highlight an evolution in the representation of the woman musician and her body: in the perspective of these female writers, the musician is a fully-fledged character (in the organic sense presented in the previous chapter) but is also endowed with a moral message, that of a social ideal where art is understood as a religion. The woman musician thus has a body but also a spiritual role. Both authors ground the image of the woman musician on the mind-body dichotomy so as to better transcend it and present women musicians as 'complete' characters at the centre of the female musical *Bildungsromane*. While in Romanticism the woman musician is presented as an ethereal figure essential to the development of the male artist, she becomes the focus of the narration in Realist and sensation fictions, as a flesh and blood character. However, as has been shown, this 'materialisation' remains disturbed due its pathologisation. The two novels examined in this chapter are hybrid works that borrow from Romanticism, Realism, melodrama and even Fantastic literature and are committed to offering a representation of society through the physical and moral evolution of the female artist. *Consuelo*, alongside its sequel *La Comtesse de Rudolstadt*, occupies a peculiar place within the chronology of the woman musician in nineteenth-century literature. Written a few years before the French Revolution of 1848, *Consuelo* is in fact an immense 'musical novel' of the eighteenth century. If I dare make this chronological breach, it is not only because the novel itself transcends time by applying social, political, and aesthetic ideas that emerge at the beginning of the nineteenth century to the musical life of the eighteenth century, but also because George Sand's vision of the female artist and her body borrows from both the Romantics and the Realists.

Consuelo and *Daniel Deronda* deal with the quest for identity of women musician characters. Although the formation of Consuelo is the concern of the text, it

is paralleled with that of Albert and of secondary characters such as Haydn. In *Daniel Deronda*, the quest for identity pertains to the eponymous character, but the developments of Mirah, and of Gwendolen Harleth, are joined to that of the hero. In both novels, music does not only appear at revealing moments, it is above all the ground, or the décor, on which the heroines' education develops. The apprenticeship of the heroines corresponds to their acceptation and affirmation as women, and music is key in this feminine development.

Music can be seen as a space in which Consuelo's and Mirah's identities are formed. Tia DeNora has recently explored the role of music in self-identity development through a sociological lens. Drawing upon Adorno's thoughts on the 'sociology of music', she shows how music can be involved in individual and collective behaviours such as knowledge formation, self-control and social control. She states:

> it is necessary to study actual Musical Events, occasions in which music comes to be linked to modes of embodied, emotional, and aesthetic agency that are not only congruent with but desired by actors, institutions, or organisations who deploy particular types of music so as to draw individuals or groups more closely towards those modes of agency […].
> Thus, music is not only a tool used by individuals for self-determination and self-control; it is also used by individuals and organisations as a tool for the 'control' of others […].[1]

It is this view of music as a tool for self and social development that I would like to pursue in this chapter. Music is anchored in the quest for identity of the heroines since it concurs with learning both about and through music. In other words, music reveals personal and social (bodily) agency.

The question of the physical appearance of women musicians is the trigger behind both narrations. The famous opening of *Daniel Deronda* 'Was she beautiful or not beautiful?'[2] sets the plot around feminine physical appearance and questions from the beginning the stability of this very feminine appearance. The question raised by Daniel Deronda is directed at Gwendolen Harleth, whose personal development is

[1] Tia DeNora, *After Adorno: Rethinking Music Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 140, p. 147.
[2] George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda,* ed. by Terence Cave (London: Penguin Books, 1995 repr. 2003), p. 7.

paralleled with that of the hero as well as that of the musician Mirah. The troubling of feminine identity of the opening is accentuated by the confusion between narrative and discourse chronologies. The first two chapters present events actually taking place later in the narration; it is only in chapter twenty-one that these events reappear within the chronological order of the plot. This opening introduces a displacement of characters – that will remain throughout the story – creating a correlation between Gwendolen and Mirah; hence my interpretation of the first line as being directed not only at Gwendolen but also at the musician Mirah. The same questioning is presented in relation to Consuelo in George Sand's novel. A male character, Anzoleto, wonders if Consuelo is beautiful or not and needs to know the opinion of others on the matter to realise that Consuelo can be beautiful. This questioning of women's beauty illustrates both authors' desire to rethink the perception of women's physical status as well as their place in society and art.

The ambiguous beauty of Consuelo and Mirah is not their only point in common; they are both extremely talented singers who cannot sustain their prima donna careers. They also both come from modest classes; Consuelo is originally a Spanish bohemian and Mirah comes from a modest Jewish family. As a matter of fact, the narrator of *Consuelo* says at the beginning:

> Bohémienne, elle ne l'était pourtant que de profession et par manière de dire; car de race, elle n'était ni gitana ni indoue, non plus qu'israelite en aucune façon […] Si j'avais inventé le personnage de Consuelo, je ne prétends point que je ne l'eusse fait sortir d'Israel, ou de plus loin encore […].[3]

The notions of growth, origin and gender that are connected with the development of the heroines are entangled and disentangled through music – we find here female versions of Wilhelm Meister's formation. Furthermore, the resemblances between Mirah and Consuelo are such that it appears plausible that George Eliot was inspired by the French novel. After the publication of *Daniel Deronda* (in the same year as George Sand's death), several studies brought together the works of both authors.[4]

[3] *Consuelo,* p. 38.
[4] For example, Henry James wrote a fictive debate about the two authors, in 'Daniel Deronda: A Conversation', *Atlantic Monthly*, 38 (1876), 684-94. We could also mention Daniel Vitaglione's work, *George Eliot and George Sand* (New-York, Bern, Paris: Peter Lang, 1993). It seems that the common denominator between both authors was George Henry Lewes, who was George Eliot's partner, and who corresponded with George Sand and translated her work into English.

Franz Liszt also perceived some similarities between the two writers, writing in a letter:

> Par moment, disait-il au sujet d'Eliot, sa manière d'écouter me rappelait Mme Sand. Elle paraissait absorber comme une éponge ce qu'elle voyait et entendait… Mais Mme Sand était recueillie en écoutant, elle vous rendait plus éloquent ; Mlle Evans au contraire, semblait convoiter l'énonciation et vous mettait sur vos gardes.[5]

Besides their common (masculine) pen name, the authors' similarities appear to be multiple. George Sand and George Eliot were both musicians; they both frequented literary and musical salons in Europe. The European perspective is prevalent in both novels as music and travels together structure the heroines' developments. The opening of boundaries is connected to questions of nation and of social progress. Both novels impart a message about the significant role played by music in this social progress; by confronting concepts of community (bohemian life in *Consuelo* and Jewishness in *Daniel Deronda*) and of nations, music is presented as a principle of social cohesion. The authors lean on different theories but reach the same conclusion: music can act as a religion and the female artist has a role to play in social progress. While George Sand incorporates socialist (and Saint-Simonian) theories such as those of Félicité de Lamennais and Pierre Leroux, George Eliot is influenced by the evolutionary and organicist theories of Auguste Comte and Charles Darwin, as I shall further explore. The heroines' physical and moral development into womanhood is an embodiment of social evolution. The empowered women musicians have a moral and intellectual role to play that establishes them as social guides, educators.

[5] Cited in Therèse Marix-Spire, *George Sand et la musique* (Paris: Nouvelles éditions Latines, 1955), pp. 138-39.

George Sand's *Consuelo, La Comtesse de Rudolstadt:* the prophetess musician

Sand's socialism

Consuelo's self-development corresponds to a musical transformation. In the first chapter of this immense novel, Consuelo is presented as 'une petite fille qui ne se croit point et ne se sent point encore femme'.[1] The story of Consuelo is precisely the development, through music, of this little girl into an empowered woman. Different musical genres provide a framework for the heroine's physical and intellectual growth. From art and religious music to folk music, the story is overflowing with both fictional and real references, and George Sand intertwines the biographies of musicians such as Nicola Porpora and Joseph Haydn with the story of Consuelo. The heroine becomes a prima donna and performs in theatres across Europe, but she is also a music teacher, a composer and, at the end, a social educator through music. The musical palette is quite wide and allows a confrontation of the heroine to herself and to others, including male artists who play a decisive role in her personal development (we therefore have here an inversion of the male Bildungsroman as it is presented in *Wilhelm Meister*).

A brief summary of the novel will help us understand the evolution of the character together with the role of music. The novel opens on her education at the Mendicanti ospedale[2] in Venice directed by Nicola Porpora. The latter asks Consuelo to sing Pergolesi's *Salve Regina* to give the other students (referred to as the 'undisciplined flock') an example of a perfect solo. The beginning of the novel thus presents the character as a virginal figure[3] physically weak and not beautiful but displaying 'consciousness' while singing (Porpora praises this musical quality throughout the narration). Consuelo is soon after engaged at the theatre San Samuel in Venice where she sings religious and serious music, receiving the acclaim of the audience. When she discovers the infidelity of Anzoleto, her platonic lover who had promised to marry her, she decides to leave Venice for Bohemia where she teaches

[1] *Consuelo*, pp. 35-36.
[2] The Ospedali were Venetian institutions offering musical education to children of different origins.
[3] *Salve Regina* is a Christian prayer addressed to the Virgin Mary.

music in a noble family and stops performing in public. The encounter with the mysterious Albert de Rudolstadt and with Bohemian folk music changes Consuelo's vision of art. However, she is not completely at ease in this family, and prefers to leave them to join her mentor Porpora, now in Vienna, to resume her singing career. Her public performances continue in *La Comtesse de Rudolstadt* where Consuelo performs in Berlin and is imprisoned. She is freed by a mysterious knight with whom she falls in love without knowing his identity. Before discovering who he really is she has to endure a series of physical and moral tests, always accompanied by music, within the secret society called *les Invisibles*. The mysterious knight belonging to this society turns out to be Albert himself. Consuelo and Albert get married and have children while the secret society disappears. After losing her voice on stage, Consuelo ends her career and lives a nomad life with her husband and children. The family travels across Bohemia by foot and spreads a message of social unity through the folk songs they sing.

From the virginal figure singing religious music to the mother-wanderer singing folk songs, Consuelo's evolution is clearly marked by musical, bodily and intellectual agency. I would like to show in this section how George Sand uses music to unite the body and mind. The physical and intellectual evolution of Consuelo as a woman, which occurs through musical experiences, finds equilibrium in the diffusion of art as a social unifier. At the dawn of the 1848 revolution, George Sand presents, in *Consuelo*, a strong message about the humanitarian role of art and of the female artist. When she writes *Consuelo*, George Sand is greatly influenced by her readings of Saint-Simonian writers, and particularly by Lamennais and Leroux who expose the idea of the messianic role of music.

It is through music, so to speak, that George Sand expanded her interest in Saint-Simonianism. It is indeed the musician (and philosopher) Franz Liszt who introduces her to the readings of Saint-Simonians at the beginning of the 1830s,[4] when he was himself looking for a philosophy that would define the role of the artist. First curious about the ideas of philosophers such as Barrault and Enfantin, Liszt is

[4] Thérèse Marix-Spire develops the role of Franz Liszt in the socialism of George Sand. In fact, Marix-Spire explores Liszt's life as much as Sand's; she particularly highlights his appeal for philosophy and his claim that music and philosophy are not antithetic, pp. 419-79.

then convinced by Lamennais who clearly defines the role of the artist.[5] In *De l'art et du beau*, Lamennais states:

> les artistes peuvent enfin, descendant au fond des entrailles de la société, recueillir en eux-mêmes la vie qui y palpite, la répandre dans leurs œuvres qu'elle animera comme l'esprit de Dieu anime et remplit l'univers […] la religion de l'avenir projette ses premières lueurs sur le genre humain en attente, et sur ses futures destinées : l'artiste en doit être le prophète.[6]

Liszt introduces Lamennais to George Sand who shortly after starts to include the social question linked to music and religion in her writings. It is interesting to note that in *De l'art et du beau*, Lamennais develops his social and artistic ideas through bodily metaphors. More particularly, he associates art with the body; for example, he affirms that the role of the artist is to extract art from the 'entrails of society' and explains that works of art are the organs of a living body.[7] Lamennais even says about music: 'la musique est le résultat de l'action des lois physiques, physiologiques et morales, action qui s'exerce directement sur le principe interne qui constitue la nature des êtres'.[8] The corporeal metaphors used by Lamenais are important for understanding the central place of Consuelo's body and its connection with artistic and social ideas. According to Lamennais, art is to be extracted from individual bodies and should unify them as one social body.

The idea of social art, as Lamennais advocates it, is also developed by Pierre Leroux with whom George Sand and the singer Pauline Viardot founded the *Revue indépendante* in 1841. It is in this journal that *Consuelo* (which is dedicated to Pauline Viardot) was published in serial form. If Lamennais does not refer to the role of women in society, Leroux explicitly proclaims the equality of men and women, particularly in marriage. He states, in *De l'égalité*:

> Donc, puisque chaque femme, en tant qu'épouse, nous apparaît égale à son époux, toutes les femmes nous apparaissent sur le même rang que tous les

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 434
[6] Félicité de Lamennais, *De l'art et du beau* (Paris: Frères Garnier, 1885), p. 149.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 333.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 174.

> hommes. Egales à nous dans l'amour et le mariage, comment ne seraient-elles pas égales partout ? Donc, invinciblement la société actuelle se sent entraînée à proclamer l'égalité de l'homme et de la femme.[9]

George Sand further explores the idea of equality between men and women by presenting equality in love and in sexual experience in *Consuelo*.[10] Like Lamennais, Pierre Leroux envisages the social role of art and refutes the idea of 'art for art'; but despite his essays on gender equality he does not combine the role of art with that of women in society and he even seems to be distinguishing artists from women. One of his arguments about gender equality is that as different professional categories (such as scientists, artists and industrials) are considered equal, so too should men and women be.[11] This argument implies that women cannot be considered as part of these professional categories, inasmuch as they represent a category in themselves. Inspired by Lamennais and Leroux, George Sand develops their ideas by establishing the woman musician (and her body) as the preacher of social art. Other influences allow George Sand to present the female artist in a new light, notably her Christian convictions and her readings of E.T.A. Hoffmann that both add a mystic perspective to Consuelo's journey.

The heroine (and her body) is thus the meeting point of aesthetic, social and religious ideas. The transformation of Consuelo, from childhood to womanhood, embodies the author's own developments in relation to social and aesthetic conceptions closing on a utopian note, as if her ideas could only be expressed through the movement of Consuelo's journey. This sections analyses the relation of the heroine with music and society, from her public performances of art music to her 'social' performances of folk music, as well as the initiatory ordeals she has to endure.

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[9] Pierre Leroux, *De l'égalité* (Paris: Boussac, 1848), p. 38.
[10] As Lucienne Frappier-Mazur notes, Leroux never mentions the question of feminine jouissance: 'Il se concentre sur la question de l'égalité sociale, intellectuelle et morale de la femme […]. Au contraire, Sand insiste pendant plusieurs pages sur l'égalité dans l'amour physique, et ses adjurations, fort claires, proclament le droit de la femme au plaisir dans le mariage […]', in 'Code romantique et résurgences du féminin dans la Comtesse de Rudolstadt (Consuelo)', in *Le Récit amoureux,* ed. by Didier Coste (Seyssel: éditions du Champ Vallon, 1984), pp. 53-69, p. 61.
[11] Leroux, p. 42.

1. The intimate body and the public performance

The musical and social awakening of Consuelo corresponds to the self-acceptation of her body. There is a progression in the representation of her body, from a celestial figure, almost without a face or body, to a 'fleshy', terrestrial character. The awakening of Consuelo's physicality is therefore marked by a tension between the sublime and the material that music reflects, as I have shown in Chapter 2. Equally, the music she sings triggers and echoes a self-awareness of her body. There is a form of intimacy in the process of discovering her body that contrasts with the religious and serious music she sings in public.

1.1 The awakening of the physical senses

Consuelo is presented at first as an asexual being singing religious music. Her femininity is negated at the beginning of the novel and she is introduced as an ugly character, as one of the other singers of the *ospedale* notes: 'elle n'est pas belle non plus, elle est jaune comme un cierge pascal, et ses grands yeux ne disent rien du tout; et puis toujours si mal habillée. Décidément c'est une laideron'.[12] The simile with the Christian candle shows that the other singers do not perceive her as feminine but as a religious object. However, the narrator misleads the reader by first presenting these comments from Consuelo's peers to create an effect of surprise, in the same way as Consuelo surprises her audience. When Consuelo sings, a true transfiguration occurs and she becomes beautiful. For example, when singing 'I cieli immensi narrano' by Marcello at the audition for the San Samuel theatre, a 'miraculous transformation' occurs, and she is presented, from this moment on, as more and more beautiful. We could even detect a hint of irony in the repetition of superlatives such as 'jamais sa voix n'avait eu plus d'expression et plus d'éclat';[13] Consuelo looks more beautiful at each performance until the lack of eulogy coincides with the loss of her voice at the end of the story.

Like in Romantic texts, the voice is the link between the immaterial and the material; it divinises her as well as bringing her beauty and body to light. Consuelo's talent is linked to her physical constitution; it is specified several times that she has

[12] *Consuelo*, p. 36.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 304.

the 'organisation' and 'fibres' of an artist[14]. Therefore, Consuelo's extraordinary voice comes from the fibres of her body, her physicality. Although Consuelo's professor, Porpora, distinguishes 'le talent de la matière' from 'le génie de l'âme',[15] Consuelo seems to link both elements throughout the story.

Contrary to Hoffmannian singers such as Antonie in 'Rat Krespel', Consuelo's voice is not only celestial but also organically rooted, which helps her to discover the sensuality of her body. This awakening of sensuality occurs through musical moments shared with Anzoleto. From the beginning, he is presented as a 'physical' character; he is also a singer but is opposed to Consuelo since he is admired for his presence when he sings. Less talented than Consuelo, he is above all a body, described as being 'artiste jusqu'aux os', 'avide de plaisirs' and abandons himself to 'des instincts violents'.[16] Before listening to his songs, the audience sees his physique. Even his musical qualities are characterised through his body, as the following zeugma emphasises: '[il] se lança, […] avec son ambition et son *ut* de poitrine, dans cette carrière périlleuse […]'.[17] Anzoleto is therefore associated in the text with physicality and the musical moments he shares with Consuelo kindle sensuality. From their complicity in Venice Anzoleto's final appearance at *the Invisibles* indenture, not forgetting their subtle kiss at the Rudolstadt castle, their duets denote sensuality. Singing with Anzoleto provokes physical sensations in Consuelo. This is particularly visible when Anzoleto unexpectedly visits Consuelo at the Rudolstadt castle in Bohemia – where the heroine takes refuge after his betrayals in Venice. The performance of Venetian canticles in front of the Rudolstadt family denotes a sexual scene, with the description being focused on Consuelo's sensations:

> Elle retrouvait en lui toute une vie de contemplation animale ignorante et délicieuse; […] tout un passé de calme, d'insouciance, de mouvement physique […]. Consuelo chantait d'une voix toujours plus douce et plus touchante, en s'abandonnant par de vagues instincts aux distinctions que je viens de faire à sa place, trop longuement sans doute. […] Sans cela comprendrait-on par quelle fatale mobilité de sentiment cette jeune fille si sage et si sincère […] s'oublia au point d'écouter sa voix, d'effleurer sa chevelure, et de respirer son souffle avec

[14] *Ibid*., p. 486.
[15] *Ibid*., p. 89.
[16] *Ibid*., p. 45.
[17] *Ibid*., p. 48.

> une sorte de délice? […] Anzoleto, n'accompagnant plus que d'une main, avait passé son autre bras autour du corps flexible de son amie, et l'attirait insensiblement contre le sien. […] Tout à coup elle sentit à la fin d'une strophe les lèvres ardentes de son premier fiancé sur les siennes. Elle retint un cri; et, se penchant sur le clavier, elle fondit en larmes.[18]

This passage shows the awakening of sensuality in Consuelo although she is not able to identify or control it, hence the intervention of the narrator justifying the comments about Consuelo's feelings. The phrase 's'abandonnant par de vagues instincts' demonstrates that Consuelo's reaction is physical, almost animal in nature, but also contrasts with Porpora's idea, as mentioned above, that she sings with consciousness; 'instinct' could thus also be seen as a form of unconsciousness. 'Instinct' is another connection between the body and the mind; on the one hand, singing is presented as an 'instinctive' role she fulfils, as a natural and divine quality – therefore unphysical – while on the other hand it awakens sensuous instincts, bodily sensations. This episode is duplicated in *La Comtesse de Rudolstadt*; when Consuelo and the mysterious knight Liverani kiss, the word 'instinct' is used again but this time without the intervention of the narrator, as if Consuelo were finally aware of her bodily reaction. We could draw here a parallel between the superlatives mentioned above that are used to describe Consuelo's voice and her sensual experiences where the narrator repeatedly highlights how chaste she is. Through these hints of irony, the voice of the narrator links the transformation of Consuelo's voice (increasingly beautiful) to the discovery of sensuality (with her instincts and chastity).

If Anzoleto is a body that awakens Consuelo's femininity, it is with Albert de Rudolstadt – who is more of a spectre than a body – that she slowly pursues her quest for identity and sensuality. The intimate moments between Consuelo and Albert occur in the cave called Schrekenstein (literally the stone of fright) where Albert retreats during mystical crises. More than a depiction of moments shared by the two characters, the cave scenes are strategic introspective moments for the heroine, and the Schrekenstein appears as a place for self-discovery. Music, and more particularly the music played on the violin by Albert, participates in this introspection. Albert's violin attracts Consuelo in the cave and appears as a sensual violin:

[18] *Ibid*., pp. 389-90.

> le son admirable de l'instrument lui chanta le psaume ancien qu'elle avait tant désiré écouter une seconde fois. […] et Albert l'exprima avec un sentiment si pur et si large, qu'elle oublia toutes ses angoisses pour approcher doucement du lieu où il se trouvait, attirée et comme charmée par une puissance magnétique.[19]

The acceptance of her own body and femininity is scattered with doubts and impediments; even if Anzoleto and Albert awaken sensuality, they also frighten and disgust Consuelo. We could see these characters as doubles of Consuelo, mirrors in which she observes herself, albeit in different ways. It is indeed when looking at herself in the mirror that she compares the two men. Anzoleto – the bodily character – reflects Consuelo's own erotic body by constantly observing her beauty; whereas for Albert – the spectral character – Consuelo does not have a face, 'comme si un nuage l'eût enveloppée'.[20] In his eyes, Consuelo is a fragile and almost sick creature but an ideal of love; Albert thus reflects Consuelo's self-control.

As is the case for Camille Maupin and Emma Bovary, music has an (electric) effect on Consuelo's body. Besides arousing her senses, it can provoke physical crises and sickness. For example, Consuelo suffers convulsions and faints after singing Galuppi's opéra bouffe *Arcifanfano re de'matti* in Venice, before her departure for Bohemia. Similarly, she has a 'horrible crisis' after her first descent into the Schrekenstein cave and a fever causes her to have hallucinations when she is imprisoned in Spandau in *La Comtesse de Rudolstadt*. She thinks she hears the sensual violin of Albert: 'l'hallucination que lui causait la fièvre devait naturellement présenter un caractère musical, et porter sur ses organes auditifs'.[21] The effect of Albert's violin on her is described as a violent process since the vibrations of the instruments reach Consuelo painfully.[22] Music provides a space of discovery of the heroine's own body but also, as the metaphors of vibrations show, has a brutal physical effect on her.

[19] *Ibid.,* p. 337.
[20] *Ibid*., p. 239.
[21] *CR*, p. 866.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 964.

1.2 Serious music and theatricality

The development of Consuelo's body-awareness stretches until the very end with the epilogue[23] standing as the denouement of her quest for identity. The ending uncovers an equilibrium between the role of the artist, the control of her body, and the understanding of a social ideal. Until this conflux, Consuelo's personal journey seems to consist of a succession of covers, layers she needs to comprehend. The image of a covered body is used throughout the narration, particularly through the presentation of the world of the theatre and its association with illusion. There is a contrast between the slow process of uncovering her body, in the sense of discovering sensuality as presented above, and the covers offered by her public performances.

Each theatre in which Consuelo performs, in Venice, Vienna and Berlin, is thoroughly described and displays abundant ornaments – details which contribute to creating an atmosphere of illusion. Opera music, and the roles sung by Consuelo – such as Jomelli's *Didon Abandonnée*, Gluck's *Ipermestre* or Predieri's *Zenobia* – denote a sense of illusion in the text and contrast with religious and folk music. Having arrived in Vienna after travelling with Haydn, Consuelo confesses her aversion to interpreting operatic roles: 'tout cela est faux, archi-faux, mon pauvre Beppo! Faux comme nos costumes […], comme ces décors que nous voyons là de près, et qui ressemblent à l'Asie comme l'abbé Métastase ressemble au vieil Homère'.[24] More than an illusion, these operas are fake for her. Haydn develops this idea from the point of view of the composer; he answers that he prefers to compose oratorios rather than operas: 'les puérils artifices de la scène ne viennent pas donner un continuel démenti à la verité du sentiment, dans ce cadre symphonique où tout est musique, où l'âme parle à l'âme par l'oreille et non par les yeux'.[25]

The distinction between the eyes and the ears is also part of the process of self-discovery. Consuelo seems to be the centre of conflicts between looking and being looked at, hearing and being heard. While she is standing in the spotlight of the opera stage and under the gaze of the audience, Consuelo cannot control her presence on stage or accurately see either herself or the world around her. In fact, she seems to see the world in a distorted way. In addition to living within the illusion of theatre

[23] The end of the narration is explicitly entitled 'epilogue' and constitutes the last fifty pages of *La Comtesse de Rudolstadt*.
[24] *Consuelo*, p. 637.
[25] *Ibid*. The idea evoked here by Haydn echoes the Hoffmannian concept of absolute music as presented in Chapter 2.

when singing, other key elements of her personal journey refer to a sort of misrepresentation; two striking examples are the Rudolstadt castle, which is referred to as the castle of Giants, and the secret society called *the Invisibles*. Roaming between Giants and Invisibles – as well as the illusion of theatres – Consuelo sees a distorted world.

As in the other case studies of this thesis, the thematic of masks and disguise toys with the tension between covering and uncovering the bodies of women musicians. Disguise envelops Consuelo's body in a notion of haziness, as is the case when she goes to a masked ball in *La Comtesse de Rudolstadt*, but even more so while she is travelling with Haydn to Vienna. When Consuelo decides to leave the Rudolstadt castle to join her mentor Porpora in Vienna, she meets Haydn and they travel across Bohemia together; to avoid trouble, she decides to dress like a boy, change her voice and go by the name of Bertoni while she renames her companion Beppo.[26] Consuelo, in the lineage of Mignon, thus appears as an androgynous character. Consuelo takes on the role of a young boy to play the 'parodie musicale' established by count Hoditz, who wants them to perform: 'elle se fit une voix d'enfant un peu rauque'.[27] Consuelo's androgyny seems to be that of a child; like Mignon, it is not that she is both masculine and feminine. Rather, she is not yet feminine and therefore androgynous; her femininity is latent. The count calls her 'mon petit musicien' in the same way that Albert already referred to her as a (masculine) child. However, even as an androgynous child, the attention is drawn towards Consuelo's body. The count Hoditz, more *mélomane* than a musician, gives her directions for her singing, and Consuelo plays along with this 'parody' by pretending she cannot sing properly. As a matter of fact, the count, who thinks he is teaching her how to sing, uses corporeal images as musical techniques:

> Maintenant, reprit-il, la cadence avec *chute* et *tour de gosier*! […] Nous reprendrons demain une leçon; car nous avons dix leçons à prendre, au bout desquelles vous saurez chanter. Nous avons le *coulé*, le *flatté*, le *port de voix tenu* et le *port de voix achevé*, la *chute*, l'*inflexion tendre*, le *martèlement gai*, la *cadence feinte*, etc., etc..[28]

[26] These Italian names remind us of Leonardo and Guido in *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts*, Guido being the masculine identity of Flora.
[27] *Consuelo*, p. 479.
[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 481-82.

These techniques – which do not seem to have really existed – highlight the choice of movement and physicality in the count's instructions. This musical parody presents several layers of interpretation, which converge around Consuelo's body. On the one hand Consuelo thinks she is tricking the count by singing like a young boy and pretending to be a (bad) amateur singer. On the other hand, the count, who embodies a big-headed dilettante, seems to over-play his own role in order to discover who Consuelo-Bertoni is. For that matter, he directs his instructions towards physicality and movement and eventually unmasks Consuelo and seduces her. Consuelo does not see that she is being tricked; it is not only the disguise of a young boy that makes her androgynous, but her childish innocence prevents her from understanding sexual attraction, as we have seen with Wilhelm Meister. Until the epilogue, Consuelo is presented as a character living in illusion, unaware of the power of her body and its effect on men.

Consuelo can be seen as an actress, playing roles (and hiding her true identity) not only for an audience on stage but also for herself. In that sense, opera music seems to be not necessarily an obstacle in her quest but a refuge from herself, a way to delay or prolong her quest. Opera music is one of Consuelo's covers, suggesting that she is in the process of self-discovery. Throughout the narration, Consuelo takes on different operatic roles – she is a mezzo-soprano but also a contralto when travelling as Bertoni – and she can be identified with some of the characters she plays. For example, *Didon Abandonnée* and *Zenobia* foreshadow some events of her life; the former announces the betrayal of Anzoleto and her departure for Bohemia while the latter presages the diffusion of the artistic and moral message at the end.[29] Opera music can also duplicate a situation she lives, like when she sings Almirena's aria from *Rinaldo.* Like Almirena imprisoned in Armina's palace in Haendel's opera, Consuelo is imprisoned by *les Invisibles* in a sumptuous house and sings: 'Lascia ch'io pianga/La dura sorte/E ch'ia sospiri/La libertà' ('Cry, poor soul/ Your cruel fate/ And hope for freedom').

The aim of this first section has been to introduce the significance of Consuelo's body in the narration and its tension with music. Simultaneously pointing at her body and hiding it, music seems to be a cover around her body. It plays a role in

[29] While the title of the first opera is self-explanatory, Consuelo's power to expand art across boundaries can be associated with the life of Zenobia, a Syrian Queen who expanded her empire and conquered several territories.

the intimate process of discovery as well as blurring the contours of her body. Although the narrator presents her as a woman who attracts men (almost all the men she meets fall in love with her), Consuelo does not see the power of her body until the end. I will now proceed to examine the evolution of her intellectual journey through the obstacles and ordeals imposed on her, although we will see that this journey combines the physical and moral spheres.

2. Physical and moral ordeals: touchstone and 'stone of fright'

Initiation rites are the touchstone of Consuelo's affirmation as a woman. Similarly to Wilhelm Meister, Consuelo must overcome a series of tests that correspond to symbolic deaths and rebirths. Initiation obstacles seem to be where the physical and moral evolutions of the heroine meet. Talking about the destiny of humanity, Pierre Leroux mentions the importance of initiation: '[l]'Humanité ne saurait faillir à ses destinées; car Dieu ne saurait manquer à ses promesses. L'initiation s'accomplit par degrés et avec douleur, mais elle s'accomplit'.[30] According to Leroux, the awakening of humanity is an initiation that goes through painful rites. It is through Leroux that George Sand became interested in initiation rites and particularly those of Freemasonry. George Sand writes to Pierre Leroux in 1843:

> Vous ne savez pas dans quel labyrinthe vous m'avez fourrée avec vos Francs-maçons et vos sociétés secrètes. C'est une mer d'incertitude, un abîme de ténèbres. Il y a tant d'inconnus dans tout cela que c'est une belle matière pour broder et inventer et, au fait, l'histoire de ces mystères ne pourra, je crois, jamais être faite que sous la forme d'un roman.[31]

In a very similar way as in *Wilhelm Meister*, George Sand incorporated some rites of Freemasonry in Consuelo's journey and deformed them by applying them to gender and music. Consuelo's initiation rites take two forms: ordeals involving captures and liberations on the one hand, and the affirmation to create on the other hand.

[30] Leroux, pp. iii-iv.
[31] George Sand, *Correspondance: 1843-juin 1845,* ed. by Georges Lubin (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2013), VI, p. 179.

2.1 Captures and liberations

The first ordeals that Consuelo undergoes involve a transposition of the myth of Orpheus, although this is rewritten by George Sand through an inversion of gender, as several scholars have explored.[32] Because Orpheus' myth has both a personal and a social scope, I would like to show that Consuelo's personal and social experiences merge through the initiations she undergoes. The Orpheus myth represents the revelation of art as a language through a guide; Consuelo becomes a guide of orphic art. For Saint-Simonians, Orpheus is a figure able to embody the universality of Christianity,[33] and Leroux abundantly refers to Orpheus in *De l'humanité* as one of the monumental Greek philosophers.[34]

We can read two transpositions of the Orpheus myth, one in *Consuelo* and one in *La Comtesse de Rudolstadt*. The first orphic experience occurs when Consuelo decides to look for Albert in the Schrekenstein cave and rescue him. The cave is described as 'le fond des entrailles de la terre',[35] and yet, as mentioned above, by using the same expression Lamennais encourages the artist to descend to the bottom of society's entrails. For Consuelo, this experience in the cave is therefore that of the social artist. She enters the cave as an individual body (with all her fears and emotions, as presented previously) to find herself as a collective body, an Orpheus. In this first instance, Consuelo seems to be Orpheus and Albert Eurydice; the heroine must overcome obstacles (the test of water and the Cerberus-like dog) in order to save Albert who has withdrawn into the cave and lost his mind. Consuelo manages to find Albert and to bring him to his senses; however, she is not a full Orpheus since she does not play music or sing at that moment. Rather, it is Albert who plays the violin. Once Albert regains consciousness, it is Consuelo who loses her strengths and Albert must bring her back to the light. One could therefore think that even if Consuelo is first an Orpheus-like figure and Albert Eurydice, the status quo is re-established with Albert, the musician, who saves Consuelo. However, I would like to argue against this

[32] One of the most susbtantial works on the myth of Orpheus in Consuelo is probably that of François Laforge 'Structure et Fonction du mythe d'Orphée dans Consuelo de George Sand', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, 1 (1984), 53-66.
[33] Brian Juden, *Traditions orphiques et tendances mystiques dans le romantisme français (1800-1855)* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971), p. 251.
[34] Leroux, *De l'humanité, de son principe et de son avenir* (Paris: Perrotin, 1840), p. 452.
[35] *Consuelo*, p. 255.

interpretation; as Maurice Blanchot explains, in order for Orpheus to create and be an artist he must abandon Eurydice in the underworld. Turning around, looking at Eurydice and leaving her imprisoned is a source of inspiration for Orpheus. Blanchot states: 'Il perd Eurydice, parce qu'il la désire par delà les limites mesurées du chant, et il se perd lui-même, mais ce désir et Eurydice perdue et Orphée dispersé sont nécessaires au chant, comme est nécessaire à l'œuvre l'épreuve de désoeuvrement éternel'.[36] Blanchot's analysis helps us to understand the exact role played by Consuelo and the Orpheus myth in her quest for identity. First, Albert does not appear as Orpheus because he saves Consuelo and brings her back with him, unlike the denouement of the myth. Moreover, Consuelo is the one who fails to bring the other back; once she finds Albert she faints, becomes fragile and is unable to return with him. The last paragraph describing Consuelo fainting insists on her eyes and what she sees:

> elle sentit ses jambes fléchir, *ses yeux se troubler* […] A travers les voiles de la mort qui semblaient s'étendre sur *ses paupières*, Consuelo *vit* sa joie, et n'en fut point effrayée […]. Elle *ferma les yeux* et tomba dans un état d'annéantissement […]. Lorsqu'elle reprit l'usage de ses facultés, *se voyant* assise sur un lit assez dur, et ne pouvant encore soulever *ses paupières*, elle essaya de rassembler ses souvenirs.[37]

Consuelo is the one who sees, who looks at Albert and leaves him in the underworld. She is (in the process of becoming) Orpheus; although she does not use her music, she has in this experience the revelation of the artist, and will be an Orpheus figure who creates.

The myth of Orpheus is repeated in *La Comtesse de Rudolstadt* during the rites imposed by *Les Invisibles*. After having been brought on a small boat, and drunk from a precious goblet, Consuelo has to descend into a sanctuary[38] (described here again as 'les entrailles de notre pyramide') but must not turn around. The reference to the Greek myth here is obvious:

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[36] Maurice Blanchot, *L'Espace littéraire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1995), p. 228.
[37] *Consuel*o, pp. 279-80, my emphasis.
[38] George Sand seems to transform some of the rites of Freemasonry.

> craignez de ne jamais arriver à la porte du temple si vous avez le malheur de regarder une seule fois derrière vous en marchant […] dès qu'une porte s'ouvrira devant vous, franchissez-la, et ne vous retournez pas. C'est, vous le savez, la prescription rigide des antiques initiations.[39]

Consuelo plays the role of the guide here again, but she does not know who is following her. Instead of guiding someone outside and saving them, Consuelo seems to have to save herself; she is both the guide and the rescued, Orpheus and Eurydice. More than in the first transposition of the myth, Consuelo is here an artist musician. In order to leave the Sanctuary she must answer questions and defend herself in front of the committee of *les Invisibles*; she decides to sing 'I cieli immensi narrano' as an answer. Consuelo does not turn around to see who is following her, but here again there is an emphasis on her look: during the ceremony of the Invisibles, they cover her so that she can see everything without being recognised.[40] Consuelo is an orphic artist, and is presented as both Orpheus and Eurydice. Looking around her, as Orpheus turns around to see Eurydice, but not being completely in charge of the ceremony, Consuelo performs what Blanchot calls 'le désoeuvrement éternel'. According to Blanchot, the writing process is a process of oblivion. If we transpose this idea onto Consuelo's musical process, it could be said that her musical practice, to be creative, operates a necessary *désoeuvrement*, which, far from denying her creative agency, in fact underlines it. *Désoeuvrement* can also help us to highlight the fact that, on the one hand, Consuelo is not a work of art – as is the case with Romantic figures – she is, rather, a creator who experiences a necessary oblivion. And, on the other hand, the work of art she produces disseminates her social mission in the collective sphere, as we shall see.

Consuelo's final initiation occurs right before the epilogue and marks her affirmation both as a woman – she marries the man she loves and desires – and as an artist. Inspired by hussitic, masonic and Christian rites, this initiation is presented as the final step in Consuelo's journey; she has finally gained a certain self-awareness by uniting the physical and the moral. This initiation is marked by music and by a violent process; in the sanctuary, Consuelo is facing the violence and deaths of the hussitic people, seeing skulls, weapons and collapses once more. This symbolical death leads

[39] *CR*, p. 1075.
[40] *Ibid.*, p. 1068.

to her rebirth in the epilogue, where she re-embraces her career. All the characters who have played an important role in her life are present at the ceremony: Porpora, Anzoleto, Gottlieb, and others attend Consuelo's initiation, as if she had to liberate herself from them. As mentioned earlier, the *Invisibles* do not only represent a secret society but also reflect what Consuelo is unable to see; she is the only one who does not see her own development, until this final ceremony. The epilogue indicates Consuelo's awakening by repeating the music she had sung before. All the music that has marked her development is present in the epilogue: Porpora, Pergolèse, Haendel, as if she were aware of herself as a physical and intellectual woman, able to control her music.

Another key moment in Consuelo's revelation as a woman artist is when she is imprisoned in Spandau and starts to compose: 'les ténèbres, loin de lui causer l'effroi qu'elle attendait, lui révélèrent des trésors de conception musicale qu'elle portait en elle depuis longtemps sans avoir pu en faire usage et les formuler, dans l'agitation de sa profession de virtuose'.[41] The incarceration is an important step in Consuelo's journey, when she finally has the physical and moral capacity to compose. She is, along with Camille Maupin, one of the only women composers presented in this thesis. Although there were women composers in the nineteenth century, their works were not always published or passed on; this is perhaps why George Sand insists on the notation and transmission of Consuelo's work. The narrator specifies that Consuelo manages to inscribe her compositions with a pin and wood, and makes sure to memorise them. Unlike in the case of Camille Maupin, her work is performed: during the *Invisibles* ceremony, Anzoleto sings one of Consuelo's compositions. The initiation steps in Consuelo's journey correspond to moments of incarceration that lead to instances of artistic liberation corresponding to oblivion. The physical and moral ordeals reveal to Consuelo herself her position as a woman artist.

2.2 Voicing independence

In addition to the rites she has to overcome to understand herself as a woman, Consuelo must affirm her independence before a patriarchal discourse. George Sand demonstrates the place of women in a patriarchal society in several instances presented above: through a gender inversion of the Orpheus myth; the admission of a

[41] *Ibid.,* p. 864.

woman into a secret society (which was impossible in Freemasonry at the time); and a gender inversion of the Romantic ideal. While the woman musician is the ethereal figure who inspires a male artist in Romanticism (like Antonie in 'Rat Krespel' whose voice seems to be that of a violin), it is here a male musician, Albert, who is the spectral figure associated with the violin. Consuelo has to impose her voice upon a patriarchal discourse, embodied mainly by Porpora.

Although (fictionally) living before Romanticism, Porpora promotes the Romantic image of women musicians; at the beginning of the novel he tells Consuelo:

> Tu contempleras l'idéal sublime dépouillé de ce voile terrestre; tu t'élanceras dans le ciel; et tu vivras d'un hymen sacré avec Dieu même […] tu peux être une sainte, une vierge céleste, la fiancée de l'idéal sacré […] Je ne te veux ni mari, ni amant, ni famille, ni passions, ni lien d'aucune sorte. C'est ainsi que j'ai toujours conçu ton existence et compris ta carrière. Le jour où tu te donneras à un mortel, tu perdras ta divinité.[42]

Consuelo has to face the image of the solitary unearthly musician imposed by her mentor and resist the romantic fantasy of the male discourse. Porpora's voice sounds as if he were the creator of Consuelo; however, at the end of the novel she has broken all her mentor's commandments and proves that she is her own creator. Porpora even says that he has 'des entrailles de père' for Consuelo, yet we have seen that she finds other organic 'entrailles', those of society, in order to develop herself. Anne Marcouline, noting the significance of Consuelo's lack of paternal lineage, states: 'Lacking paternal lineage and surname, and orphaned as a teenager by a poor mother, who, like Consuelo, went only by her baptismal first name, Consuelo finds few paths marked out by which she could pursue her art and safeguard herself from slander'.[43] Although Porpora is a paternal figure for the heroine, she progressively detaches herself from him to find her independence. When she leaves Venice to go to Bohemia, Consuelo develops a will for independence, expressing 'le besoin de s'appartenir à elle-même, ce besoin souverain et légitime, véritable condition du

[42] *Consuelo*, pp. 139-40.
[43] Anne Marcouline, 'Hearing Double: The Musical Body and the Female Voice in the Works of E.T.A. Hoffmann and George Sand' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California Santa Barbara, 2012), pp. 265-66.

progrès et du développement chez l'artiste supérieur'.[44] Consuelo finds a form of independence in her art, by performing professionally and above all by composing. Composing seems to be an act of rebellion against the patriarchal discourse, and meets with Porpora's disapproval. When Consuelo sings one of his compositions and inserts a phrase of her own creation, he accuses her of being the devil:

> - La voilà ! la voilà ! voilà ce que je voulais, et ce que je ne pouvais pas trouver ! Comment diable cela t'est-il venu ?
> - Est-ce que ce n'est pas ce que vous avez écrit ? ou bien est-ce que le hasard ? … Si fait, c'est votre phrase.
> - Non c'est la tienne fourbe […] Elle est bonne et j'en fais mon profit […] Tu es le diable ! J'ai toujours pensé que tu étais le diable ![45]

Consuelo does not want to offend her mentor by showing her ability to compose (perhaps better than him); she does not want to deprive him of the (paternal) power of creation. Porpora no longer compares her to a divine figure, but to the devil, as if composing involved breaking his Romantic understanding of the woman musician. Because Consuelo lacks a paternal lineage and is able to compose, it could be inferred that she places the artistic creative power on the side of the maternal. This lack of a father does not situate Consuelo as a child but, on the contrary, as a mother countering a paternal discourse – as the end of the novel explicitly shows. Consuelo needs to resist what is imposed by the male discourse and impose her (maternal) voice.

This identity process corresponds to the evolution of Consuelo's singing voice. We have seen that Consuelo can change, therefore control, her voice when needed; she also endures uncontrolled fluctuations of her voice while singing that we could interpret as the desire to find (and impose) an independent stable voice. Consuelo loses her voice several times while singing. For example, she stops singing for a long time after leaving Venice, and abruptly breaks an ornament (a fermata recalling Romantic texts) and collapses on stage in Berlin. Later, on the same stage, she loses interest and sings mechanically; she finally loses her voice on stage at the end, unable to produce a sound, and decides to end her career. She sees this moment

[44] *Consuelo*, p. 328.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 565.

as a sign that she should put an end to her profession and join her husband Albert. However, we could in fact see this as a voluntary act to mute herself on stage in order to (also) be heard off stage. Consuelo sings again, but only folk music while travelling with her family. Yet this corresponds to the artistic path she was yearning for; she finally finds her true voice. The series of initiations involving music are progressive steps that reveal Consuelo's knowledge formation and self-control, empowering her as the woman artist. The last step of Consuelo's journey is to redistribute, as it were, her (musical) knowledge to society; after becoming aware of her individual body through music, she tries to control a collective body.

3. The social body and the intimate performance

The completion of Consuelo's journey truly occurs when she makes her knowledge of music and of her body – acquired through experience and ordeals – available to society. This does not happen through public (on-stage) performances, but through the errant life she lives with her musical husband and children – one could call this a life of *désoeuvrement* – as recounted at the end of *La Comtesse de Rudolstadt*. The body she has learnt to discover and accept becomes a collective body. The personal, artistic and social revelations converge at the end of her journey in this musical (collective) body. According to Lamennais, art cannot be simply an aesthetic form, it must have content too, he argues: '*L'Art pour l'art* est donc une absurdité. Le perfectionnement de l'être dont il manifeste les progrès en est le but. Il est comme le point de concours de ses besoins physiques et de ses besoins intellectuels et moraux […]'.[46] 'Être' can be understood here as an individual being as well as humanity more generally.

Therefore, art stems from the progress of individuals and corresponds at the same time to the communion of the body and mind. Consuelo's journey represents the progress of humanity; the heroine is, as David Powell puts it, 'at once unique and universal'.[47] George Sand follows Lamennais and Leroux's opinions by presenting art as a religion but develops this idea through folk music and women more particularly. Art, or popular music, has the power to unify humanity; at the dawn of 1848, popular

[46] Lamennais, p. 10.
[47] David Powell, *While the Music Lasts: the Representation of Music in the Works of George Sand* (Lewisburg Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 2001), p. 20.

music has the political and spiritual power to frame society within the revolutionary concepts of *liberté, égalité, fraternité.*[48]

3.1 The woman musician as prophetess of folk music

As mentioned earlier, Lamennais clearly states that the artist must be the prophet of the progress of humanity, and yet Consuelo is defined in such terms. Albert is the first to explain to Consuelo her role as a woman artist; while Consuelo searches for her place as an artist, he already announces her destiny:

> Votre profession est la plus sublime qu'une femme puisse embrasser, votre âme est la plus digne d'en remplir le sacerdoce […] La musique et la poésie sont les plus hautes expressions de la foi, et la femme douée de génie et de beauté est prêtresse, Sybille et initiatrice.[49]

The reference to the sibyl demonstrates an indispensable role of women in music; whether as creators or not, women have the artistic role of imparting an aesthetic message to society.

Albert's mother, Wanda, is also presented as a sibyl. She is a member of *Les Invisibles* and guides Consuelo before the initiation ceremony by explaining that women should be free to love who they want – at this moment, Consuelo is torn between her attraction for the mysterious Liverani and her widowhood. Wanda, first presented as an old man, reveals to Consuelo that she is a woman and that her prior masculine aspect is due to her former unhappiness (and frustration) in love. Wanda is the last figure to influence Consuelo's quest by exposing the necessity of independence in love and sexuality; she incidentally grants a divorce between Consuelo and Albert. Presented first as a 'père spirituel', Wanda turns out to be a maternal sibyl; we could even understand her double (androgynous) aspect as the embodiment of social equality. Her role is directed towards the self-acceptance of Consuelo's body, as if, to become a prophetess herself, Consuelo needed to assume her femininity in a patriarchal society. In order to preach the power of art to the

[48] During the initiation ceremony of *Les Invisibles*, one of the initiators tells Consuelo about the importance of educating people in order to understand this formula: '*Liberté, égalité, fraternité*: voilà la formule mystérieuse et profonde de l'œuvre des Invisibles […], tu verras que, […] c'est toute une éducation, toute une conversion, toute une révélation, que d'arriver à comprendre nettement la possibilité humaine, la nécessité sociale et l'obligation morale de ce triple précepte', *CR,* pp. 1010-11.
[49] *Consuelo*, pp. 324-25.

collective body of society, she first needs to empower her own body, and Wanda's speech validates this achievement. Albert announces the outcome of Consuelo's quest already in the Schreckenstein cave; he has told her that religion used to distinguish the soul from the body of society but that a secret society has sought to unify both: 'Une secte mystérieuse et singulière rêva […] de réhabiliter la chair, et de réunir dans un seul principe divin ces deux principes arbitrairement divisés'.[50] Albert does not finish his explanation,[51] but the ending of *La Comtesse* does so for him: after the fall of the secret society, Consuelo assumes the power to restore the significance of the flesh while dispensing a message of equality, through the new religion that is music.

Before understanding her role, Consuelo's attitude to the idea of the artist prophetess progresses through different stages – at the risk of misinterpreting Albert's statement on the role of the woman artist. First, she understands music as a vocation, a divine (virginal) mission in which she devotes herself entirely to art: 'j'ai un but, une vocation, un état. J'appartiens à l'art auquel je me suis consacrée dès mon enfance'.[52] Then, she starts to see in music a revolutionary element and wonders, in a discussion with Porpora, if music is a fight. Finally, she understands that the role of a musician is to be the voice of humanity, as she tells Haydn, and to spread a musical message; she sums this up in the epilogue: 'Nous apportons l'art et l'enthousiasme aux âmes susceptibles de sentir l'un et d'aspirer à l'autre […] Chaque jour nous faisons de nouveaux disciples de l'art'.[53] Consuelo sees herself as an educator of people preaching values of self-knowledge, freedom and equality in the same way that she has experienced herself through music.

Art can be seen as a religion only if, as Lamennais assumes, it comes from the people. For George Sand, popular music is the form most capable of embodying values of freedom and equality. In *Consuelo*, the narrator defines folk music as follows:

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[50] *Ibid.*, p. 347.
[51] The effects of the announcements and echoes used by the author are numerous and complex. Several elements demonstrate that this is a key announcing scene. Albert talks about a secret society in the past tense, although the rise (and the fall) of the *Invisibles* has not yet been introduced, and refers to it as 'she', which personifies and femininises it; he also insists on the introduction of a positive image of the devil by this society (and yet Consuelo is associated with the devil several times). So Consuelo appears already in this scene as the figure that will succeed where the secret society fails.
[52] *Consuelo*, p. 378.
[53] *CR*, p. 1136-37.

> Il y a une musique qu'on pourrait appeler naturelle, parce qu'elle n'est point le produit de la science et de la réfléxion, mais celui d'une inspiration qui échappe à la rigueur des règles et des conventions. C'est la musique populaire: c'est celle des paysans particulièrement […]. Le génie du peuple est d'une fécondité sans limites.[54]

Popular music comes from nature and from instinct. The best representative of this genre in the novel is Zdenko, a mad Bohemian who composes one (popular) song every day, which he then forgets by the following day; he is irrational but musically productive. The reference to popular music starts at the beginning of the novel when Consuelo recounts her travels with her Spanish and gypsy mother across Europe. Her mother teaches her a Spanish canticle 'Consuelo de mi alma', which becomes a guiding principle in Consuelo's quest. The choice of instruments presented in the novel also supports the importance of popular music: the guitar that Consuelo receives from her mother and Albert's violin are popular instruments anchored in the heroine's development. Although the harpsichord is mentioned (let us recall that the story takes place in the eighteenth century and that the piano did not yet exist), this is only episodically (in prison and at the palace of the *Invisibles*).

Whether in the form of Spanish or Bohemian songs, popular music is connected with specific regions, cultures and languages. Anne Marcouline explains that George Sand innovates by establishing Bohemia as a cultural centre as opposed to the European capital cities.[55] There is a contradiction here in the topographical limits of popular music. Popular music delineates spaces (and can abolish set boundaries) but is at the same time universal. This paradox is highlighted by Adorno, with reference to music and the nation, in his *Introduction to the Sociology of music:*

> Musik prägt aberwie kein anderes künstlerisches Medium auch die Antinomien des nationalen Prinzips in sich aus. Tatsächlich ist sie eine universale Sprache und doch kein Esperanto: sie unterdrückt keine qualitativen Eigentümlichkeiten […] Trotz ihres universalen Charakters - den sie dem verdankt, was ihr

[54] *Consuelo*, p. 349.
[55] Anne Marcouline: 'in the process of mapping Consuelo's journey through the principal European cities, Sand inscribes the Bohemian Forest as the new cultural and epistemological center; in turn, with Bohemia at the heart of the novel, Venice, Vienna, and Berlin become, one after the next, repositioned towards the periphery, if still within the reaches of what she situates as the central Bohemian network', p. 224.

> gegenüber der redenden Sprache mangelt, der Absenz des festen Begriffs - zeigte sie nationale Charakteristika.[56]

While Adorno presents this nationalistic paradox as irreconcilable (because music at the service of nation is necessarily ideological)[57], George Sand acknowledges the 'nationel Bestimmungen', as Adorno call them,[58] of regional music without seeing them as competitive in any way, but rather as a means of musically aligning communities. For George Sand, the different forms of popular music converge towards the same ideology, that of a universal language of equality.

It is only close to nature that Consuelo can be a prophetess, a 'consolation' for people, by listening to and producing folk music, and creating a collective and musical consciousness. Consuelo's intimate performances– intimate because they are not in the spotlight of a public stage, and personalised rather than private – reform the social body and syncretise it in art.

3.2 Communication, creation, inscription

Consuelo's mission is to communicate a universal message through the universal language of music. Inseparable from music, her communication becomes an act of creation. I would like to argue against Lucienne Frappier-Mazur who, in a highly influential article on *La Comtesse de Rudolstadt*, interprets the ending as almost the failure of Consuelo's quest. She underlines 'le recul du personnage de Consuelo dans le stéréotype de l'épouse mère' and the fact that in comparison with Albert she is 'redescendue au statut de médiatrice'.[59] However, the fact that Consuelo is the composer of the family does not seem to me to place her below Albert, and establishes her not as a mediator but as a creator. Albert, who is not in full possession

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[56] Adorno, *Dissonanzen: Einleitung in die Musiksoziologie, Gesammelte Schriften in zwanzig Bänden,* vol. 14, p. 350. ('Yet music, more than any other artistic medium, expresses the national principle's antinomies as well. In fact, it is a universal language without being an Esperanto: it does not crush the qualitative peculiarities [...]. Despite its universal character – which it owes to the absence of firm concepts, the very lack that distinguishes it from the spoken language – it did show national characteristics.' *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, trans. by E. B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1988), p. 155.)

[57] 'Die ideologische Funktion der Musik innerhalb der Gesellschaft ist davon untrennbar. Zu politischen Ideologien sind Musiken seit der Mitte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts dadurch geworden […]', *Ibid.*

[58] The 'nationel value' is that which relates to the idea of the nation, as opposed to the 'national' which relates to the nation itself, *Ibid.*

[59] Lucienne Frappier-Mazur, p. 68.

of his reasoning faculties at the end, is, if anything, the 'spouse father' and Consuelo the maternal creator. Contrary to the common nineteenth-century belief that women are able to procreate more than to create, Consuelo shows that creation can be on the side of the maternal, but, I admit, a reconstituted maternal. Consuelo does not follow the traditional role of the mother; she has left her eldest children to Haydn and the good *chanoine* who raise and educate them, and lives an errant life with her other children. Consuelo's children appear in fact as her first 'disciples de l'art'; with Albert writing lyrics, Consuelo composing music, and their son singing, the musical family is fully engaged in spreading its social message. Having children is a necessity for fulfilling the social mission, since each family member has a role to play in it, as the ending sums up: 'Chacun reprit son fardeau, le père le sac de voyage, le jeune homme les instruments de musique, et la mère les mains de ses deux filles.'[60] Consuelo's motherhood seems to be a symbol for the disciples of art, or children of art, that she begets. Holding the hands of her daughters is an image for guiding the children of art towards equality and making other women artists.

Because communication becomes an act of creation for Consuelo, it is important to analyse, lastly, the relationship between music, transmission and the body. Inscriptions of music are present throughout Consuelo's development. She always carries music scores with her, tries to find a way to inscribe her compositions while incarcerated in Spandau, and possesses numerous music scores while confined by *les Invisibles*. However, these modes of inscription are rejected at the end when she glorifies folk music, which consists of improvisations and oral transmissions.

The epilogue even seems to try to detach itself from inscription by presenting layers of mediation. The mode of narration changes at the end; it is not the omniscient narrator (who intervenes and addresses the reader on several occasions) that tells the story but rather a letter from Phylon, in which he describes his travels with his friend Spartacus and their encounter with Consuelo and her family. This letter contains the lyrics of one the songs composed by Consuelo, 'La bonne déesse de la pauvreté'. The popular music of this canticle is not described; only the lyrics by Albert are transcribed. Through the layers of narration – a letter within the narration and a song within the letter – George Sand emphasises the oral, non-inscribable nature of folk music. These layers demonstrate the impossibility of inscribing popular music in a

[60] *CR*, p. 1159.

text and at the same time point to the immateriality of this art. An answer to the tension between music and inscription is perhaps to be found in the significance of the body in the text. Music is inextricable from the body in the novel. As we have seen earlier in this chapter, art is to be extracted from the entrails of society (as Lamennais suggests), music guides self-knowledge about individual bodies and constitutes, finally, a social unifier composing a social body. The body seems to be a mode of inscription of music in the text. Jean-Luc Nancy helps us to understand this concept. The philosopher explains that the body can only be approached from the exterior; this is what he calls *expeausition;*[61] for him, the body cannot be inscribed but 'exscribes' itself. Hence, he argues:

> ("Ecriture" est encore un mot trompeur. Ce qui s'adresse ainsi au corps dehors *s'excrit*, comme j'essaie de l'écrire, à même ce dehors ou comme ce dehors.) "Ontologie du corps" = excription de l'être. Existence adressée au dehors […].[62]

Following on from this idea we could argue that if music confounds itself with the body, it cannot be inscribed but excribes itself. George Sand's attempts to inscribe through the (material) layers of narration popular music are aporetic since music is already excribed through Consuelo's body and the social body. The final recourse to a letter in the epilogue and the transcription of the lyrics of 'la bonne déesse de la pauvreté' have the function of consecrating the role of the body and of the female artist in the musical reference in literature.

Consuelo's long journey is intended to empower the body of the woman artist and the body of art. The constitution of her body, in parallel with the growth of a strong personality, ultimately reveals creative agency. Consuelo's physical, moral and musical progress reflects a social progress that Sand and the socialists Lamennais and Leroux advocated a few years before the revolution of 1848. The social message of equality could not be better expressed for George Sand than through the rise of popular music. Although connected to regionalisms, folk music is the most universal language and able to unify people. In this sense, wandering and travel emphasise the universality of music. Everything in *Consuelo* is movement: the heroine's journey (in the symbolical and geographical sense), the different types of music (from art to folk

[61] Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus* (Paris: Métailié, 2006), p. 31.
[62] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

music), the growth of individual and collective bodies, and the social message (of oral and body transmission). The empowerment of the heroine does not sanctify or sublimate her in the romantic sense but makes her more real, a fully-fledged character with a body and creative power.

The social utopian note of the end of *Consuelo* disappears in Sand's later works. The author's interest for folk music persists but not as a social ideal, as the tragic ending of the novel *Les Maîtres Sonneurs* shows. Written ten years after *Consuelo*, and at the beginning of the Second Empire, the novel is entirely devoted to the folk music of the Berry and Bourbonnais French regions but displays pessimism as Joseph, the bagpipe player, ends up going mad and is killed by other musicians. The evolution between the two novels calls into question the social message in *Consuelo* but certainly not the role of the woman artist, which remains innovative and stable throughout Sand's work.

George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876): the plural woman musician

Daniel Deronda's quest for identity – resulting in the discovery of his Jewish origins and his devotion to religion – is not the only spiritual (and physical) journey recounted in the novel. Daniel Deronda's decisive encounters with the women musicians Gwendolen Harleth, Mirah Cohen and Alcharisi do not present these women as imaginary figures who reflect (and serve) the evolution of the hero – contrary to Romantic figures – but as fully-fledged characters experiencing their own quests for identity. In fact, the agency of their journeys, and their adjacency to Deronda's story, empower the role of the woman musician in the text. It is as if the figure of the woman musician, split into several bodies (Gwendolen, Mirah, Alcharisi but also Catherine Arrowpoint), were evolving in parallel with that of the hero. Music, particularly through these women characters, is at the core of the novel's tension between diversity and unity, while at the same time acting as a disjunctive and conjunctive element within the narration.[1]

Diversity is particularly present in the text through the concept of organicity, as developed by Eliot's contemporaneous scientists and intellectuals. The organic body is thus ubiquitous in the text: as a biological reality of the characters as well as a narrative metaphor. Leaning on theories of evolution, Eliot dis-organises the body in the physiological sense to constitute distinct 'types' whose differences are emphasised by their relation to music. Amongst these 'types' are the figure of the woman musician – displaying four different facets – as well as male 'types' like Daniel Deronda (although, like the woman musician, he seems to embody several facets), Grandcourt, Klesmer and Mordecai. Even though it is the figure of the woman musician that forms the object of our study, we will refer to the above male characters and their relation to music to better understand the place and role of female musicians. The body of the text itself seems fragmented through Eliot's manipulations of the narration, such as the distinction between narrative and plot chronologies or the paratextual epigraphs inserted at the beginning of each chapter. Music joins

[1] Shirley F. Levenson only affirms that music is 'a divisive rather than a unifying, element', in 'The Use of Music in Daniel Deronda', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 24 (1969), 317-334 (p. 317).

antagonistic bodies together as well as the dismembered text and can thus be perceived as an organic thread.

Unity can be understood through the moral and humanist message of the novel. The implications of the text in terms of concepts of nations, religion and social classes depict a social progress that is also framed within an organic evolution. Music is deeply connected to religion in the text, largely because most of the characters who play music are Jewish, but also because it is at once an organic and a spiritual element that develops in the characters' quests for identity. Music is at once unique and plural due to the diversity of the musical. The contrast between Jewishness and Englishness, emphasised by music, and the opening of national boundaries also illustrate the idea of diversity within unity, as underscored by Comte in his definition of Humanity ('le Grand-Être' as he calls it): 'l'humanité est l'ensemble continu des êtres convergents'.[2] The diverse musical journeys of the characters across Europe converge towards unity – illustrating a most recent European motto: *in varietate concordia*.

The European span is important in the novel for understanding the tension between diversity and unity to which the woman musician is a keystone. Women musicians are in exile, travelling across Europe, in movement, and thus never really at home (despite the requirements of the private practice). Both inside and outside, multiple and one, the female musician constitutes an organic mesh connected to all the elements of social progress presented in the text: the search for an origin, religion, social classes, races, nation, and artistry. The plural woman musician, as I envision it, is the embodiment of society's converging bodies.

Furthermore, this plurality could even take the form of a four-headed woman musician, as it were, due to the frequent association between references to sorority in the text and the number four. Gwendolen's sisters, recurrently called the 'four sisters' or even the 'four units',[3] seem to mingle into one creature distinct from Gwendolen. Similarly, the women of the Meyrick family (where Mirah finds shelter), the mother and the three sisters, are described as the 'four little women' or 'four faces'.[4] If Gwendolen and Mirah do not belong to these four-faced creatures, it is because they belong to the four-faced musical sorority of the text, consisting of themselves as well as Catherine Arrowpoint and Alcharisi. I would like to argue that the four-headed

[2] Auguste Comte, *Système de politique positive ou traité de sociologie instituant la religion de l'humanité* (Paris : Carilian-Goeury et V. Dalmont, 1854), IV, p. 30.
[3] *DD*, p. 25, p. 32.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 200.

woman musician embodies the confrontation of discourses on humanity, notably the crisis between religion and evolution, which is nothing else than a crisis of the spiritual and the physical.

1. Music, the body and evolution in Eliot's time

In her article 'Liszt, Wagner and Weimar', which introduced Wagner to the English public in a positive light, Eliot praises the organic system of Wagner's operas according to which 'music, drama and spectacle must be blended'.[5] Paraphrasing Wagner, she posits:

> An opera must be no mosaic of melodies stuck together with no other method than is supplied by accidental contrast, no mere succession of ill-prepared crises, but an organic whole, which grows up like a palm, its earliest portion containing the germ and prevision of all the rest.[6]

Although Eliot confesses that she is not deeply 'affected by Wagner's music', she endorses the Wagnerian organic and dramatic system in *Daniel Deronda*. The vegetal metaphor used by Wagner accentuates the importance of interconnections in opera as well as of the progressive expansion of the whole piece. The interest of Wagner and Eliot in organicity brings to the fore two fundamental features of both music and literature: time and development. However, Eliot approaches organicity in a different manner; while Wagner suggests a linear development of an opera with a clear origin ('the earliest portion containing the germ and prevision of all the rest'), Eliot allows for a non-linear development of the narration.[7] She produces an organic system involving a manipulation of the notion of origins, both of the narration and of the characters' identities. Wagner's image of the expanding palm is substituted in Eliot's text by the simultaneous developments of distinct bodies converging (metamorphosing) into one. The concepts of organicity and origins are deeply anchored in the scientific and intellectual discourse of the time, as Gillian Beer

[5] George Eliot, 'Liszt, Wagner and Weimar' in *Selected Critical Writings,* ed. by Rosemary Ashton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 85.
[6] *Ibid*., p. 86.
[7] The relation to and the perception of time is the main difference between music and literature. As Bernard Sève summarises: time is imposed upon the listener in music but not upon the reader in literature. See *L'Altération musicale,* p. 29.

recounts in *Darwin's Plots*. She explains the reconsideration of origins in the works of Darwin:

> his insistence on interactions between organism and environment, and his resistance to absolute origins, is expressed both in the multivocality of his metaphors and in his argumentative insistence on metamorphosis.[8]

Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871) are indeed replete with metaphors. I would like to highlight the bodily and musical metaphors in Darwin's work as well as in the works of contemporaneous philosophers such as Herbert Spencer and Feuerbach in order to contextualise the intersections of the body, music and organicity in *Daniel Deronda*. Evolutionary theories would appear to be inseparable from the imaginary of the body and music.

One of the main claims in *The Descent of Man* is that the origins of music are to be found in the sexual courtship of the male directed at the female species, and that these physical passions have been inherited by humans:

> I conclude that musical notes and rhythm were first acquired by the male or female progenitors of mankind for the sake of charming the opposite sex. Thus musical tones became firmly associated with some of the strongest passions an animal is capable of feeling, and are consequently used instinctively, or through association, when strong emotions are expressed in speech.[9]

By successively presenting the (bodily) use of music by insects, frogs, birds and gorillas, Darwin sees in music a support to his argument on evolution; in other words, the usage of music for animal sexual reproduction is an assurance of evolution from animals to man. Darwin does not necessarily wish to examine the origins of music (contrary to Spencer) but acknowledges that his suppositions serve his theories on evolution well: 'We must *suppose* that the rhythms and cadences of oratory are derived from previously developed musical powers'.[10] Darwin suggests that music in

[8] Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot, and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 56.
[9] Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*, 2nd edn (London: John Murray, 1874), note 39, p. 572.
[10] *Ibid.*, my emphasis, p. 572.

the animal reign precedes human articulate language as his demonstration relies on the relations between corporeal structures, music, and instinct.[11]

Spencer starts his essay 'On the Origin and Function of Music' with a consideration of the aptitude of the body to move along with emotions, with a particular focus on muscular contractions: 'all feelings, then – sensations or emotions, pleasurable or painful – have this common characteristic, that they are muscular stimuli'.[12] It is only after a long reflection on bodily reactions that he proclaims: '"But what has all this to do with the Origin and function of Music?" asks the reader'.[13] Spencer demonstrates that music is originally vocal; it is therefore a production of the body and its muscles reacting to emotions. He even adds that the body is itself musical, or at least rhythmical: 'in common with inorganic actions, all organic actions are completely or partially rhythmical—from appetite and sleep to inspirations and heart-beats'. To sum up, music, according to Spencer, has its origin in the body and has an organic function, that of 'facilitating the development of this emotional language'.[14] By demonstrating that music both originates from and facilitates the bodily expression of emotions, Spencer argues that there is a deep connection between music, the body and the emotions (he even mentions pleasure several times).

A few years before the release of this essay, the German philosopher Feuerbach had published *Das Wesen den Christentums* (1841) – translated by George Eliot in 1854 – in which he questions the Christian fracture of the body and mind. Feuerbach asserts that the body and mind are inseparable and highlights the significance of pleasure:

> Material pleasure is nothing further, so to speak, than the joy of matter in itself, matter proving itself by activity. Every joy is self-activity, every pleasure a manifestation of force, energy. Every organic function is, in a normal condition, united with enjoyment.[15]

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[11] 'It will be universally admitted that instincts are as important as corporeal structures for the welfare of each species, under its present conditions of life'. Darwin, *The Origins of Species by means of natural selection, or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life* (London: John Murray, 1859), p. 209.
[12] Herbert Spencer, 'On the Origin and Function of Music' (1857), in *Essay: Scientific, Political & Speculative* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1891), p. 403.
[13] *Ibid.*
[14] *Ibid*., p. 426.
[15] Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, trans. George Eliot (New-York: Calvin Blanchard, 1855), p. 400.

Feuerbach's essay reconsiders the construction of Christianity based on a philosophy of the body. The philosopher shows how religion is detached from bodily materiality and therefore from reality: 'But a body does not exist without flesh and blood. Flesh and blood is life, and life alone is corporeal reality'.[16] He claims the dominance of bodily senses over the essence of divinity; according to him, the senses are the only possible materiality and therefore reality. [17] In other words, Feuerbach deconstructs the foundations of Christianity through a hedonistic view in which music finds a place. He refers to music several times within his reflections on the senses; music is deeply linked to the manifestation of the senses since it is 'a monologue of emotions'.[18] Feuerbach places the body and its senses in the foreground; the body should be intertwined with thoughts, feelings and sensations – which are influenced by music.

This overview of contemporary thinkers reveals that the interaction between the body and music is a privileged image in the discourse on evolution. The (Christian) fracture between the body and mind is questioned and music is one of the bridges between the two elements. The following analysis deconstructs the figure of the woman musician according to the role of (each of) her four faces in parallel with Daniel Deronda's quest for identity, where each role corresponds to a different relation of music. Each of the woman musician characters represents a communion of music and the body – one of the elements always prevails over the other for each character; we could say, for example, that Gwendolen is a musical body while Mirah is a bodily music.

[16] *Ibid*., p. 127.
[17] 'Everything must ultimately take an external form, must present itself to the senses', *Ibid*., p. 213.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

2. No music or body: Gwendolen Harleth

The character of Gwendolen Harleth has been an object of fascination for many critics who have seen in her the true heroine of the story.[19] However, I would like to show that she is not the only heroine but a member of the body of women musicians. Peter Brooks leans on the representation of Gwendolen's body to argue that 'the novel moves her at the end from a specular to a biographical or narrative mode'.[20] Although I agree with this idea, I would like to add that this shift is only possible through her relation with music[21] and with the other (musical) characters, notably through the perspective of the plural woman musician.

Gwendolen's relation with music is first 'visual', in that she plays music in order to be seen and sees herself in music, rather than hearing it. This 'delicate-limbed sylph'[22] uses music as a mirror of herself, as her self-comparison with a painting of Saint Cecilia shows:

> 'Here is an organ. I will be Saint Cecilia: some one shall paint me as Saint Cecilia. Jocosa (this was her name for Miss Merry), let down my hair. See, mamma?'
> She had thrown off her hat and gloves, and seated herself before the organ in an admirable pose, looking upward; while the submissive and sad Jocosa took out the one comb which fastened the coil of hair […]
> 'I should make a tolerable St. Cecilia with some white roses on my head,' said Gwendolen, - 'only how about my nose, mamma? I think saint's noses never in the least turn up. I wish you had given me your perfectly straight nose […] Mine is only a happy nose; it would not do so well for tragedy. [23]

[19] For example, F.R Leavis suggests in 'Gwendolen Harleth', *London Review of Books,* 4 (1982), 10-12, that the title should be *Gwendolen* and Peter Brooks focused his analysis of the body on the character of Gwendolen in 'Talking Bodies, Delicate Vessels', *Body Work: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993).
[20] Brooks, p. 254.
[21] Brooks touches upon this idea when he says, with regard to Gwendolen's body, that 'the reader senses a paradigm shift, comparable to that worked by Freud, from seeing to listening', *Ibid*. However Brooks does not refer to music and does not explain that the relationship of Gwendolen with music is fully part of this shift.
[22] *DD*, p. 39.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

Saint Cecilia, the virgin patroness of the musician, is referred to here only as a picture, and Gwendolen identifies herself with 'a musician of silence'.[24]

Gwendolen's relationship with music is indeed one of silence, not to negate the role of music in her life but to highlight the meditative effect music has on her. She is silent in front of music, and does not produce music but contemplates herself (and her life) in it. The combination of music with her silence, which creates a meditative state, is therefore of a religious nature, as it is in Mirah's life for whom music is explicitly connected to religion, as we shall see.

The predominance of Gwendolen's body paradoxically reveals a spiritual development triggered by music. As the above quote shows, she is first presented as a physical character, a body. Her nose is a recurrent feature, as references to her '*nez retroussé*' are redundant, as often noticed by other characters. This nose reveals a form of nakedness, serving as a substitute for the sensuality of her body, and perhaps even a sexual attribute, as the observation of a character at the beginning of the novel underlines: 'And that delicate nose with its gradual upward curve is distracting. And then her mouth – there never was a prettier mouth'.[25] According to Feuerbach, the nose serves one of the most 'material' senses, the sense of smell is the most bodily sense, which even represents the belly: 'Das Gefühl, der Geruch, der Geschmack sind Materialisten, sind Fleisch, das Gesicht und Gehör sind Idealisten, sind Geist. Aber Augen und Ohren vertreten den Kopf, die übrigen Sinne den Bauch'.[26] Gwendolen's bodily attributes, her nose and mouth, accentuate the materiality of her body.

However, the importance of sight (what she sees and being seen by others) as well as the sense of hearing (notably music) show that Gwendolen is not only a material body. The recurrent questioning of Gwendolen's beauty indicates, indeed, that she is not only an aesthetic body. The very emphasis on her nose impairs any form of idealisation, revealing instead an organic body. The irony about the unsuitability of her nose for tragedy – which consequently leads us to think that it would be more suitable for comedy – confirms a form of irony on the aestheticism of her body.

Whether a tragic or comic heroine, Gwendolen appears to be an actress more than a musician. The predominance of her body mingled with her musical silence –

[24] In his poem 'Sainte' (1865), Mallarmé calls Saint Cecilia the 'musician of silence'.
[25] *DD*, p. 12.
[26] Feuerbach, 'Wider den Dualismus von Leib und Seele, Fleisch und Geist', in *Sämmtliche Werke,* 10 vols (Leipzig: Otto Wigand, 1846), II, pp. 347-379 (p.370).

offering a décor to her acting – accentuates her constant performance. Like the organ she sits at, musical instruments are accessories that partake in her comedy. She is never described as playing instruments, but uses them as pieces of furniture for her stage. For example, while waiting for Klesmer, Gwendolen sits at the piano to order her music books but this movement leads her to look at her own reflection in the window and to walk towards it. Klesmer plays along with her staged performance by placing his hat on the piano as if it was a mere hat stand. The piano is a central piece of Gwendolen's performance and of her quest for identity, triggering self-reflection (in the specular and introspective sense). The piano is indeed at the centre of her important conversations, be it with Klesmer who discourages her from starting a singing career, or with Daniel Deronda who makes her think about her marriage. The latter conversation – referred to in a theatrical way as 'their conversation at the piano', since Deronda understood Gwendolen's cue to be joined at the piano – helps Gwendolen to question her identity by comparing herself with Mirah.

Gwendolen is an actress who desires the attention of a public but improvises her play, progressively building her quest for identity. Her conversations are even accompanied by stage directions. When she speaks to Grandcourt, for instance, the speech is repeatedly interrupted by the interventions of the narrator (stage director) in brackets, such as: '(Pause during which she imagined various degrees and modes of opinion about herself that might be entertained by Grandcourt)'.[27] Gwendolen composes her role and actions as she plays. Even when she performs a written role, that of Hermione, her unexpected reaction participates in an improvised performance. The tableau of Hermione is accompanied by Klesmer striking a chord on the piano which has the effect of opening a movable panel showing the picture of a dead face. Gwendolen has a strong physical reaction to this: she screams, falls on her knees and places her head in her hands. While the striking chord was supposed to be the signal for her to advance on the stage and step down, it actually led her to take Hermione's pose in an even more credible way. Gwendolen is a character who is constantly performing and does not seem to be able to control her acting. Even when she decides to act, her body seems to overact the play for her. She is the puppet of her own body

[27] *DD*, p. 112.

and its interaction with music[28]. Music seems, indeed, to first have an effect on her body and then on her moral actions. The effect is often of an electrical nature, like the vibration of Klesmer's chord or a discussion with Daniel Deronda who uses music to make Gwendolen think about her life, his speech then provoking an 'electric shock' on her. [29]

The lack of control of her body (and of her performance) reveals a form of immaturity which will evolve into an awareness of the self and others. The Hermione episode prefigures another shock in Gwendolen's life, marking a clear evolution: her husband's death in the sea, and the sight of his dead face. By overcoming this episode, with Deronda's help, she takes a step forward in her womanhood.
The significance of her theatricalised body emphasises the silent role of music. Gwendolen cannot produce music, when she considers becoming a professional singer, she is soon discouraged by Klesmer and must resign herself to playing the role of a housewife. Her (silenced) relationship with music makes her think about the reality of her own body. She cannot be a mere '*plastik*'[30] – as Klesmer calls her performance of Hermione – she is not an independent aesthetic piece (despite her will to be independent) but part of an organic whole, hence her lack of control of her permanent acting. Gwendolen always counts on her body before questioning her identity; when she learns about the bankruptcy of her family, she wants to become a professional singer and is ready to 'give away her own flesh':

> The belief that to present herself in public on the stage must produce an effect such as she had been used to feel certain of in private life; was like a bit of her flesh – it was not to be peeled off readily, but must come with blood and pain.[31]

The harsh judgement behind Klesmer's proclamation that she does not have the aptitude to become an artist, who must be a figure of genius and 'must subdue mind and body to unbroken discipline'[32], tells her that she is not a mere body. Klesmer had already expressed a judgement after her performance of Bellini's aria:

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[28] In his essay on the marionette theatre (1810), Heinrich von Kleist argues that human purity appears in the mechanical form of the puppet or in a divine form; the puppet thus reveals human spirituality. 'Über das Marionettentheater: Aufsätze und Anekdoten' (Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1944).
[29] *DD.*, p. 451.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 61.
[31] *Ibid.,* p. 255.
[32] *Ibid.,* p. 256.

> It is always acceptable to see you sing. […] You sing in tune, and you have a pretty fair organ. But you produce your notes badly; and that music which you sing is beneath you. It is a form of melody which expresses a puerile state of culture […] There is […] no sense of the universal.[33]

Klesmer's opinion forces Gwendolen to think of herself outside her body and to reach a form of consciousness. Klesmer, who prefers to see rather than hear Gwendolen sing, suggests that she comprehend her singing in an individual and collective manner to reach a universal sense. Similarly, Daniel Deronda later tells her, in a priest-like posture, that if she really enjoys music, it is always 'worth while in private, for your own delight'.[34]

Klesmer and Deronda present music as a connector of the body and mind, which helps Gwendolen envisage her life outside the physicality of her body, or rather inside the consciousness of her body. Gwendolen's relationship with music follows, as Brooks suggests, a 'biographical' progression, from an aesthetic character to a character conscious of its organicity. Although Gwendolen does not 'produce' music – apart form Bellini's aria, music is presented as a spiritual recourse rather than actual music that she plays – it has an effect on her body and mind, binding the two elements and shifting the perception of her body from the aesthetic to the organic. Music is therefore a means to place her body in the perspective of her quest for identity. She is not presented as a talented musician, and does not often play; rather, music affects and awakens her. Her musical silence is of a meditative nature, contributing to her quest for identity by leading her to realise the significance of her body.

[33] *Ibid.,* pp. 48-49.
[34] *Ibid.,* p. 411.

3. Nobody and music: Mirah Cohen

While we see Gwendolen before we hear her, we hear Mirah before we see her. Contrary to Gwendolen, Mirah is more of a spectral than a fleshy character. She is a talented musician who sings serious and religious music such as Beethoven's aria 'Per pieta non dirmi addio' or Haendel's 'Lascia ch'io pianga'; she produces music and is constantly associated with it. The leitmotivic arias she sings (Beethoven's and the fictional 'O Patria Mia') demonstrate that she is the main musical source in the text. Gwendolen and Mirah are musically but also physically opposed – Mirah, like Consuelo, has dark hair and eyes. While Klesmer offers a 'spiritual' speech to Gwendolen, explaining to her how to envision music in a larger way, he simply shakes Mirah's hand and pragmatically declares 'you are a musician'.[35]

Mirah is presented as a musician before being described physically; it is music that gives Mirah a body rather than the other way round. This is particularly obvious in the scene in which Daniel Deronda and Mirah meet. Daniel Deronda is rowing on the Thames, singing fragments of Rossini's *Otello* when he hears the verse 'Nella miseria' being repeated by a voice from the banks. Mirah is introduced as a disembodied voice before she is physically described and when Daniel Deronda finally sees her, she is designated as an image rather than a person: 'the picturesque lines and colour of the image that were exceptional', 'the attractiveness of the image'.[36] The dreaminess of their encounter is accentuated by the vocabulary of the unconscious: Daniel Deronda sings unconsciously the 'low-toned chant which had *haunted* his throat all the way up the river' and Mirah is 'an impersonation of the misery he was unconsciously giving voice to' and she seems herself 'half conscious of her surroundings'.[37] Music creates a vaporous space in which their encounter takes place; even the décor is musicalised: 'the approach of his favourite hour – with its darkening masses of tree and building between the double glow of the sky and the river – disposed him to linger as if they had been an unfinished strain of music'.[38] Music, Mirah's spectral figure and the significance of the unconscious produce a

[35] *Ibid.,* p. 484.
[36] *Ibid.,* p. 188.
[37] *Ibid.,* p. 187, my emphasis.
[38] *Ibid.,* p. 189.

dematerialised environment which reveals this encounter as a key chronotope of their respective spiritual journeys.

However, Eliot does not leave this topos as a Romantic one but adds a scientific element, that of animal courtship. Evoking Darwin's cases studies, the narrator specifies that only Mirah can hear and understand Deronda's chant: 'it was only to one ear that the low vocal sounds came with more significance than if they had been an insect-murmur amidst the sum of current noises'.[39] This simile echoes Darwin's description of insects' musical courtship: 'The males in the three saltatorial families belonging to this Order are remarkable for their musical powers, […] All observers agree that the sounds serve either to call or excite the mute females'.[40] The encounter between Deronda and Mirah is therefore a courtship scene, where Deronda 'calls or excites' Mirah with music (however Mirah is not completely mute). Eliot shifts the encounter from a Romantic to an organic one. In this light, the remarks on the effects the two characters have on one another – the 'melodic wail' sighed by Mirah and Deronda's voice which enters 'her inner world without her having taken any note of whence it came'[41] – assume a physical, sensuous significance.

The actual physical description of Mirah comes later in the narration. We have explained that music establishes a development from the body to spirituality in Gwendolen's quest for identity; she is, above all, a body, but music, by creating a décor to her constant performance as well as through the comments of Deronda and Klesmer, provides her with a spiritual reflection, that of a vision of her body that belongs to a (organic) system. On the contrary, the movement of music in Mirah's life takes the opposite direction, as Mirah is presented from the start as a devoted Jewess. The first physical depiction of Mirah is introduced when she starts singing Beethoven and accompanying herself on the piano: music triggers the physical description. The narrator's use of the anaphora 'imagine her' insists on the importance of visualising this sounding body:

> Imagine her – it is always good to imagine a human creature in whom bodily loveliness seems as properly one with the entire being as the bodily loveliness of

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 187.
[40] Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, p. 352.
[41] *DD*, p. 187.

> those wondrous transparent orbs of life that we find in the sea – imagine her with her dark hair brushed from her temples […].[42]

This shift from the spiritual to the physical is also possible through the mention of her musical instinct and the fact that her 'singing all came by nature'.[43] Mirah also uses music to express her jealousy when she thinks Deronda is with Gwendolen, singing: '*Lascia ch'io pianga*, giving forth its melodious sobs and cries with new fullness and energy'.[44] Yet according to Darwin, jealousy is one of the animal instincts that is expressed by music.[45] Therefore, Mirah is also attached to the organic system of the four-headed female musician.

The fact that Mirah is a spiritual being before a physical one is also a self-empowering conduct. She refuses any form of bodily exhibition, constantly repeating, for instance, that she does not like acting – 'Acting is slow and poor to what we go through within'[46] – and escapes the constant performance imposed by her father. While her father makes her sing in theatres in Europe and America to earn money, as if she were a 'musical box',[47] she leaves when she realises he has organised her marriage with a count. She clearly rejects the view of her body as a public commodity and wishes to be independent and earn her living. Mirah's physical weakness and rejection of public exhibition contrast with Gwendolen's physical exuberance. However, they both wish to be independent and yet both belong to a form of organicity of the woman musician. This is where Eliot's depiction of women artists seems to stand in contradiction with Sand's; the permanent image of the organic system applied to women musician rejects a complete form of independence on their part – and therefore the impossibility of escaping commodification.

Furthermore, the opposition between Mirah and Gwendolen also appears in the inverted (musical) relationship they have with Daniel Deronda. When Daniel Deronda and Gwendolen meet, music is presented as a material (theatrical) décor and Deronda encourages Gwendolen to think about her life and mentions that music could help her. On the contrary, Deronda and Mirah are both 'immersed' in spirituality and

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[42] *Ibid.,* p. 372.
[43] *Ibid.,* p. 435.
[44] *Ibid*., pp. 728-29. Since Consuelo sings the same aria to express her hope for freedom, we could understand Mirah's singing as a cry of jealousy as well as a hope for a freedom in love and religion.
[45] Darwin, 'the courtship of the sexes,– would have expressed various emotions, such as love, jealousy, triumph,– and would have served as a challenge to rivals.', *The Descent of Man*, p. 87.
[46] *DD,* p. 651.
[47] *Ibid.,* p. 213.

music physically unites them. Similarly to Consuelo, Mirah's repertoire is constituted by serious music, which we associate here with spirituality: music by German composers or religious songs. Mirah's performance of 'O Patria Mia' – a patriotic ode to Italy – in front of Klesmer intersperses Deronda's discovery of the Jewish culture with Mordecai (Mirah's brother). Mordecai's speech – when he tells Deronda that he is probably Jewish – has a musical effect on the hero who feels 'a new chord sounding'.[48] Mirah's singing as well as Deronda's musical reaction both express their social and spiritual ideal, which will be realised at the end when they leave for Israel.

Thus the relation of Mirah and Deronda to religion is as musical as their own relationship is. Mirah's music even seems to develop Deronda religious feeling; when he hears her sing 'O Patria Mia', the words seem to 'breathe as inspiration through the music'[49], and he even mentally adds lyrics to the song, showing his growing devotion to her and to religion. Through her singing, Mirah takes on the role of a priestess, as is also revealed by the choice of her name; she introduces herself as Mirah Lapidoth but wishes to change her last name to Cohen, which originally means 'priest' in Hebrew. However, Deronda firmly replies that she cannot take this name:

> the name is inadmissible for a singer. This is one of the trifles in which we must conform to vulgar prejudice. We could choose some other name, however – such singers ordinarily choose – an Italian or Spanish name, which would suit your *physique*.[50]

The use of the pronoun 'we' shows that Deronda identifies himself with Mirah and with Judaism. The role of music is double here; it reveals the cleavage between 'Jewishness' and 'Englishness', but at the same time unites Mirah's and Deronda's spiritual and social ideal. It has been mentioned that music gives a body to Mirah, but it can be added that Deronda also participates in her incorporation. Mirah belongs to the female organic system because she does not remain spectral, nor does she become completely material. Once more, it is the electrical image that is used in the text; for example, when Deronda tells her he is a Jew she feels an 'electric shock'.[51] Thus, Mirah does not appear as a 'musical box' but rather as a soundbox the vibrations of

[48] *Ibid.,* p. 503.
[49] *Ibid.,* p. 559.
[50] *Ibid.,* p. 467, my emphasis.
[51] *Ibid.,* p. 748.

which, like nervous connections and immaterial sounds, (physically) resonate with the other musicians.

4. The professional musicians: Catherine Arrowpoint, Alcharisi, and Klesmer

Because of the presence of both male and female musicians in the novel, one question that arises is: Why do women musicians form an organic system in Eliot's text more than male musicians? Klesmer, Grandcourt and Lush are also musicians but they are not described as following a personal development through music, as is the case for Gwendolen, Mirah and, to a lesser degree, Alcharisi and Catherine Arrowpoint. Deronda is also a musician (a tenor) but his quest for identity occurs through a confrontation with female musicians; in addition to their own self-affirmation, women are a mirror of his development. The four women musicians can be conceived of as one entity also because Eliot presents the particularities of the condition of the female artist with the question of vocation at the centre. The opposition established between the four women musicians, the quadruple sorority mentioned, and Deronda and Klesmer, accentuate their place as female artists.

Through the experiences of the professional women musicians, Catherine Arrowpoint and Alcharisi, Eliot shows the difficulties faced by the professional female artist. Catherine Arrowpoint is a talented instrumentalist (she plays three instruments) and a composer (she mentions 'my operetta').[52] By marrying her piano teacher, Klesmer, she expresses a resistance to English-bourgeois society which considers this union as a *mésalliance*. Her parents reject her, she is no longer part of the bourgeoisie and thus joins the artist class, considered as a lower class. Her musical talents show a form of agency; however, once she marries Klesmer, no mention is made of her musical practice, as though she had to give way to her genius husband. Similarly, Deronda's mother, Alcharisi, recounts how she left her son to a family friend in order to pursue her career as a prima donna. She was forced by her father to marry but showed a will to be free ('I meant to be free and to live for my art')[53] and to resist patriarchal society through music. However, like Consuelo, she loses her voice on stage and has to end her career and incidentally starts a family. Yet, Alcharisi is presented as a genius, as she tells Deronda: 'You are not a woman. You may try – but

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 243.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 639.

you can never imagine what it is to have a man's force of genius in you, and yet to suffer the slavery of being a girl'.[54] Professional and genius women musicians cannot pursue their vocation; the case of Alcharisi shows that women have to choose between being women and being artists.

If Alcharisi is forced to give up her career it could be because she does not understand the social message of music, as Mirah and Deronda do. She rejects her religion (she is originally Jewish) and affirms that she has no talent to love. Therefore, it seems that she loses her voice because she did not find in music a universal voice. Mirah does not become a professional like Alcharisi, but manages nonetheless to earn her living by teaching music and, contrary to Catherine Arrowpoint and Alcharisi, continues to play and sing after her marriage. It is as though only the understanding of music as a unifying philosophy can allow women to be musicians without any limits.

This idea of music as a religion first appears with Klesmer, the genius musician par excellence, who is presented as 'a felicitous combination of the German, the Slave, and the Semite, with grand features, brown hair in artistic fashion, and brown eyes in spectacle'.[55] He is the one who explains to female musicians the importance of understanding the unity of music.[56] Although he assumes the role of the judge when it comes to women musicians, and an artist of genius, he is still considered as an outcast of society.[57] In this sense, like women musicians, he stands outside of bourgeois society. However, unlike Catherine and Alcharisi, he sees music as a religion. He introduces himself as 'Elijah, the wandering Jew',[58] and appears as a prophet figure preaching the union of music and religion. In this sense, he is the double of Mirah's brother Mordecai, who wants to unite 'the great body of the nations'[59] and who explains to Deronda the importance of spreading a religious message and returning to Israel. Deronda first has the revelation of religion through music at the synagogue of Frankfurt, but what is only an inclination becomes a duty when he listens to Mordecai's preaching, Deronda thus declares: 'I might feel myself the heart and the brain of a multitude – some social captainship, which would come to

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 631.
[55] *Ibid.,* p. 47. Of German origins and certainly inspired by Liszt, Klesmer also seems to come from the lineage of Kreisler and Krespel.
[56] Several critics also noted his resemblance with Wagner, for example John M. Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 93.
[57] Catherine's mother calls him a gypsy, *DD*, p. 246.
[58] *Ibid.,* p. 242.
[59] *Ibid*., p. 526.

me as a duty'.[60] It is interesting to note that Mordecai's religious speech relies upon bodily metaphors. He adds: 'our race shall have an organic centre, a heart and brain to watch and guide and execute'. However, Deronda on his own is not capable of becoming a prophet and guide; the embodiment of a spiritual message is only possible through the musician Mirah, who, like Consuelo, becomes a prophet-mother able to spread the universal message of religion through music. The novel closes, indeed, on Deronda's and Mirah's wedding and their departure for Israel with Mordecai. The latter dies shortly after making the newly-wed couple the new prophets, the new 'transmitters' – and yet this designation carries the notion of electric transmission and vibration, which stands at the heart of the relation between the body and music as I have attempted to demonstrate.

Contrary to Alcharisi, Mirah finds her (musical) vocation and voice in religion, as if the only acceptable role of women musicians had to be endowed with a moral role. The pleasure of music for its own sake is rejected in both *Consuelo* and *Daniel Deronda* and associates women with commodification. Both Sand and Eliot acknowledge the significant role played by women musicians but do not grant them the freedom of performing for pleasure. Eliot grounds the importance of a social message – she even quotes Leroux – in the body, creating an organic network where female musicians stand out. Mirah, as a moral creature, appears as the embodiment of music as religion.

[60] *DD*, p. 750.

Conclusion

Beyond the implications with the bildungsroman, both *Consuelo* and *Daniel Deronda* seem to be in line with the musical and travel tradition of *Wilhelm Meister*. Here, it is female characters who experience a personal development and who are given a high place in the musical patriarchal framework. Not only are women musicians endowed with organic (sensual) bodies, but they are also empowered with an intellectual agency. This agency is not only a creative, artistic one but also a spiritual one where women musicians are the prophetesses of a new social model. However, this model does not seem to be entirely subversive since women musicians are not free when it comes to their musical practice. Although they are not restrained to the domestic sphere, and travel to spread a musical universal message, they are still bound to a patriarchal frame and have to fulfil a maternal role. Women musicians cannot triumph as professional musicians to become independent; their role as social prophetess is certainly of high consideration but remains limited. Women thus perform in the name of something, and not for their own pleasure; they are, as it were, always bowing, performing a reverence of subjection. The image of reverence offers a particularly rich notion with which to conclude this chapter, as both Consuelo and Mirah, just like Mignon in *Wilhelm Meister*, bow for their audience on several occasions. Before spreading her social and musical message, Consuelo transcends her audience with her opening bowing:

> Consuelo entra gravement et froidement. Elle fit des yeux le tour de son public, reçut les salves d'applaudissements de ses protecteurs avec une *révérence* sans humilité et sans coquetterie, et entonna son récitatif d'une voix si ferme, avec un accent si grandiose, et une sécurité si victorieuse, qu'à la première phrase des cris d'admiration partirent de tous les points de la salle. [1]

Whether this is a reverence of female physical subjection to musical performance or of the acceptation of a spiritual role, the two novels, through their rich musical narrative networks, also make reference to music as reverence.

[1] *Consuelo,* p. 120.

Chapter 5: Decomposing bodies/recomposing music in Emile Zola's *Nana* (1880) and Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks* (1901)

Introduction: Degeneration, the body and music

The evolution of the representation of women and music across nineteenth-century literature – from the ephemeral figures of Romanticism (Chapter 2), as well as pathological bodies (Chapter 3) to ideological developments (Chapter 4) – brings us at the end of the century to bodies in decomposition, to degeneration. Although the pathological element in the narratives of *Nana* and *Buddenbrooks* is as present as it is within the paradigm of monomania outlined in Chapter 3, its connection to women and music differs. Monomania and its expressions through and in the body have allowed us to introduce women musicians as fully-fledged characters torn between reality and the imagination. In the present chapter, the pathological component draws on the clinical works of the 1830s to explore beings in a degenerative state. The context of *fin-de-siècle* decadence establishes a link between criticism concerning Zola and Mann, particularly with regard to naturalism,[1] and accentuates the socio-political dimension of degeneration.[2] In this chapter, I will analyse the role of music and the body in the narratives of degeneration presented in *Nana* and *Buddenbrooks* through women characters.

In *Nana*, the degeneration of the eponymous character consists of her death through decomposition (due to smallpox) as well as the slow social decay for which

[1] See for example: Irene Gammel, *Sexualising Power in Naturalism: Theodor Dreiser and Frederick Philip Grove* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1994); Judith Ryan, '*Buddenbrooks*: between realism and aestheticism', in *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Mann*, ed. by Ritchie Robertson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 119-36; Ulrike Vedder, 'Writing Heredity: Emile Zola's *Rougon-Macquart* and Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks,* in *A Cultural History of Heredity III 19th and Early 20th centuries*, Preprint 294 (Berlin: Max-Planck-Institut für Wissenschaft Geschichte), pp.153-166 < https://www.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/Preprints/P294.PDF> [accessed 15 March 2013].

[2] Although Thomas Mann did not undertake the same social project as Zola, he acknowledges an inevitable connection between social bourgeois matters, decline and music: 'Ethik, Bürgerlichkeit, Verfall: das gehört zusammen, das ist eins. Gehört nicht auch die Musik dazu? Ich erinnere mich wohl, mit welchen Worten, mündlicher Überlieferung zufolge, Stefan George meine 'Buddenbrooks' abgelehnt hat: 'Nein', sagte er, 'das ist nichts für mich. Das ist noch Musik und Verfall'. Noch! Späte, ja verspätete Bürgerlichkeit machte mich zum Verfallsanalytiker', *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen,* in *Gesammelte Werke,* 12 vols (Frankfurt a. M: Fischer, 1960), XII, p. 106.

she is held responsible. By setting Nana's birth in 1852 and her death in 1870, Zola explicitly frames her life within the Second Empire, so much so that she can be seen as an allegory of Second Empire society.[3] Nana's degeneration reflects the degeneration of society, yet the examination of the role of music in her life sheds creative light on the idea of degeneration. Nana is the opposite of a musician; she explicitly lacks acting and singing talents, and yet music is a key element of her decomposition.

In *Buddenbrooks*, the reader is warned by the subtitle 'Verfall einer Familie' that what they are about to read is the downfall of a family. The Buddenbrook family progressively loses its commercial and material strength; its cereal firm becomes bankrupt and their last male child, Hanno, dies (of Typhus fever). Music, through the figure of the violinist Gerda and her son Hanno, accompanies the family's degeneration but at the same time seems to offer a means of overcoming it.

Although some critics have pointed out a connection between the degeneration of the Buddenbrook family and the increase in the number of musical references in the text,[4] the nature of this connection has not been explored through the crucial role of women and the body. And yet women are not only bodies in decomposition, they are also established as vectors of decadence through their introduction of music into their social environments. In *Nana* and *Buddenbrooks*, the female body – particularly bodies in decomposition or exhausted bodies – is the meeting point of decadence and music, since their performances are bodily performances. Furthermore, the (bodily) convergence of degeneration and music occurs particularly through a mechanism of repetition. Music in the performances of Nana, Gerda and even Hanno (whose androgyny allows us to envisage his musical improvisations along with his femininity, as will be shown) is characterised by repetition. The temporal characteristic of decay – degeneration is by definition an evolution in time – is emphasised by musical temporality: the repetitions not only within their performances but also of those performances, partly because they appear as recurrent elements

[3] *Nana* takes place during the three last years of the Empire but Zola mentions Nana's (Anna Coupeau) birth in *L'Assommoir* and confesses in an interview 'j'ai dû tricher et, […] Nana, par exemple, fait en trois ou quatre ans ce qu'elle devrait faire en dix ans. La raison est que je n'ai pas voulu déborder du Second Empire', Entretien du 15 avril 1880, quoted in Eleonore Reverzy, *Nana d'Emile Zola* (Paris: Gallimard, 2008), p. 113.

[4] For example, in the influential *The Ironic German*, Erich Heller suggests that the novel points to 'those creative forces which are released by the collapse of the old order' (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 35.

within the narration but also because they demonstrate particular inner structures of repetition. This chapter aims to show how degeneration is presented in a creative light through the bodily performances of women musicians characterised by repetitions, recompositions, and variations. In order to develop this argument in each text, it is important to contextualise and define the notion of degeneration in *fin-de-siècle* literature.

Naturalism and heredity

In *Le Naturalisme au théâtre* (1880), Zola collected his articles about theatre and fine-tuned his understanding of naturalism. He reproaches authors, particularly of tragedy and romantic drama, for idealising their characters in a fake frame, where there is: 'Jamais l'analyse complète d'un organisme, jamais un personnage dont les muscles et le cerveau travaillent comme dans la nature'.[5] According to Zola, physiological man should be placed at the centre, just like naturalist texts present the body through thorough observation of and in line with nature. The naturalist concern with the body is of central importance for understanding the role of women and music in the two novels. Yves Chevrel explains that this concern is not only with individual bodies but also with society as a body: 'le monde est perçu d'abord comme un organisme en mouvement, tantôt sur le modèle biologique, tantôt sur le modèle mécanique'.[6] The characters' bodies, caught in an organic system, struggle with social and natural forces. However, the latter deterministic element does not establish an opposition between the individual will and determined phenomena but reveals that they are interconnected. From this perspective, I agree with Jennifer Fleissner who argues that if determinism underlines a negation of agency, it can also be viewed as a participative negation rather than one that is merely passive.[7] Women's bodies at the same time endure and participate in degeneration.

The role of music and women in degeneration can first be understood through heredity. The genealogy of Zola's Rougon-Macquart, the presentation of which is informed by the work of Prosper Lucas and Claude Bernard, may throw some light on

[5] Emile Zola, *Le Naturalisme au théâtre: les théories et les exemples* (Paris: G. Charpentier, 1881) <http://obvil.paris-sorbonne.fr/corpus/critique/zola_naturalisme/> [accessed 20 April 2015].
[6] Yves Chevrel, *Le Naturalisme* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1982), pp. 100-101.
[7] Jennifer Fleissner, *Women, Compulsion, Modernity: The Moment of American Naturalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2004), notably, this is her argument, when one substitutes compulsion to determinism, p. 39.

the lineage of the Buddenbrooks. The Rougon-Macquart family spreads across five generations and is characterised by the transmission of an original taint (*la tare originale*) due to the neurosis of Tante Dide (Adelaïde Fouque). Zola shows the influence of this original defect on his characters according to the different branches of the family and their social environments. Thus Nana, who belongs to the fourth generation, comes from the Macquart branch (a particularly flawed one due to the inheritance of the taint and alcoholism of Antoine Macquart) and evolves in the environment of prostitution. The characters are connected through an extended family network, which Zola depicts with the metaphor of the tree, as Docteur Pascal explains in the novel of the same name: 'le tronc explique les branches qui expliquent les feuilles'.[8]

In *Buddenbrooks*, the family network is presented as a chain, as Jean Buddenbrook tells his daughter Tony: 'wir sind nicht lose, unabhängige und für sich bestehende Einzelwesen, sondern wie Glieder in einer Kette, und wir wären, so wie wir sind, nicht denkbar ohne die Reihe derjenigen, die uns vorangingen und uns die Wege wiesen'.[9] Despite the fact that six generations of the family are mentioned, three are at the core of the narration; the decay is visible when Thomas takes over the direction of the family business. His marriage with Gerda emphasises the presence of music in the family, which contrasts with Thomas's economic concerns. Although the reference to music reaches its apex in the final performances of Hanno, it is present in the family's life from the beginning of the novel; for example, one of the first references concerns Johann Buddenbrook who plays light songs on the flute. There is at least one member of the family in each generation who plays music, so that music seems to progressively cross the lineage until Hanno's improvisations and death. In other words, as a characteristic present in the early generations and that is transmissible, music can be associated with the Rougon-Macquart family's original taint. In *Nana* it is not only music but rather artistic connections that are transmittable – one of Nana's half-brothers is the suicidal painter Claude Lantier (the hero of *L'Oeuvre*). In both novels, music and art are connected to degeneration through heredity. However, we will also see how music bestows a metaphysical significance upon degeneration and how the musical taint figures a primal instability reflected physically in both texts.

[8] Émile Zola, *Le Docteur Pascal,* ed. by Henri Mitterand (Paris: Gallimard, 1993), p. 179.
[9] Thomas Mann, *Buddenbrooks: Verfall einer Familie* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1989), p. 146.

Max Nordau's degeneration

In *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, Thomas Mann declared the ambiguity of degeneration as a literary category:

> ich gehöre geistig jenem über ganz Europa verbreiteten Geschlecht von Schriftstellern an, die, aus der décadence kommend, zu Chronisten und Analytikern der décadence bestellt, gleichzeitig den emanzipatorischen Willen zur Absage an sie – sagen wir pessimistisch: die Velleität dieser Absage im Herzen tragen und mit der Überwindung von Dekadenz und Nihilismus wenigstens experimentieren.[10]

According to Mann, writers are torn between contributing to decadence and overcoming it; and yet music reflects this duality in *Nana* and *Buddenbrooks.*[11] Degeneration was first defined by Bénédict Augustin Morel in his *Traité des dégénérescences physiques, intellectuelles et morales de l'espèce humaine* (1857) as a 'déviation maladive' from a normal type.[12] The concept was then developed by Cesare Lombroso, Richard von Krafft-Ebing and Max Nordau. Lombroso particularly highlights the role of women (prostitutes and criminals) in decadence due to their monstrosity: 'Suivant nous, la véritable dégénérescence féminine est la prostitution'.[13] In Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886), however, degeneration is envisaged through sexual deviations. Max Nordau's *Entartung* (1882) examines degeneration as a negative imprint of decadent art. His essay is thus a critique of contemporary writers, musicians and philosophers, including Zola, Wagner and Nietzsche, as he warns in his dedication to Lombroso: 'Entartet sind nicht immer Verbrecher, Prostituirte, Anarchirsten und erklärte Wahnsinnige. Sie sind manchmal Schriftsteller

[10] Mann, *Betrachtungen*, XII, p. 201. ('I belong to that face of writers throughout Europe who, coming from decadence, appointed to be chroniclers and analysts of decadence, at the same time have the emancipatory desire to reject it – let us say pessimistically: they bear the velleity of this rejection in their hearts and at least experiment with overcoming decadence and nihilism', *Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man*, trans. by Walter D. Morris (New York: F. Ungar, 1987), p. 144.)

[11] In his book on the figure of the female dancer in *fin-de-siècle* literature, Guy Ducrey acknowledges this paradox: 'Ainsi font les écrivains, les illustrateurs décadents : ils multiplient avec une joie frénétique les signes d'une apocalypse qu'ils feignent de dénoncer', in *Corps et graphies. Poétique de la danse et de la danseuse à la fin du XIX^e siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1996), p. 24.

[12] Bénédict Augustin Morel, *Traité des dégénérescences physiques, intellectuelles et morales de l'espèce humaine et des causes qui produisent ces variétés maladives* (Paris: J.B. Baillière, 1857), p. 362.

[13] Cesare Lombroso, Guillaume Ferrero, Louise Meille, and Pierre Darmon, *La Femme criminelle et la prostituée* (1895) (Paris: Editions Jérôme Million, 1991), p. 483.

und Künstler'.[14] Nordau criticises Zola's Naturalism (which he says is only another word for Realism) and his scientific method, arguing that the degeneration of the Rougon-Macquart does not reflect the world's decadence but that of the writer. He says:

> Die Verworrenheit seines Denkens, die sich in seinen theoretischen Schriften, in seiner Erfindung des Wortes "Naturalismus", in seinen Vortellungen vom "Experimental-Roman" kundgibt, seine triebhafte Hinneigung zur Darstellung von Wahnsinnigen, Verbrechern, Prostituirten und Halbnarren, sein Anthropomorphismus und Symbolismus, sein Pessimismus, seine Koprolalie und seine Vorliebe für Rothwälsch kennzeichnen Zola hinreichend als höhern Entarteten. […] Dass er ein Sexual-Psychopath ist, veräth sich auf jeder Seite seiner Romane.[15]

Nordau does not explain, however, the particular nature of Zola's degeneration and his critique remains more a description than an analysis of decadent literature. Leaning on Morel's definition, Nordau accentuates the physiological and hereditary aspect of degeneration, asserting: 'Wenn unter dem Einflusse von Schädlichkeiten aller Art ein Organismus geschwächt wird, so werden seine Nachkommen nicht dem gesunden, normalen und entwickelungsfähigen Typus der Gattung ähnlich'.[16] Degeneration is, for him, organic and is spread across generations (or within one) through bodily degradation as well as 'organic weakness of will'.[17] Although Nordau also criticises Nietzsche, he incorporates the idea of will ruling life as Nietzsche, from his readings of Schopenhauer, conceptualises it. The very expression 'weakness of will' seems to come from Nietzsche, author of an aphorism on 'Schwäche des Willens'. Before discussing Nietzsche's account of music and will, it is important to highlight the omnipresence of the idea of repetition in Nordau's writings about

[14] Max Nordau, *Entartung,* ed. by Karin Tebben (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), I, p. vii.
[15] *Ibid.*, IV, p. 487. ('The confusion of thought which is shown in his theoretic writings, in his invention of the word 'naturalism', in his conception of the 'experimental novel', his instinctive inclination to depict demented persons, criminals, prostitutes, and semi-maniacs, his anthropomorphism and his symbolism, his pessimism, his coprolalia and his predilection for slang, sufficiently characterise M. Zola as a high-class degenerate [...]. That he is a sexual-psychopath is betrayed on every page of his novels'. *Degeneration*, [trans. ?] (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1895), pp. 499-500. The following translation is from this edition.)
[16] *Ibid.*, I, p. 28.
[17] *Ibid.*, I, p. 33.

degeneration. Repetition is indeed a central dynamic connected to music in *Nana* and *Buddenbrooks*.

Degeneration and musical repetition

Drawing on Wagner's music, Nordau argues that 'das Zurückstreben zu den Anfängen [...] jedoch eine Eigenthümlichkeit der Entartung und in ihrem tiefsten Wesen begründet [ist]'.[18] A return to beginnings is a characteristic of degeneration and the repetitive character of music participates in this circularity. Nordau further states that the Wagnerian 'unending melodies' and leitmotifs are a return to a 'primordial', even 'pre-human' stage.[19] According to Nordau, Wagner thus does the opposite of what he explains in his essay *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*.

Repetition in music, as Margulis has recently outlined, elicits a sense of expectation from the listener, that can either be fulfilled or not, and therefore of participation.[20] However, Margulis also suggests that the anticipation of a sound iteration raises the possibility of its variation: 'Since two iterations are never precisely repetitions in their deepest essence – they're composed of different atoms or occur at different time points – it is perception that abstracts both a relationship of shared subjectivity and a relationship of difference.'[21] It is this idea of repetition and variation that Nordau formulates in relation to degenerate music, when he writes:

> Der musikalische Hörer hat die Gewohnheit, jedes Motiv, das im Tonstück auftritt, umwillkürlich im Geiste ein wenig zu entwickeln. Die Art, wie der Tonsetzer sein Motiv weiterführt, muss nun von dieser vorausgeahnten Entwickelung gänzlich verschieden sein. Sie darf nicht errathen werden können. Wo man einen konsonanten Intervall erwartet, muss ein dissonanter erscheinen; wenn man die Phrase in einleuchtender Schlusskadenz bis zu einem natürlichen Ende ausgesponnen zu sehen hofft, muss sie inmitten eines Taktes jäh abreissen. Die Tonarten und Höhenlagen müssen plötzlich wechseln.[22]

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[18] *Ibid.*, II, p. 178.
[19] *Ibid*.
[20] 'This link between memory and repetition pulls us into repeated music and invites us to inhabit it', in Elizabeth Hellmuth Margulis, *On Repeat: How Music Plays the Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 11.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 35.
[22] Nordau, I, pp. 23-24. ('The musical listener is accustomed involuntarily to develop a little in his mind every motive occurring in a piece. The mode in which a composer carries out his motif is bound, accordingly to differ entirely from this anticipated development. It must not admit of being guessed. A dissonant interval must appear where a consonant interval was expected; if the hearer is hoping that a

Although Nordau's *Degeneration* might, at times, seem to offer a superficial explanation of the symptoms of degeneration, for example in his critique of Zola, he powerfully suggests that its underlying principle lies in the expectation of mere repetition. Expectation subverted by sudden variations (dissonances, or de-cadences) is a principle of degeneration. Decay is not a mere fall, it is a succession of repetitions and variations escaping a sharp ending.

As an agent of degeneration in *Nana* and *Buddenbrooks,* the female body is also the core of (musical) repetitions. In fact, we will see that music is not contained in the female body; repetitions and variations make it escape female musical practice as well as the degeneration of the text.

Music, decadence and metaphysics

The *fin-de-siècle* context allows us to bring a metaphysical light to pathological and atavistic concerns. Women, music, and the body are linked not only in the organic idea of degeneration but also in a wider understanding of the individual within decay. The metaphysical role of music was extensively explored by Nieztsche. In his early work *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, music is linked to suffering, through the figure of Dionysos, as opposed to Apollo's order: 'Der dionysische Musiker ist ohne jedes Bild völlig nur selbst Urschmerz und Urwiederklang desselben'.[23] Music expresses the Dionysian primordial essence, and it appears as an art of disorder better expressed by 'musical dissonance'.[24] Nietzsche, whose affinity with Thomas Mann is more obvious than with Zola – the implications of Nietzsche as well as Schopenhauer will be further developed with reference to *Buddenbrooks* – nonetheless helps us to understand music as an invisible force linked to the body and to decay, raising a metaphysical concern in the texts discussed in the present chapter. Moreover, the idea of *Urwiederklang* proves useful for understanding the dynamics of music in *Nana* and *Buddenbrooks*, dynamics that rely on repetition. Music as *Urwiederklang* stands as a primordial repetition, as a mechanism that sustains creativity in degeneration.

Although *Die Geburt der Tragödie* lays the groundwork for Nietzsche's thought on music, decay and the individual, it is only in his later works (compiled in

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phrase in what is an obvious final cadence will be spun out to its natural end, it must sharply be interrupted in the middle of a bar. Keys and pitch must change suddenly', p. 12.)

[23] Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, in *Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Werke*, ed. by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, 36 vols (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1967–), vol. III/1, p. 40.

[24] *Ibid.*, vol. III/1, p. 148.

Der Wille zur Macht) that the philosopher articulates his conception of will to power as the irreducible reality of the world, for which music can be seen as a (recurrent) expression and affirmation. Moreover, for the philosopher, art later becomes inseparable from disease and sick degeneration. This shift in his relationship with Wagner (from *Die Geburt der Tragödie* to *Der Fall Wagner*) does not contradict the creative power of music; although Nietzsche calls Wagner himself a 'disease' and his music 'sick' in *Der Fall Wagner*,[25] it does not remove the creativity of music within degeneration. Thus, Nietzsche's affirmation of the will to power signifies an affirmation of suffering (contrary to Schopenhauer's explanation, as we will see) and the failure to affirm suffering as reality (for example by seeking an escape in music) expresses the will to power decadently. This account of a decadent will to power will help us to understand the individual relation of women with music but also, considering that the body is at the centre of their performances, with their audience. As a matter of fact, Nietzsche does not neglect the body in his doctrines, placing it at the centre of the thought process: 'Der Glaube an den Leib ist fundamentaler, als der Glaube an die *Seele'*.[26] The body, driven by the invisible will to power and constituting the process of thinking, finds, in music, not a conscious representation but a sensitive language to express this will. The will and music converge towards the body striving to create, hence Nietzsche's famous idea: 'Der Mensch ist nicht mehr Künstler, er ist Kunstwerk geworden'.[27] The will to power, echoed in and by music, finds an embodiment in the musician. It is this idea of the creative body that I would like to explore in Nana's, Gerda's and Hanno's relations with music and decay.

With reference to pathological as well as metaphysical discourses of degeneration, this chapter aims to examine the social and philosophical concerns expressed in *Nana* and *Buddenbrooks* through the relation between music and women.

[25] *Der Fall Wagner*, *KGW*, VI /3, p. 21.
[26] *KGW*, VIII/1, 2[102], p. 110.
[27] *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, *KGW*, III/1, p. 26.

Listening to *Nana*

Nana's physical omnipotence, as 'la toute puissance du sexe',[1] has been extensively examined through the significance of the gaze or the scopic dimension.[2] Her body, often associated with Cabanel's and Bouguereau's paintings of Venus, has been depicted – and repainted – as an abominable Venus.[3] However, before posing as Venus in the operetta *La Blonde Vénus,* which propels her career as a low-class 'prima donna', she tries to sing Venus. She certainly does not sing well and yet her body is surrounded by music; the character of Nana is as sonorous as it is visual. In fact, she teases her audience through all the senses; she is an allegory of the five senses.[4] In Nana's performances, the sonic dimension complements the scopic one, and vice versa. This section brings into focus the importance of listening to Nana's degenerating body.

The music surrounding Nana is mostly that of variety theatre: operettas and popular tunes. Nana's performances, on the stage of the aptly named Théâtre des Varietés,[5] with the backing of music, blurs from the beginning of the novel the boundaries between theatre and reality. Zola unfolds all aspects of the theatre around the character of Nana: actors, producers, music, on and off stage. Nana's body, in its sonority, is the link between each different aspect of the theatre and between on- and off-stage appearances. Prostitute and actress, Nana places her body centre stage, arousing the curiosity and fascination of the (male) public, who strive to look at and listen to her. Using metaphors of animalisation, Zola positions the primitiveness of the perceptions of the female body, through the five senses, as a motor for the

[1] Expression repeated in the text: Emile Zola, *Nana*, ed. by Henri Mitterand (Paris: Gallimard, 2002), p. 43, p. 486, p. 489.
[2] See for example: Janet Beizer, 'Uncovering Nana: The Courtesan's New Clothes', *L'Esprit créateur,* 25 (1985), 45-52; Peter Brooks, 'Nana at last Unveil'd? Problems of the Modern Nude' in *Body Work: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 123-61; Eleonore Reverzy, *Nana d'Emile Zola* (Paris: Gallimard, 2008).
[3] See Peter Brooks, 'Le corps-récit, ou Nana enfin dévoilée', *Romantisme*, 19 (1989), 66-86 (p. 69); and the caricature of André Gill, 'La naissance de Nana-Vénus' (1879).
[4] Barbara Vinken suggests that: 'She is omnipresent to all the senses thanks to the most modern medial technology with her name, image, scent, music: a gaslight Venus', in 'Nana: Vénus *à rebours*. Paris of the Second Empire as the Return of Rome and Babylon', in Hanjo Berressem, Günter Blamberger and Sebastian Goth, *Venus as Muse. From Lucretius to Michel Serres* (Boston: Brill Rodopi, 2015), pp. 173-197 (p.174).
[5] The Théâtre des Varietés was created in 1807 on the Boulevard Montmartre in Paris. It hosted operettas (light opera combining comedy, music and dance) and other *opéras comiques* of the nineteenth century, notably the works of Offenbach.

narration. In the *dossier préparatoire* for the novel, he sums up: 'Le sujet philosophique est celui-ci: toute une société se ruant sur le cul. Une meute derrière une chienne, qui n'est pas en chaleur et qui se moque des chiens qui la suivent. Le poème des désirs du mâle, le grand levier qui remue le monde'.[6] *Nana* is therefore about male desires and the heroine's body is the place of inscription of such *a poem*.

However, Nana's body is not a mere image that engages with the male gaze and the reader; it is a body constantly performing in music. Zola uses music to exceed the visual depiction of the body and establish it as a body in tension rather than one in stasis. Beyond the musical references to operettas, Zola's use of repetition (linked to music or not) musicalises the text but also Nana's body; Nana herself is a figure of repetition.[7] Through repetitions, as we shall see, she even becomes a metonymy of music in the text, although she is not a musician. The captivation of the public is thus triggered by Nana's sonorous body and male desires are furtively animated by sonic effects. In fact, Nana's sound-generating body not only figures individual desires but, through repetitions and music, stands as an agent of degeneration.

1. 'Bastringue', 'chienlit', 'mirliton': a musical satire?

The music presented in the text reflects Nana's character, it is dissonant, abject, and yet fascinating. The recurrent vocabulary used to characterise operetta music could just as well refer to the milieu of prostitution: 'bastringue', 'chienlit', and 'mirliton'refer to a general commotion that could apply to music but also to the uproar of brothels.[8] Another of the novel's singers, Rose Mignon, even creates the confusion between singing and being a prostitute, as she tells her husband: 'tu sais, le marquis de Chouard, chez qui je suis allée chanter'.[9] Singing and prostitution seem to be intertwined but also interchangeable at times. Operetta music and its audience reflect a deviance in society; to Zola's consternation, the public is regaled with comic operas but disapproves of the serious music of Wagner.[10] Zola's aversion for operetta

[6] Zola, 'Dossier préparatoire' (1879), in *La Fabrique des Rougon-Macquart*, ed. by Colette Becker (Paris: H. Champion, 2006), III, folios 207-208.
[7] For Auguste Dezalay, she is the 'eponymous genius of repetition'. *L'Opéra des Rougon-Macquart: Essai de rythmologie romanesque* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1983), p. 98.
[8] *Nana*, p. 44, p. 161.
[9] *Nana*, p. 156. Terence Cave notes that the name Mignon in Zola's novel cannot be an accident and must be 'reckoned as a further joke at the expense of the Mignon craze', *Mignon's Afterlives*, p. 120.
[10] 'n'est-ce pas qu'on a sifflé Wagner ce dimanche', *Nana*, p. 102.

music is articulated both in his fiction and non-fiction. In *Nana,* the author based his descriptions of *La Blonde Vénus* and *La Petite Duchesse* on his impressions of Offenbach's *La Belle Hélène* and *La Grande Duchesse*, which he widely criticised in diverse articles.[11] Zola reproaches comic operas for the lightness of music and the lack of musical talent of its interpreters, who use their bodies to compensate. For want of musical talent, Nana also uses her fascinating 'coup de hanche' and plays her own comedy. Although she is not an actress or a singer, she has a talent that captivates the audience, which is the staging of her naked body. However, this crude skill is paradoxically presented as mysterious and ineffable. For her role in *La Blonde Vénus*, she has a 'something else' that distinguishes her from other singers: 'Nana a autre chose, parbleu! Et quelque chose qui remplace tout'.[12] This indefinable, incomprehensible 'autre chose' places her on the side of the abstract, of art. Nana thus has something of an artist.

The choice of operetta music also allows Zola to frame the degeneration of Nana's life and of society. The operettas structure the narration and follow Nana's evolution: the first performance of *La Blonde Vénus* introduces Nana and the other performances echo the development of the character and her male audience throughout the first part of the novel. Following this, *La Petite Duchesse* shows the shift of the second part of the novel and the beginning of Nana's decline, and finally the reference to *Mélusine* occurs at the end when the figure of Nana fades away. The performances are less and less developed towards the end (*Mélusine* is only briefly mentioned), echoing Nana's degeneration. The entire first chapter is structured around *La Blonde Vénus*; Zola places the atmosphere of the theatre in the foreground, describing the audience as much as the operetta. By doing so, he creates a *mise en abyme* where the reader is a spectator of the audience attending the operetta. The expectations of the public, waiting for Nana, and the décor are described to the detriment of music. The sonic intensity comes from the audience, and the operetta is mainly visual: Zola satirises music. The only references to music are negative and mingled with sonorous descriptions of the public: 'au milieu de ce murmure pâmé, de ces soupirs mourants, l'orchestre éclatait en petites notes vives, une valse dont le

[11] As we can read in: Olivier Sauvage, *Emile Zola, écrits sur la musique* (Paris: Editions du Sandre, 2013).
[12] *Nana*, p. 25.

rythme canaille avait le rire d'une polissonnerie'.[13] The narrator emphasises the parade of characters from Roman mythology to delay Nana's entrance and make the reader wait along with the audience.[14] It is only at the end of the first act that Nana appears on stage. Lacking talent, she puts an end to the purported opera by muffling the musical aspect and making the performance, as it were, a pantomime show:

> Jamais on avait entendu une voix aussi fausse, menée avec moins de méthode. Son directeur la jugeait bien, elle chantait comme une seringue. Et elle ne savait même pas se tenir en scène, elle jetait les mains en avant, dans un balancement de tout son corps, qu'on trouva peu convenable et disgracieux. Des oh! oh! s'élevaient déjà du parterre[15]

The acoustic show no longer comes from the stage, but only from the audience. The music starts again for the second verse but the audience (the reader included) knows from now on that the focus is on Nana's body (the director of the theatre having already announced Nana's lack of talent and praised her skin: 'oui, elle ira loin… Une peau, oh! une peau!').[16] Nana is not a musician but she plays with music.

With Nana's body, her ineffable talent, Zola derides at the same time music, Nana and society. Operetta music, just like Nana, embodies for Zola the corruption of the Second Empire in France. His mockery of society often coincides in the text with a mockery of musical tastes and especially with women's relationship with music. Most of the women characters presented in the text are interested in music and can sing or play an instrument. Rose Mignon, Nana's competitor, who is a prostitute and originally a café-concert singer, is described as a talented singer; Léonide 'tape des airs d'opérette sur son piano';[17] and Nana enjoys singing tunes when she feels happy, such as those composed by Madame Lerat: 'Elle chantait souvent à demi-voix, une romance de Mme Lerat, pleine de fleurs et d'oiseaux'.[18] If the narrator's comment about the naivety of the song ridicules its quality, it is worth noting that Mme Lerat composes music and lyrics. At the exception of this woman composer and the small

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 33.
[14] *La Blonde Vénus* is based on characters from Roman mythology while Offenbach's *La Belle Hélène* uses Greek mythology, but Zola clearly based the 'libretto' of *La Blonde Vénus* on that of Offenbach's operetta.
[15] *Nana*, p. 37.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 25.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 102.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 212.

tunes and other operettas women sing or play, Zola reduces women's musicality to superficial discussions about composers: 'les dissertations sentimentales des dames sur la musique couvraient le petit bruit de cet embauchage'.[19] This last remark recalls another one in *L'Oeuvre* (1886), where serious music is inscribed in a general reflexion on art; the writer Sandoz thinks to himself: 'Sandoz se demandait d'où Mathilde pouvait tenir ce jargon […] D'ailleurs, il avait remarqué que les femmes causaient très bien musique, sans en connaître une note'.[20] These comments reveal that the few references Zola makes to music occur through discussions between women, and highlight therefore the significance of women in the musical reference in literature. In *Nana*, the reflections by women on music mark a gender divide in relation to music; they sound like a religious canticles opposed to the recurrent 'choeur des cocus' in *La Blonde Vénus*.[21]

If Zola satirises music through the repertoire mentioned, women and the musical instruments – the instruments are personified in an organic way[22] – the use of repetitions and of a sonic environment make us think that music cannot only be interpreted as a satire on society but must have intrinsic narrative purposes. In his *dossier préparatoire*, Zola uses musical metaphors to characterise the narration: 'les deux musiques du chapitre', 'il faudrait un crescendo comme je sais les faire'.[23] Dezalay has even noticed a musical structure in the text: 'un style fugué', 'une structure contrapuntique'.[24] Music seems to be a model, a support, in writing Nana's story of degeneration, a degeneration which is also a crescendo, that is to say an amplification of the narrative matter. As already suggested, this narrative matter is inscribed on the dominance of Nana's body. Thus, the music presented in the text does not only embody a degenerate society, which it would satirise; with Nana's body, it composes this degeneration.

[19] *Ibid*., p. 102.
[20] Zola, *L'Oeuvre,* ed. by Henri Mitterand (Paris: Gallimard, 2006), p. 379.
[21] 'les voix de ces dames s'étaient faîtes molles et languissantes. On eût dit […] le cantique discret et pâmé d'une petite chapelle', *Nana*, p. 101.
[22] Among other examples we can mention 'les éternuments de clarinette', 'les gambades de petite flûte', p. 43, or even Daguenet who pours Champagne in the piano as if it was one of the diner's guests.
[23] 'Dossier préparatoire', folios 25, 207.
[24] Dezalay, p. 118.

2. A body in (de)composition

According to Beizer, Nana is a ventriloquised body, which she defines as 'the narrative process whereby woman's speech is repressed in order to be expressed as inarticulate body language, which must then be dubbed by a male narrator'.[25] Nana's body would therefore be a channel for the discourse of others. She is an organic flux in the text, as her ineffable talent shows: she is skin, flesh. The first chapter can be seen as the depiction of a real striptease. Nana appears at the end of the first act after a long period of expectation on the part of the audience; she teases the public by repeating her 'coup de hanche' and shows a 'gorge débordante'in the second act, [26] before finally appearing naked in the third act. The narrator insists on her powerful body captivating the male audience ('la toute puissance de sa chair').[27] As in a striptease, the music played is only an accompaniment that gives way to the visual effect. Once Nana is naked, the music is no longer described and even the public is silent ('Un vent semblait avoir passé très doux, chargé d'une sourde menace').[28] The metaphors of animalisation ('une bête en folie', 'une jument parfaite') highlight Nana's domination of her audience, [29] an instance of flesh devouring the mass:

> Nana avait pris possession du public, et maintenant chaque homme la subissait. […] Et Nana, en face de ces quinze cents personnes entassées, noyées dans l'affaissement et le détraquement nerveux d'une fin de spectacle, restait victorieuse avec sa chair de marbre, son sexe assez fort pour détruire tout ce monde et n'en pas être entamé.[30]

Her marble flesh takes on ambivalent significance. The numerous marmoreal metaphors in the text play on the ambiguity of 'fille de marbre', referring on the one hand to prostitutes in the second part of the nineteenth century after the publication of *Les Filles de marbre* by Théodore Barrière and Lambert Thiboust (1853), and, on the other hand, making a traditional reference to virginal figures, such as Eichendorff's

[25] Janet Beizer, *Ventriloquized Bodies: Narratives of Hysteria in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), p. 9.
[26] *Nana*, p. 43.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 50.
[28] *Ibid.,* p. 50.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 52.
[30] *Ibid.,* pp. 51-52.

Marmorbild. Nana would be at once the visceral prostitute and, like the Venus of *Das Marmorbild,* the ethereal figure who offers a spectral reflection of men. This double figuration of Nana is particularly visible during her performances of *La Blonde Vénus*. It is as if the exhibition of Nana's flesh contaminated the public, becoming itself a reacting body. Some of the men's faces are pale, others red, and they all physically respond to the sight of Nana's skin ('Daguenet dont les oreilles saignaient et remuaient de jouissance').[31] The seductive striptease has become a place of manifestation of a monstrous flesh, fascinating and frightening the audience. By reacting physically, the audience is once more fully part of the show. The Pygmalion audience is as naked as its sensual devouring statue ('elle [Nana] retournait la chair d'un geste de son petit doigt').[32] As the visceral prostitute, Nana performs male desires, and as a spectral marmoreal figure she reflects these desires back.

Nana's show and power of fascination continue off stage in Chapter 5. At the 34th performance of *La Blonde Vénus*, the Prince, count Muffat and Bordenave (the Theatre director) visit Nana in her dressing room in between two acts. Half naked and playing with the curtain, Nana duplicates the on-stage striptease. Moreover, the narrator emphasises her fake reactions, as if she were acting ('jouant la confusion', 'risqua encore des mines hésitantes d'ingénue, se remuant comme chatouillée').[33] The narrator blurs the line between theatre and the real world and even clearly states that this scene is a play: 'le monde du théâtre prolongeait le monde réel, dans une farce grave'.[34] The vision of Nana's changing her clothes and applying makeup does not demythologise the performer; on the contrary, it duplicates and intensifies her performance. Zola plays with perspectives and shows Nana through external as well as internal focalisations, establishing her as a character who is constantly watched and heard, always performing. When Nana leaves her dressing room to go on stage, she is described through the internal focalisation of Muffat (who has stayed backstage), who watches her moving body through a hole in a curtain.[35] This form of voyeurism shows that even when Nana is performing her nakedness, her body arouses the idea of seeing something secretly, perhaps seeing and finding something beyond her naked body.[36]

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[31] *Ibid.,* p. 52.
[32] *Ibid.*
[33] *Ibid.,* p. 167.
[34] *Ibid.,* p. 168.
[35] *Ibid.,* p. 182.
[36] In his introduction to *Body Work*, Peter Brooks recounts that the representation of the body arouses a desire 'to know and to have it, which results in making the body a site of signification', pp. 5-6.

The unremitting display of Nana's naked body calls for more performance and an intensification of the audience's gaze, waiting to understand what this fascinating flesh hides, to understand her 'autre chose', her ineffable talent.

Similarly in Chapter 7, Muffat watches Nana contemplating herself in the mirror in her apartment; this makes him want to possess her, not only to respond to his sexual desires, but in order to counter his fear and incomprehension of her body, as if he wanted to understand his own fascination with this 'poisoned' body.[37] This time, the scene is related through external focalisation, through which the reader watches Muffat staring at Nana. Even in the private sphere, Nana plays with her body. Once again, metaphors of animalisation are used (a parallel with Fauchery's article 'La Mouche d'or' is even made); Nana appears as a powerful and frightening being. Muffat is at once fascinated and disgusted by her body: 'Et, ne pouvant détourner les yeux, il la regardait fixement, il tâchait de s'emplir du dégoût de sa nudité'.[38] Trying to absorb ('s'emplir') Nana's nudity, Muffat is in fact trying to understand his own fascination. The presence of the mirror not only duplicates the figure of Nana, who is constantly performing and 'representing herself' (*en représentation*), but also suggests that Muffat is a double of Nana. Just as the public of *La Blonde Vénus* becomes a naked body, what Muffat truly sees in the disgusting and fascinating body of Nana is his own body, himself staring at her:

> Muffat regardait toujours, obsédé, possédé, au point qu'ayant fermé les paupières pour ne plus voir, l'animal reparut au fond des ténèbres, grandi, terrible, exagérant sa posture. Maintenant, il serait là, devant ses yeux, *dans sa chair*, à jamais.[39]

The voyeurism of the audience generally drives them to find something beyond Nana's body, which turns out to be their own bodies. Nana is indeed *in* their flesh; under their gazes she constantly performs their desires and reflects them back. As a marmoreal prostitute, Nana is an organic flux enacting male desires, but as a marmoreal Venus, she figures a spectral flux in which her audience recognise themselves. Nana is in this sense a *Doppelgänger* of her audience; the fascination with Nana's body is also a fascination with the understanding of their own desires and

[37] *Nana,* p. 247.
[38] *Ibid.,* p. 246.
[39] *Ibid.,* p. 247, my emphasis.

therefore of their own bodies. We could even say, in the context of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer discussed earlier, that the recognition of this *Doppelgänger* is an epiphany of the will; the public tends to grasp the will through Nana's performances. However, this epiphany cannot occur solely through the gaze of the audience; it has to be triggered by music, by Nana's sonorous body in repetition. It is only through music and repetition that Nana as pre-individual flux is manifest, as will now be shown.

3. Nana: between Echo and Narcissus

If the audience does not understand anything other than themselves beyond Nana's body, it is because she is envisaged as a mere physical body when she is in fact also a sounding body. The visual contemplation of Nana reflects the audience back at themselves whereas the acoustic contemplation reveals that Nana endlessly points to herself, that is to say, to degeneration. Nana appears as an 'acoustic mirror',[40] through acoustic duplication she reveals to her audience their own degeneration, and by extension that of the society of which they are part. Imagery and sound are complementary in the text and seem inseparable from duplications, or reverberations. In this sense, we could say that *Nana* offers a diverted version of Echo and Narcissus, where Nana is at times Echo when she reflects her audience's bodies, and Narcissus at other times when she contemplates herself. The public itself oscillates between the two figures, it is Narcissus when its members recognise their own bodies in Nana's performance, and Echo when reverberating her performance (for example when reacting physically). While Echo is a disembodied voice in Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* Nana is the degenerate embodiment of sound. Due to her dual position, she is not a passive echo since sound originates from her.[41]

She does not exactly 'produce' music: she does not sing in tune or play an instrument, and yet she is an embodiment of sound, she resonates. Several passages reveal that Nana is a metonymy of music. In the first chapter, when the audience is impatiently waiting for her, it is not the public clamouring her name that is described,

[40] In *Listening Subjects: Music, Psychoanalysis, Culture*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997) David Schwarz analyses the 'acoustic mirror' in psychoanalytic terms as a sonorous place of recognition similar to the visual mirror-stage, p. 16.
[41] This is what Derrida says about Echo: 'En répétant, elle lui répond; elle lui correspond. Et elle parle en son propre nom, c'est donc une ruse extraordinaire de parler en son propre nom tout en répétant'. *Derrida*, dir. by Kirby Dick and Amy Ziering Kofman (Jane Doe Films, 2003).

it is she who sounds: 'à present, comme un écho, Nana *sonnait* aux quatre coins du vestibule'.[42] Nana as Echo is a manifestation of *Urwiederklang,* that we considered earlier, that is to say a primordial repetition. She is, indeed, in her essence, repetition. Her name in itself is acoustically characterised: 'la vivacité chantante de ses deux syllabes'.[43] Furthermore, when Nana appears naked on stage, the alliteration 'Nana était nue'[44] creates a sonorous effect; Nana is nude and she 'sounds'. The alliteration is one of the figures of repetition that Zola abundantly uses in the novel. Another form of repetition is the recurrence of musical references that structure the text. In the first chapter, Zola exploits rhythmical elements of the show and repeats them, bestowing an impression of automatism upon the show. For example, the narrator refers recurrently to 'la claque',[45] as if it were giving the beat to the awaiting public, and 'le choeur des cocus'[46] is another alliteration that is repeated several times. Zola generally uses repetitions in the novel, but those connected to music or sounds insist more particularly on rhythmical elements.

By repeating her performances on and off stage, Nana clearly carries the notion of repetition throughout the text. The parallel between Nana as a figure of repetition and musical elements repeated leads us to a point of convergence. Nana is an embodiment of music. This is particularly visible through the recurrence of the 'valse canaille' of *La Blonde Vénus*.[47] This waltz from the opening of the operetta seems to announce Nana's entrance on stage and highlight her performing moments. It reappears in the second act ('la valse […] était revenue'[48]) but also in the second part of the novel, in Chapter 12, even though not as part of the operetta. This time, Nana is invited to a party at the Muffats' *hôtel particulier*: she is not performing on stage but an orchestra plays the waltz from *La Blonde Vénus* in the garden, as if suggesting Nana's presence:

> Cette valse, justement la valse canaille de *La Blonde Vénus*, qui avait le rire d'une polissonnerie, pénétrait le vieil hôtel d'une onde sonore, d'un frisson

[42] *Nana*, p. 29, my emphasis.
[43] *Ibid.,* p. 27.
[44] *Ibid.,* p. 50.
[45] In the nineteenth century, 'la claque' was a group of people paid to applaud an opera. Berlioz made this the main topic of one of his short stories.
[46] Choir of the operetta.
[47] A waltz with a 'canaille' rhythm has the particularity of having a sustained rhythm, almost in a military way.
[48] *Nana.,* p. 44.

> chauffant les murs. Il semblait que ce fût quelque vent de la chair, venu de la rue […][49]

The last sentence ('vent de la chair', 'venu de la rue') echoes Nana's effect on the public in the first chapter and the fact that she is a prostitute. Other references to the waltz in this chapter intersperse the narration and the conversations of the characters commenting on Nana. We could even see a personification of the waltz, miming Nana: 'Mais la valse déroulait toujours son balancement de rieuse volupté'.[50] The final association of the waltz with Nana is undoubtedly explicit:

> la valse sonnait le glas d'une vieille race; pendant que Nana, invisible, épandue au-dessus du bal avec ses membres souples, décomposait ce monde, le pénétrait du ferment de son odeur flottant dans l'air chaud, sur le rythme canaille de la musique.[51]

Nana is invisible but she sounds, she is *la valse canaille*. This sounding body decomposes the world while she is decomposing herself. In the last chapter, the physical decline of Nana due to a disease leaves her rotting ('Vénus se décomposait').[52] The source of this last comment is ambivalent and we might wonder if it is a comment from the narrator or from the people around Nana, her audience, as indirect speech. What is apparently expressed by the narrator seems in fact to be reported by Nana's audience as the recognition of a general degeneration. Nana is an organic flux which operates acoustic reflection, revealing a universal, decadent will.

The audience does not see that the devouring flesh engulfs masses through sonorous vibrations rather than visual effects. By trying to see beyond Nana's body, the audience forgets to hear it. And yet she contaminates her audience through musical effects: 'Des dos s'arrondissaient, vibrant comme si des archets invisibles se fussent promenés sur les muscles'.[53] Nana is repetition and music.[54] The audience sees in the repetitiveness of Nana's performances a possibility for change, and the possibility to find something beyond her body, whereas the constant sonorous

[49] *Ibid.,* p. 435.
[50] *Ibid.,* p. 447.
[51] *Ibid.,* p. 448.
[52] *Ibid.,* p. 518.
[53] *Ibid.,* p. 52.
[54] 'Music is the canonical domain of repetition, and when we reinterpret another domain to emphasize its repetitiveness, we are, in fact, examining a quasi-musical aspect of that domain', Margulis, p. 4.

association in fact rekindles more repetition, where Nana points to universal decomposition. It seems therefore that the embodiments of music and will are degenerate.

In music, the purpose of repetition is to trigger a sense of involvement from the listener and of inhabiting the sound.[55] The listener (unconsciously) anticipates a sound that is effectively realised, providing a certain sense of pleasure. Similarly, Nana's musical repetitions allow the audience (as well as the reader) to inhabit the character (and the text). The audience is unconsciously captivated by Nana's sonic power and finds a sense of pleasure in the realisation of sonic repetitions. Visually, Nana is the product of male desires and, acoustically, she creates herself as the female centre-piece, re-enacting her audience's desires. The audience is looking for something to happen visually when it actually happens acoustically; the sense of relief and of pleasure is created by the acoustic repetition of Nana's performances. The relationship between Nana and her audience is a specular one, in the same way as Echo and Narcissus. As both disembodied voice and degenerate body, Nana reverberates individual desires and a universal will.

Listening to Nana is as fruitful, if not more so, as looking at her. As she arouses the five senses, the question we have been trying to answer is: can we look at and listen to her performances at the same time? Both senses are in fact complementary and even converge with the particularity of her performance (which is in appearance anti-musical), her 'autre chose', that is, her body as a primordial repetition, as music.[56]

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 15.
[56] The significance of Nana's music must have been perceived soon after the publication of the text considering the numerous musical versions of the text, collected by Frédéric Robert in *Zola en chansons, en poésie et en musique* (Liège: Mardaga, 2001). Among the diverse operettas, popular songs based on *Nana*, we can cite Artistide Bruant 'L'âne à Nana' (1880).

Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*: a musical struggle

The story of the Buddenbrook family – announced from the start by the subtitle 'Verfall einer Familie' – has led critics to ask whether its decline is a real fall or if it could be seen, on the contrary, as a rise, notably because of the presence of music and the creativity it implies.[1] Finding this question reductive with regard to the role of music – since music is a non-representational art, applying ideas of rise or fall to it constitutes a subjective interpretation – I would instead question how musical references can be incorporated in such a fall, and what this incorporation tells us about decay as well as about music and literature. It is the fluctuating dynamics of music within the narrative of decline – dynamics that are particularly visible through questions of gender and bodily performances – that are at stake in this reading of *Buddenbrooks*.

Furthermore, the idea of degeneration is manifold and can be read on several levels in the narrative: the decline of the family business, physical degeneration (several characters die of diseases), and moral degeneration (the interest in art and spectacles over commercial matters). However, the decline of the family is not a vertical free fall but is associated with complex and progressive mechanisms of degeneration, collective and individual degeneration, within which music oscillates. In that sense, I agree with Hans Wysling who argues that: 'Erzählt wird im Grunde nicht ein Verfall, sondern das immer schillernde Lebensgewebe von Aufsteigen und Versinken'.[2] It is indeed not exactly the failure of a family that is recounted; let us recall that six generations are mentioned in the text – the 'original' Johann Buddenbrook (I), the 'old' Johann (II), the consul Jean (III), Thomas, Christian and Tony (IV), Hanno and Erika (V), and Erika's daughter Elizabeth (VI) – and that the family cereal company runs over (at least) four generations. Thus, the family cereal business is not a complete failure; moreover, although the name Buddenbrook is not perpetuated by men, the women of the family (Tony, her daughter Erika and her granddaughter Elizabeth, Gerda and the 'drei Damen Buddenbrook, die Töchter

[1] For example T. J. Reed, *Thomas Mann: The Uses of Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), pp. 37-85.
[2] Hans Wysling, 'Buddenbrooks', in *Thomas-Mann-Handbuch*, ed. by Helmut Koopmann, 3rd edn (Stuttgart: A. Kröner, 2001), pp. 363-384 (p.383).

Onkel Gottholds') survive.[3] With women, a new era seems to start where the idea of transmission occurs through the body rather than the name. Finally, the fall of the family is questioned as such by the mentioning of other families that frame the narrative of the Buddenbrooks. The Buddenbrooks buy their house from the Ratenkamp family, whose company has gone bankrupt, and sell it, after Elisabeth's death, to the Hagenströms, who could as well go bankrupt. The presence of families preceding and following the story of the Buddenbrooks shows that 'Verfall einer Familie' can be read as one decline among others. These successions (or repetitions) of declines, beginnings and endings, are nothing other than the depiction of life cycles, which places this turn-of-the-century novel between degeneration and renewal.

Thus, rather than examining the degeneration of the Buddenbrooks, I intend to analyse the declines and rises of the family and its members. The evolution of the family as a whole and of its individual members can be understood through Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's conceptions of (individual) wills ruling life as well as through their treatments of music. The influence of the two philosophers on the novel has been extensively studied,[4] but the connections between will, music and gender have been partially ignored. And yet, the individual fluctuations (individual wills) are particularly visible in the text through gendered relations to music, as will be shown.

Music affects all the members of the family, through their musical talent or aversion. Gerda is the most advanced musician of the family; she is an accomplished violinist who introduces serious music into the family by marrying Thomas Buddenbrook. Their son Hanno is drawn towards music at an early age; he plays the piano with agility and finds in music a refuge from the family's economic concerns. Both characters present physical peculiarities: Gerda's 'morbid physique' and Hanno's androgyny are recurrent features. Hanno's feminine fragility – his arms are 'schmal und weich wie die eines Mädchens'[5] – and Gerda's blue shadows under her eyes are particularly connected to their musical practice; the body is in the foreground of their performances. In fact, most members of the family present decadent physical

[3] *B,* p. 756.
[4] See for example: Fritz Kaufmann, *Thomas Mann: The World as Will and Representation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957); Hannelore Mundt, *Understanding Thomas Mann* (Columbia, S.C: South Carolina Press, 2004).
[5] *B*, p. 620.

characteristics (Thomas dies after a tooth extraction and Christian complains of his multiple diseases) which reflect their struggles with life, that is to say, in Nietzsche's words, their expression of will to power and the inability to affirm it, or their decadent will to power. Besides, the characters' relationship (or lack of) with music also reflects the struggle to assert individual wills – which incidentally reveals a gender divide in the assertion of the latter.

After giving an account of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche on music and will, I shall examine the parallel between the characters' degree of implication with music and their struggle to assert their will. Thus, music not only reflects collective and individual declines, but also seems to affect the nature of these declines.

1. The symmetries of Music and Will in Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's philosophy

Although both philosophers envisage the will as closely connected to music, they do so in a different manner. Schopenhauer asserts a possible resignation of the individual will before the general Will, to which music can contribute, whereas Nietzsche describes an entire affirmation of the will. However, for both, music is a primordial expression of the will. According to Schopenhauer, music is not a copy of the Will, but a direct image of it:

> Denn die Musik ist, wie gesagt, darin von allen andern Künsten verschieden, dass sie nicht Abbild der Erscheinung, oder richtiger, der adäquaten Objektivität des Willens, sondern unmittelbar Abbild des Willens selbst ist und also zu allem Physischen der Welt das Metaphysische, zu aller Erscheinung das Ding an sich darstellt. Man könnte demnach die Welt eben so wohl verkörperte Musik, als verkörperte Willen nennen. [6]

In the light of this reflection, it can be said that the presence of music in the Buddenbrook family makes the physical degeneration a metaphysical concern, as will

[6] Arthur Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by Wolfgang von Löhneysen, 5 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Cotta, 1961–), I, p. 366. ('For, as we have said, music is distinguished from all the other arts by the fact that it is not a copy of the phenomenon, or, more accurately, the adequate objectivity of will, but is the direct copy of the will itself, and therefore exhibits itself as the metaphysical to everything physical in the world, and as the thing-in-itself, to every phenomenon. We might, therefore, just as well call the world embodied music as embodied will', *The World as Will and Idea*, trans. by R.D Haldane and J Kemp, 7th edition, 3 vols (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1909), I, pp. 339-40. The following translations are from this edition.)

be explained in the next sections. Moreover, Schopenhauer supports the closeness between the Will and music with structural analogies. Music, like the Will, is made up of tensions seeking resolutions. He concludes:

> Durchgängig also besteht die Musik in einem steten Wechsel von mehr oder minder beunruhigenden, d.i. Verlangen erregenden Akkorden mit mehr oder minder beruhigenden und befriedigenden; eben wie das Leben des Herzens (der Wille) ein steter Wechsel von größerer oder geringerer Beunruhigung durch Wunsch oder Furcht mit ebenso verschieden gemessener Beruhigung ist.[7]

Individual wills striving, being fulfilled and striving again follow the same pattern as music with its dissonances yearning for consonance and returning to the original key. However, we will see how individual strifes and reliefs differ according to the musical affinity of the characters – an affinity which is also marked by gender. For Schopenhauer, the striving of the individual will can be pacified through exposure to the general Will in the experience of music. However, if music can provide an escape from suffering (even a momentary one),[8] it returns nonetheless in its structure to the original key centre and begins the same process again.

Nietzsche, leaning on Schopenhauer's thought, intensifies the significance of the will by making it a 'will to power'. Besides, the idea of *Urwiederklang* seems to complement Schopenhauer's idea of returning to the original key, to an original unity. Music as *Urwiederklang* is the vector of a primordial essence, a Dionysian flux, as expressed in the philosopher's early works. Music, in Nietzsche's logic of eternal return, can be seen as a recurrent expression and affirmation of the will. It is important to remember that Nietzsche's eternal return does not refer to endless repetitions but to the way one should live their lives if they were to be repeated.[9] Life

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[7] *Ibid.*, II, p. 585. ('Thus, in general, music consists of a constant succession of more or less disquieting chords, i.e., chords which excite longing, and more or less quieting and satisfying chords; just as the life of the heart (the will) is a constant succession of greater or less disquietude through desire and aversion, and just as various degrees of relief', III, p. 243.)

[8] As Lydia Goehr summarises: 'Unlike in our everyday existence, in music we experience the life of the Will without bearing the full pessimistic brunt of its associated frustrations. Music offers us, therefore, even if for just a brief moment, a redemption from our perpetual suffering', 'Schopenhauer and the musicians: an inquiry into sounds of silence and the limits of philosophizing about music', in *Schopenhauer, Philosophy and the Arts*, ed. by Dale Jacquette (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 200-228 (p. 208).

[9] 'Die Frage bei allem und jedem: 'willst du dies noch einmal und noch unzählige Male?' würde als das größte Schwergewicht auf deinem Handeln liegen! Oder wie müßtest du dir selber und dem Leben gut

consists of attempts at grasping and affirming the will in such a (satisfying) way that one would repeat it; music can be the access of such affirmation. Thus, the will is also connected to music through the idea of return, as Pierre Sauvanet puts it: 'la musique exprime l'éternel retour mais c'est surtout l'éternel retour qui exprime la musique'.[10]

In view of the indivisibility between the will and music as it is presented by Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, we might ask ourselves to what extent *Buddenbrooks* relies on this connection and to what purpose. To do so, we need to distinguish two levels of concern: one affecting the Buddenbrook family as a whole and one affecting individuals. In other words, the connection between the will and music is visible at the macro-level of the supposed decline of the family and the micro-level of individual wills. While the will in the family appears to the reader through the fluctuations of physical decay (diseases and early deaths) and through the increasing concern with music, it is revealed at an individual level through the characters' respective relations to suffering. Heller explains that, for Schopenhauer, the individual 'crisis' of the will generally occurs with 'reflection and introspection'.[11] For Schopenhauer, the striving of the individual will can be pacified through exposure to the general Will in the experience of music. Moreover, music can be, for him, an escape from suffering, that is to say, from introspection, whereas for Nietzsche music participates in affirming suffering.

Whether we understand the characters from the Nietzschean perspective of affirming suffering or the Schopenhaurean view of escaping it, we will see how their affirmation of the will depends on their musicality. Furthermore, the different individual expressions of will correspond to a gender difference (we will examine, in particular, the cases of Thomas, Tony, Gerda and Hanno), itself reflected in and influenced by music. Thomas Mann's use of repetitions and leitmotifs in the text emphasises the interconnections between the struggle to affirm the Will and the struggle with music. In fact, his writing mirrors the tensions, resolutions and returns also expressed by the Will and music, to such an extent that we might wonder if he ironically incorporates the philosophical symmetries of Music and the Will.

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werden, um nach nichts mehr zu verlangen als nach dieser letzten ewigen Bestätigung und Besiegelung?', Nietzsche, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, *KGW*, V/2, 341, p. 250.

[10] Pierre Sauvanet, 'Nietzsche, philosophe-musicien de l'éternel retour', *Archives de philosophie*, 64 (2001), 343-360 (p. 359).

[11] Heller, p. 38.

2. The *enchaînement musical* of the Buddenbrook family

2.1 From physical to metaphysical enchainment

Although the presence of music in the family becomes significant with Gerda and Hanno's interest in playing piano, music is present in the family from the first generations. At first glance, the family's relationship with music is marked by genealogical transmission and is thus attached to biological, hereditary determinism. As mentioned in the introduction to the chapter, this determinism is presented through the metaphor of the chain. Music is a link in the family chain; it is an element transmitted from generation to generation, similar to the taint of the *Rougon-Macquart*; hence the idea that the family chain is also a musical chain, or an *enchaînement musical*. However, the degree of this enchainment is not the same for every character and evolves throughout the generations. At the beginning of the novel, the narrator insists on the unmusicality of the family. This characteristic is relevant for two reasons: it shows a supposed aversion of the family to music as well as drawing the reader's attention to its ironical aspect. Indeed, not only does the leitmotif of unmusicality forecast the development of the theme of music, it also stands in contradiction with the presence of music from the beginning of the novel.

From old Johann, who plays the flute and sings light melodies, to Hanno who improvises feverishly on the piano, it is as if music were an external force roaming the lineage without being mastered by any of the Buddenbrooks, except Gerda (who is originally not a Buddenbrook). Moreover, while the musical taint spreads gradually, as the trace of sundering – the separation of unity into individuation – the very role of music changes. At first, music only accompanies happy moments within the family and acts as a domestic agent, an ordered Apolline art. For example, Johann and Elisabeth play 'eine kleine, helle, graziöse Melodie'.[12] Later, however, it becomes a serious, even fiery, matter, a Dionysiac passion for Hanno: 'und so geschah es, dass, nach den ersten Schritten, die er auf seinem Lebenswege getan, er der Musik als einer außerordentlich ernsten, wichtigen und tiefsinnigen Sache gewahr wurde'.[13]

[12] *B*, p. 30.
[13] *Ibid.,* p. 425.

The musical taint, as a primordial lapse, develops throughout the family, highlighting a biological connection but also a spiritual one. The physical resemblance, or differences, of the family members bridges biological and spiritual concerns. For example the facial traits of old Johann Buddenbrook's wife, Antoinette Duchamps, 'waren im Laufe der Jahre auf wunderliche Weise denjenigen ihres Gatten ähnlich geworden';[14] and her grandson Christian displays a figure of 'ein Bürschen von sieben Jahren, das schon jetzt in beinahe lächerlicher Weise seinem Vater ähnlich war'.[15] However, later in the novel, the arrival of the musician Gerda in the family establishes a contrast between the likeness between the Buddenbrooks and her mysterious, morbid physiognomy: 'Gerda, deren ein wenig morbide und rätselhafte Schönheit einen seltsamen Gegensatz zu der hübschen Gesundheit ihrer Schwägerin bildete, […]'.[16] It is not coincidental that Hanno inherits the physical features of both his parents: he mainly looks like the Buddenbrooks and has their hands, but the lower part of his face comes from his mother and he has the same blue shadows under his eyes. These features, which are linked to his qualities as a musician, are the result of the family heritage just as the transmission of the musical taint is.

The transmission of music as a family taint is even materialised in the family album ('das Schreibheft'), which lists all the big family events. The first reference to this book occurs when Consul Jean recounts the day of the birth of his fourth child, Clara, while old Johann sings a 'alter drollingen Melodie' in the next room.[17] The family book, and particularly the ink used to write in it, is therefore linked to music from the beginning. If the book is neatly maintained and reflects the order of the family at the beginning, it progressively deteriorates; the ink is associated with a stain when (the unmusical) Tony divorces and (the musician) Hanno later draws a double line over the genealogy of the family. Music and inscription are thus connected, as if music were progressively inscribing itself in the genealogy of the family, or infusing and diffusing itself in the family.

From its original presence in the family to Hanno's decadent practice, music follows the physical and metaphysical evolution of the family. Let us now turn to individual cases to see how music, as the vector (as 'Urwiederklang') of the primordial essence, leads to personal understandings and the affirmation of suffering.

[14] *Ibid.,* p. 6.
[15] *Ibid.,* p. 12.
[16] *Ibid.,* p. 291.
[17] *Ibid.,* p. 51.

2.2 Thomas Buddenbrook's aversion to music

The struggle with individual wills first appears in the family with Consul Jean, who finds in religion a refuge from existence, and later with Thomas, Christian, Gerda and Hanno. Thomas realises the power of an internal force within him: he becomes aware of 'eine innere Wahrheit', an 'aufreibenden Widerstreites in seinem Innern' and starts to question his life. [18] This questioning coincides with a confusion that can be interpreted as a struggle to affirm his will. His reading of Schopenhauer emphasises his confusion; he asks himself: 'Ich werde leben!', 'Ende und Auflösung? […] Was würde enden und was sich auflösen? Dieser sein Leib'.[19] He even considers breaking the chains (*Bande*) to liberate himself from this struggle.

Thomas's reflection occurs through an awareness of his own body, as if his struggle to affirm the Will were producing physical decay, manifesting at the same time his inner struggle. According to Schopenhauer, the expression of Will is organic in life, he argues:

> mein Leib und mein Wille sind eins – oder was ich als anschauliche Vorstellung meinen Leib nenne, nenne ich, sofern ich desselben auf ganz verschiedene, keiner anderen Weise mir bewusst bin, meinen Willen – oder der Leib ist die Objektivität meines Willens – oder, abgesehn davon, dass mein Leib meine Vorstellung ist, ist er nur noch mein Wille.[20]

Thomas's encounter with Schopenhauer is an encounter with his own body and thus with the Will. This consciousness of the body and will is in fact an affirmation of the latter, and yet Thomas ends his reasoning by returning to the comfort of religion. Thomas has continuously tried to devote himself to the family business, but by questioning this he momentarily touches upon an affirmation of the Will that is cut off by his return to religion.

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[18] *Ibid.,* p. 467, p. 471.
[19] *Ibid.,* pp. 656-57.
[20] Schopenhauer, I, p. 161. ('My body and my will are one; - or, What as an idea of perfection I call my body, I call my will, so far as I am conscious of it in an entirely different way which cannot be compared to any other; - or, My body is the objectivity of my will; - or, My body considered apart from the fact that it is my idea is still my will, and so forth', I, p. 133.)

The impossibility of properly affirming his will converges with his aversion to music. On the one hand, music is a reflection of the impossibility to affirm his will to power, since, like the Will, music is a hostile force for him and his family: 'wurde sie [Musik] ihm zu einer feindlichen Macht', 'Nie hatte er geglaubt, dass das Wesen der Musik seiner Familie so gänzlich fremd sei, wie es jetzt den Anschein gewann'.[21] On the other hand, his lack of musical skills contributes to his abrogated introspection. Gerda explains that his musical taste is the opposite of his ideas, that is to say, his lack of musical knowledge prevents him from merging music and ideas, which could presumably help him overcome introspectiveness by affirming himself as will. Gerda continues her explanation by saying that what he likes in music is a satisfaction that does not correspond to life: 'Was freut dich in der Musik? […] Prompte, freundliche Befriedigung des kaum ein wenig aufgestachelten Willens'.[22] Thus, Thomas's lack of musical understanding (the tensions and resolutions of music, the conflicts and satisfactions) prevents him from understanding his own suffering, that is to say, from affirming (as Nietzsche conceptualises it) or escaping it (in the view of Schopenhauer).

The music Thomas likes is popular music, for example *La Belle Hélène* by Offenbach, which is played at the family jubilee. And yet, as has been shown, Offenbach's music is presented by Zola as the music of the corruption of bourgeois society; it is for him a music of decadence. Thomas is presented as one of the spectators of this decadent music, and thus as a contributor to this bourgeois decadence. In fact, the house jubilee is very similar to the party at the Muffats' *hôtel particulier* in *Nana*, where the 'valse canaille', representing Nana, spreads throughout the house in an organic way. However, contrary to the Muffats and the other guests in *Nana,* Thomas seems to be conscious of this concert of decay: 'der Lärm der Instrumente' and the 'akustisch verzerrte Musik'[23] get on his nerves and trigger a self-questioning and a depressive state. It is also during this concert that Thomas learns about the destruction of the cereal field he had invested in, leading to the bankruptcy of the family. The orchestra playing Offenbach's operetta mimes Thomas' state of mind and triggers a self-reflection that cannot be accomplished due to his lack of musical knowledge. Thus, the final description of the music of the jubilee only

[21] *B*, pp. 508-509.
[22] *Ibid.*, pp. 510-511.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 492.

presents what he can hear and understand about music: a 'unerträglich aufreizenden Tohuwabohu von Knarren, Schmettern und Quinquilieren, zerrissen von den aberwitzigen Pfiffen der Piccolo-Flöte'.[24] The decadent music of Offenbach makes Thomas realise he is a spectator, an actor and a victim of a decadent society. Thomas's unmusicality is paralleled with the image of the mask, as if the impossibility of knowing music were masking the impossibility of grasping the Will. Only when he starts his introspection does his mask fall:

> Wie bis zur Unkenntlichkeit verändert sein Gesicht sich ausnahm, wenn er sich allein befand! Die Muskeln des Mundes und der Wangen, sonst diszipliniert und zum Gehorsam gezwungen, im Dienste einer unaufhörlichen Willensanstrengung, spannten sich ab, erschlafften; wie eine Maske fiel die längst nur noch künstlich festgehaltene Miene der Wachheit […].[25]

Thomas's brother Christian also wears masks; he likes to do imitations, to attend comic operas and marries the actress Aline Puvogel. Interestingly, Aline shares many features with Zola's Nana; they both fascinate men and live from their admirers' financial support. Moreover, Aline is rejected by the Budddenbrook family because of her profession – although it is not explicit, she is considered as a prostitute by Thomas and his mother. With the spectacles he goes to and his love for Aline, Christian is conscious of a social decadence. However, contrary to Thomas, whose exposition to decadence – through popular music – causes an internal crisis, Christian does not follow the same process of introspection. Christian cannot fight against decadence; rather, he delights in it. Therefore, he cannot grasp his individual will: he is himself decadence.[26] Although he does not die like his brother and nephew, and does not survive the decline of the family like his female counterparts, he is certified in an asylum by his wife Nana-Aline. It would seem that Thomas, who is unable to find in music an escape from suffering as Schopenhauer suggests, cannot affirm this

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 494. This description contrasts with the musical precision of the following chapter during the conversation between Gerda and Pfühl and starting with the mentioning of Bach's music.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 466. ('His face, when he was alone, changed so that it was hardly recognizable. The muscles of his mouth and cheeks, otherwise obedient to his will, relawed and became flabby. Like a mask the look of vigour, alertness and amability, which now for a long time had been preserved only by constant effort, fell from his face.' *Buddenbrooks, the decline of a family*, trans. by H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), p. 384. The following translations are from this edition.)
[26] Thomas tells him: 'Du bist ein Auswuchs, eine ungesunde Stelle am Körper unserer Familie!', *Ibid.,* p. 320.

suffering as Nietzsche envisages it either. Seeking escape in his metaphysical readings, he can only express a will to power decadently.

Let us see now how the affirmation of the will differs in the case of the musician characters and their gendered bodily performances.

3. Gerda's well-tempered violin

By playing the violin and not the piano, Gerda contrasts with the domesticated woman musician of the nineteenth century. She is the leader of musical practice in the Buddenbrook family, and as such appears as an empowered woman musician. She dictates her musical taste to men, and even uses them as accompanists. Gerda plays with her father, who is described as playing the violin like a tsigane; she plays with Mister Pfühl, a pianist, organist, and composer who becomes Hanno's music teacher; and with the officer René Maria von Trotha, who 'spielte Klavier, Geige, Bratsche, Violoncello und Flöte – alles vortrefflich'.[27] And of course Hanno accompanies his mother in the modern music she likes. The posture of the violinist singles Gerda out from the female musicians who are usually hidden behind a keyboard; she stands in front of her audience, confronts and affronts them with a bow.[28] She is presented as an assertive woman with a temperament: 'Dass übrigens auch Gerda Temperament besitzt, das beweist wahrhaftig ihr Geigenspiel'.[29] She decides when she and her accompanists play and when they stop. For instance, in the middle of a sonata by Beethoven that she plays with Hanno, she looks dissatisfied and suddenly stops playing, leaving Hanno alone in the music room, which has heavy consequences on him, as we will see later.

Gerda's main function is to introduce music in the text. Her physical features are linked to her musical practice and announce musical descriptions. Like most of the women musicians of the nineteenth century, she is foreign (the daughter of a Dutch merchant) and has a peculiar appearance, a morbid figure: 'Gerda, deren ein wenig morbide und rätselhafte Schönheit einen seltsamen Gegensatz zu der hübschen

[27] *Ibid.,* p. 550.
[28] Richard Sheppard makes the connection between the bow of the violin and the bow of a mythological huntress and the goddess Artemis. 'Realism Plus Mythology: A Reconsideration of the Problem of "Verfall" in Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*', *The Modern Language Review*, 64 (1994), 916-941, (p. 923).
[29] *B,* p. 303.

Gesundheit ihrer Schwägerin bildete, […]'.[30] In fact, her physical characteristics, particularly her 'schwere, dunkelrote Haar umrahmte das weisse Gesicht, und in den Winkeln der nahe beieinanderliegenden braunen Augen lagerten bläuliche Schatten',[31] are leitmotifs that announce her entrance in a room or her practice of music.

Moreover, Gerda's appearance and musical practice make her an allegory of death. Music seems to consume her energy to death, as she expresses her exhaustion after playing: 'Ich hatte heute Nachmittag musiziert und fühlte mich ein wenig merkwürdig… Jetzt ist mein Gehirn so tot […]'.[32] While music has a draining effect on her, she also seems to consume the energy of others (male musicians) during her performances and almost appears as a musical vampire – she likes darkness and does not like to go outside – feeding on male musicians. In this sense, the 'vampiric mother' could be one of the explanations for Hanno's death. Gerda does not compose music but Hanno is her musical creation, as if she had made him only to accompany her.

She can even be associated with a Pythia guarding a temple, as Thomas thinks: 'Er stand vor einem Tempel, von dessen Schwelle Gerda ihn mit unnachsichtiger Gebärde verwies… und kummervoll sah er, wie sie mit dem Kinde darin verschwand'.[33] Gerda is also a ventriloquised body, as Janet Beizer defines it;[34] she is the keystone of the musical reference in the text. If Thomas had married a non-musician, the metaphysical implications of music would not have had the same importance. The idea of ventriloquism associates Gerda with mythology – ventriloquism was used by the Pythia, the priestess of Apollo in ancient Greece, to deliver Delphic oracles. Other instances show the closeness of the character with mythology: she is compared to Junon, Venus, and Brünnhilde. The latter is a figure of Germanic mythology that Wagner incorporated into *Siegfried*, the third part of *Der Ring des Nibelungen.* In this opera, Brünnhilde is the daughter of Wotan and Erda; she marries Siegfried but, thinking that he consciously betrayed her, reveals his weak point, which results in his death, and eventually the *Götterdämmerung.* Like Brünnhilde in Wagner's opera, Gerda participates in the family's decay.

[30] *Ibid*., p. 291.
[31] *Ibid.,* p. 257.
[32] *Ibid.,* p. 259.
[33] *Ibid.,* p. 510.
[34] Beizer, p. 9.

As a mythical figure, Gerda escapes the tension between bourgeois reality and decadent desires, in the way her husband experiences it. However, she still experiences her own struggle: she is at the same time free and not free. She is free because she is an empowered woman musician, and not free because, even if she escapes the fate of the Buddenbrooks, she is instrumentalised (or perhaps intrumentalises herself) by her role as a mother – she is designated in the text as 'die Mutter zukünftiger Buddenbrooks'.[35] In between her roles as a musician and a mother, corresponding to a tension between myth and reality, Gerda seems to grasp the will to power, but, chained to her maternal fate, cannot affirm it completely. Contrary to Thomas or Christian, she has control over her life, but it remains a frustrated control. While Thomas's aversion for music prevents him from grasping his will, Gerda's musicality helps her in this process. She reproaches Thomas for hearing in music only what pleases him, implying that music not only provides satisfaction but also suffering. Understanding this (or hearing, playing it) participates in affirming suffering. Gerda is closer than Thomas to overcoming suffering but cannot do so completely. She seems attached to the idea of suffering in music; and convinces Pfühl to play Wagner by explaining that his music is not immoral since it is the opposite of hedonism. The question of morality in art is answered by Gerda with recurrent suffering; she explains that, like Wagner, Bach probably offended his audience with his 'Mangel an Wohlklang und Klarheit'.[36] The taste for musical dissonances, or new (modern) key modulations, corresponds to Gerda's understanding of suffering in music, contributing to its affirmation.

To sum up, Gerda's musical knowledge helps her to grasp the will, in the Nietzschean sense, much better than Thomas, and this is visible in her physical presence and temperament while playing the violin. However, her status as a (mythical) musician and (bourgeois) mother also shows a frustration in overcoming suffering. This frustration is visible in the recurrence of bodily descriptions such as the blue circle under her eyes, her coldness and pallor. Her relationship with music and Will drains her body to the point of exhaustion.

[35] *B*, p. 303.
[36] *Ibid*., p. 499.

4. Hanno's fantasies: drowning in music

From his birth, Hanno appears as a fragile child with no will to live; he is, from the start, discouraged by everything; as Wysling explains: 'Er statuiert keine Geburt'.[37] In line with his androgyny, his relationship with Will arises as a *mélange* between his father's and his mother's relationship with it. Thomas wants to make his son more virile and stop the feminine influence of his mother, that is, music, on him: 'mit männlichen Gegeneindrücken die bisherigen weiblichen Einflüsse zu neutralisieren'.[38] I would like to show that, more than a question of appearance, Hanno's struggle with life is androgynous; he has some musical knowledge that could help him grasp the will, like his mother does, but he is resigned like his father. Instead of seeing in music, or hearing, himself and his individual will, like Nietzsche suggests,[39] he seems to be drowning in (Dionysian) music, in himself.

Hanno is a talented musician who improvises fantasies on the piano rather than composing whole pieces. Gerda gives him enough tools to accompany her on the piano when she plays the violin, or to play around simple melodies, but makes sure he will not be a soloist and asks Mister Pfühl to teach him a general understanding of music but not virtuosity. Hanno does not 'master' music in this sense and is not presented as an accomplished musician. His mother Gerda even doubts his dignity to receive Mister Pfühl's creative lessons and his father does not see any progress, as the free indirect speech states: 'Zugegeben, dass die Liebe des Jungen zum freien Spiel ohne Noten von einer nicht ganz gewöhnlichen Veranlagung Zeugnis gab, – im regelrechten Unterrichte bei Herrn Pfühl war er keineswegs außerordentlich weit vorgeschritten'.[40] Thus, Hanno lacks the motivation, the support from his family and the will to be a complete musician, he is a *génie manqué.* He confides his resignation to his friend Kai: 'Was ist mit meiner Musik, Kai? Es ist nichts damit […] Ich kann beinahe nichts, ich kann nur ein bisschen phantasieren, wenn ich allein bin […] Ich werde so müde davon. Ich möchte schlafen und nichts mehr wissen. Ich möchte

[37] Wysling, p. 372.
[38] *B*, p. 619.
[39] Nietzsche, 'die wahrhaft dionysische Musik tritt uns als ein solcher allgemeiner Spiegel des Weltwillens gegenüber: jenes anschauliche Ereignis, das sich in diesem Spiegel bricht, erweitert sich sofort für unser Gefühl zum Abbilde einer ewigen Wahrheit'*Die Geburt der Tragödie*, *KGW*, III/1, p. 108.
[40] *B*, p. 527.

sterben'.[41] Hanno seems to be conscious of a will in his life but chooses not to liberate himself from it. Instead of seeing in music an escape from suffering or a way to apprehend a will to power, Hanno lets himself be intoxicated by it. In this sense, he follows neither Schopenhauer nor Nietzsche and is still unable to liberate himself from the struggle of the will. However, the music he improvises brings a liberation from the family enchainment: contrary to his mother, he is able to create music in his fantasies.

For his eighth birthday, Hanno plays with his mother 'eine kleine, eigene Phantasie vor, ein einfaches Motiv, das er ausfinding gemacht, merkwürdig gefunden und ein wenig ausgebaut hatte'.[42] What is announced as a simple childish invention turns out in the next paragraphs to be a complex and innovative piece of music. Mister Pfühl is incidentally disconcerted by the subversive character of the harmony:

> Was ist das für ein theatralischer Schluss, Johann! Das passt ja gar nicht zum übrigen? Zu Anfang ist alles ganz ordentlich, aber wie verfällst du hier plötzlich aus H-Dur in den Quart-Sext-Akkord der vierten Stufe mit erniedrigter Terz, möchte ich wissen? Das sind Possen. Und du tremolierst ihn auch noch. [43]

If Pfühl is surprised, it is because the classical chord progression would be B Major/ E Major with C sharp; whereas Hanno plays B Major/ E minor and delays the resolution of this harmony by playing the C sharp later, which gives an impression of suspense that Mann transcribes narratively by using the same sustaining process. The narrator depicts it as follows:

> Leise und glockenrein umperlt und umflossen von den Läufen der Violine, tremolierte pianissimo der e-Moll-Akkord … Er wuchs, er nahm zu, er schwoll langsam, langsam an, im forte zog Hanno das dissonierende, zur Grundtonart leitende cis herzu, und während die Stradivari wogend und klingend auch dieses

[41] *Ibid.,* p. 743.
[42] *Ibid.,* p. 429.
[43] *Ibid.,* p. 428. ('What sort of theatrical ending is that, Johann? It doesn't go with the rest of it. In the beginning it is all pretty good; but why do you suddenly fall from B-major into the six-four chord on the fourth note with a minor third? These are tricks; and you tremolo here, too.' p. 412.)

cis umrauschte, steigerte er die Dissonanz mit aller seiner Kraft bis zum fortissimo.[44]

Thomas Mann succeeds in using technical musical vocabulary that offers a well-defined discourse on the reception of modern music, for this progression B major/ E minor / B major (fig. 4 & 5) has been related to the last chords of 'Liebestod' in *Tristan und Isolde* by Wagner.[45] And yet, this progression of chords comes after the leitmotif of the 'Tristan chord' (F B D# G#) (Fig. 3) in *Tristan and Isolde.*

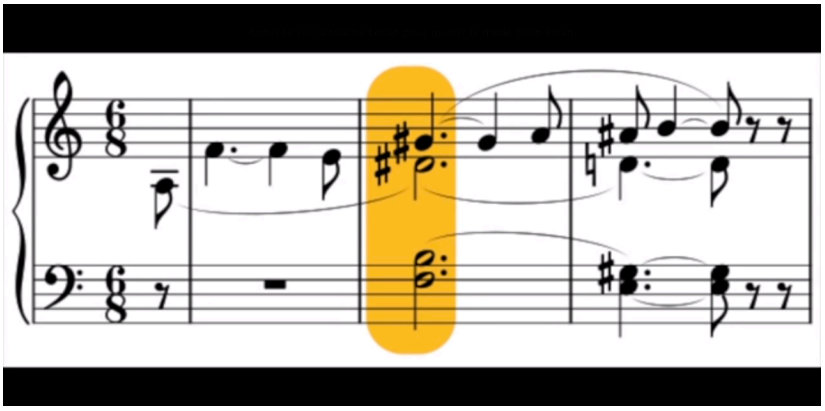

Fig.3

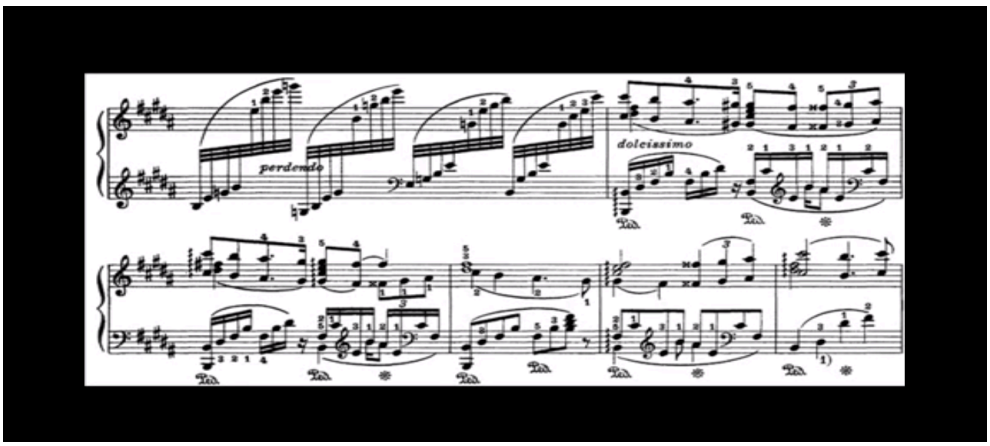

Fig. 4

[44] *Ibid.,* p. 430. ('Soft and clear as a bell sounded the E minor chord, tremolo pianissimo, amid the purling, flowing notes of the violin...It swelled, it broadened, it slowly, slowly rose: suddenly in the forte, he introduced the discord C-sharp, which led back to the original key, and the Stradivarius ornamented it with its welling and singing. He dwelt on the dissonance until it became fortissimo.' p. 413.)

[45] Jocelyne Kolb, 'Thomas Mann's Translation of Wagner into Buddenbrooks', *Germanic Review*, 61:4 (1986), pp. 146-153.

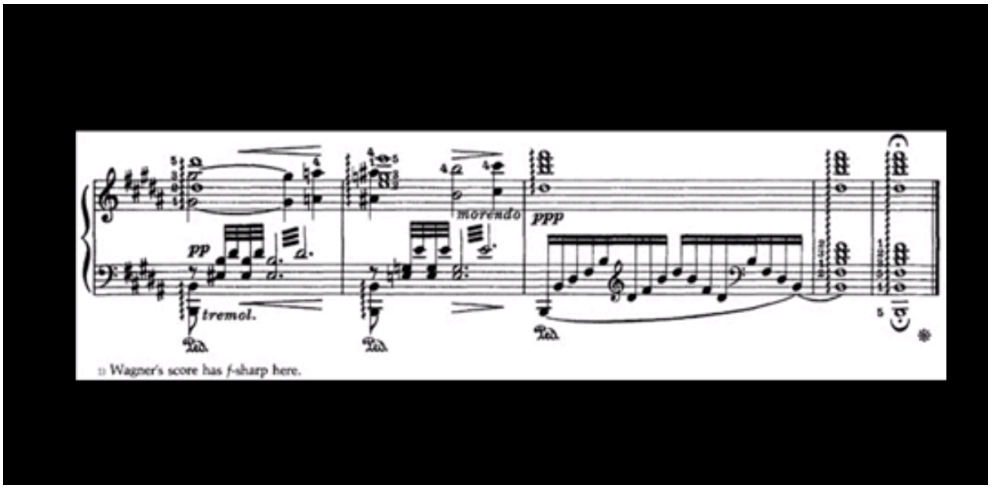

Fig. 5

According to Jean-Jacques Nattiez, this chord is androgynous.[46] Nattiez recalls indeed the analysis of Gut and Mayrberger, who respectively explained that the Tristan chord is at the same time E minor and A minor, personifying at the same time Tristan and Isolde. Hanno could thus be himself a *mélange* of Tristan and Isolde. Furthermore, Nattiez completes this analysis by saying that more than representing the world of Isolde, A minor corresponds to the death of Tristan as wished by Isolde, E minor is Tristan's desire and the resolution in B major is the key of transfiguration. Two aspects catch my attention here: first, the idea that A minor is not the key of a passive Isolde but of an active dangerous Isolde. And yet when Hanno plays his little fantasy in front of the family, Gerda plays on the violin and it is her who sustains the A minor chord – with Gerda wishing the death of Hanno. The second intriguing aspect lies in Gerda's presence in this passage; even if she is mentioned only briefly, an incestuous sensuality is suggested, since Hanno's musical fantasy is clearly associated with sexuality – he plays convulsively, moves his whole body along with the music, and is erotically intoxicated. This momentary incest recalls once more the libretto of *Siegfried;* when the hero sees Brünnhilde for the first time and kisses her, he thinks he sees his mother for a moment. Like Brünnhilde leading to the death of Siegfried, and Isolde wishing the death of Tristan, Gerda somehow wishes the death of Hanno.

[46] Nattiez, *Wagner androgyne: essai sur l'interprétation* (Paris: C. Bourgois, 1990), p. 338.

Hanno's second fantasy occurs at the end of the novel, when he plays variations on a simple motif, not long before dying of typhus fever. This time, the performance is not described technically. Rather, the style is full of imagery:

> Es lag etwas Brutales und Stumpfsinniges und zugleich etwas asketisch Religiöses, etwas wie Glaube und Selbstaufgabe in dem fanatischen Kultus dieses Nichts, dieses Stücks Melodie, dieser kurzen, kindischen, harmonischen Erfindung von anderthalb Takten… etwas Lasterhaftes in der Maßlosigkeit und Unersättlichkeit, mit der sie genossen und ausgebeutet wurde, und etwas zynisch Verzweifeltes, etwas wie Wille zu Wonne und Untergang in der Gier[47]

The shift of the narration from musical technicalities in the first performance to the imagery of this second performance is a metaphysical shift highlighting a convergence of creativity, eroticism, and death. Hanno has incorporated the creative and deadly wishes of his mother. Here again, the body not only reflects or illustrates his struggle with and defeat by music, but is also a creative place that shapes his struggle. Music is a compulsive expression of his inner fights but it also acts on and rekindles these fights. It is a pathological urge that echoes his physical fragility and his sicknesses (like his heart problems when he was born or his recurrent teeth problems) and it announces the fatal typhus fever that strikes him in the next chapter. Music, like sickness, seems to be a refuge for Hanno, who tries to escape his bourgeois duty of taking on the family business.

Hanno's androgyny reflects his ambivalent relationship with music, thus with the will. More than any other characters examined in this thesis, Hanno is the androgynous embodiment of the conflict between creation and creator. On the one hand he is a creation. First, the musical creation of his mother – she made him to accompany her music on the violin. Then, he is also a beautiful physical *mélange* of his parents. Yet, according to Monneyron, the best embodiment of beauty in *fin-de-siècle* literature is the androgynous boy: 'dans le monde du phénomène et du désir, la concrétisation la plus adequate de l'idée du beau en soi que représente l'androgyne est

[47] *B*, p. 639. ('The fanatical worship of this worthless trifle, this scrap of melody, this brief, childish harmonic invention only a bar and a half in length, had about it something stupid and gross, and at the same time something ascetic and religious – something that contained the essence of faith and renunciation. There was a quality of the perverse in the insatiability with which it was produced and revelled in: there was a sort of cynical despair, there was a longing for joy, a yielding to desire [...]', p. 597.)

le jeune homme effeminé'.[48] Hanno is in this sense a creation of beauty. On the other hand, Hanno is a figure of creator since he has the knowledge and ability to create music. However, his creations remain on the level of improvisation and are not exactly compositions but compulsive forms of expression. Hanno can never properly compose and cannot express his will. After his father's unsuccessful attempt to fight to affirm the will (and his struggle against decadence) and his mother's yearning to grasp the will through an equilibrium between suffering and pleasure, Hanno instead takes the path of embracing degeneration through death. There is nothing redemptive for him. By expressing deindividuation, self-distantiation through music, Hanno appears as a Schopenauerean figure. Having only known a model of degeneration, Hanno cannot constitute individuation; he knows from the start that he is enchained to a family that is 'verrottet'.[49] More than reflecting his will or struggle with it, Hanno's music raises a question of subjectivity: it expresses the pleasure of the non-self, neither creation nor creator. Through this artistic androgyny Hanno embodies therefore the struggle of the female musician that I have explored throughout this work.

[48] Frédéric Monneyron, *L'Androgyne décadent: mythe, figure, fantasmes* (Grenoble: Ellug, 1996), p. 57. As this book shows, the figure of the androgyne was very present in decadent literature; some of the novels which places androgyny at the heart of the narration include *Monsieur Vénus* (1884) by Rachilde and *L'Eve future* (1886) by Villiers de l'Isle-Adam.
[49] *B,* p. 743.

5. Tony, E.T.A. Hoffmann and the work of art

However, this artistic androgyny is not the final note of the novel as the narration leaves us with the importance of the finished work of art more than on the figure of the artist. This last section allows me to go back to the beginning of the thesis and to the Romantic aesthetic. A final character of *Buddenbrooks* remains to be explored as it concerns one of the women survivors: Tony. Tony is another unmusical character and yet her relation to music allows us to bring a different light on the confrontation of individual and universal will. On the subject of Hanno's first performance, she says: "er wird ein Mozart, ein Meyerbeer, ein…' und in Ermangelung eines dritten Namens von ähnlicher Bedeutung […] beschränkte sie sich darauf, ihren Neffen […] mit küssen zu bedecken'.[50] Her interventions are often ironically introduced and a humoristic note follows all the descriptions of this character. For example, she never has the same name (going by the names of Tony, Miss Buddenbrook, Mrs Grünlich, and Mrs Permaneder). However, the irony bestowed upon her character helps to shed a different light on the role of music in the text.

Despite her unmusicality, Tony is exposed to music through literature and particularly through the novellas of E.T.A. Hoffmann, such as those of the *Serapionsbrüder*, which she likes reading as is mentioned several times in the text. This is significant in Tony's relation with music. Through Hoffmann's characterisation of music (and women) as immaterial in the *Serapionsbrüder* (see Chapter 2), Tony has an understanding of music in its immateriality. In this sense, she appears as a Romantic subject who yearns for a better place; however, she is not a Kantian rational subject since she believes in the work of fate.[51] Music in the writings of Hoffmann could be a metaphysical tool helping her to reflect upon her life. Standing outside art (she is not an artist), Tony has an understanding of music that could be the key to affirming the will. Because of her indirect exposure to music, she cannot use it as an escape from suffering like Schopenhauer suggests. Instead, music and literature help her to acknowledge suffering, and therefore to affirm and overcome it better than the other characters. The distantiation with music through literature allows her to escape degeneration – she is not a decadent character like the

[50] *Ibid.,* p. 509.
[51] See Ryan, p. 131.

others – making her the only survivor of the Buddenbrook family, and thereby enabling her to achieve a perspective on suffering. She is, as it were, the embodiement of the finished work of art that is music within literature. The novel does not finish on the figure of the artist but on the work of art itself, composed by masculine and feminine elements, as this section has shown. It is the work of art that must be androgynous more than the figure of the artist, and *Buddenbrooks* as the finished work of art is androgynous because it is constituted of male and female elements, but above all of music and literature.

Conclusion

Nana and *Buddenbrooks* present female degenerate bodies affected by music. However, they offer different perspectives on the relationship of the individual with the degenerative world through music and women, be it a social one (*Nana*) or a metaphysical one (*Buddenbrooks*). As a dual marmoreal figure, Nana is both a spectral and a degenerate being. She reflects not only male desires but also her audience as degenerate. More than just her visual performance, the music surrounding Nana, and her music (as repetitions), create a sonic mirror of degeneration in which her audience recognises itself. Nana's degenerate body can therefore be interpreted in a creative light, with her death constituting the fortissimo of the narration's crescendo, revealing a universal degeneration, which is understood by her audience through her performances. Visually, Nana's performance is the product of mastery and objectifying urges; yet, acoustically, the decomposition at play resists such impulses imposing (at least) a spectral agency that resonates beyond the text.

On the other hand, Thomas Mann offers philosophical and musical models that seem insufficient; these models are structurally duplicated within the narration through leitmotifs, and effects of echo and announcement. Narratively, and also visually, Mann reproduces the tensions, resolutions and returns present in music and the philosophy of the will. The study of the family's genealogical and metaphysical connection to music and of its members confirms that *Buddenbrooks* is not the story of one decline, but of multiple declines or rather a series of rises and falls. These fluctuations are understandable through Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's explorations of will and music, and indicate that the latter connection is bi-directional: music expresses the struggle with the will, a struggle which is itself influenced by music.

The individual expressions of the will differ according to gender and to the musicality of the characters. The unmusical Thomas fights against decadence but lacks the musical skills to affirm suffering (in Nietzsche's view) or to escape suffering through music (as Schopenhauer explains). Gerda, on the other hand, finds an equilibrium thanks to her understanding of music but is at the same time trapped in this equilibrium between being a musician and being a mother. She manages to affirm suffering but does not completely overcome it due to her frustration as a mother. The physically androgynous Hanno is likewise androgynous in his relation with the will, the binary model of his parents and the degenerate tableau of his family placing him apart from the will. Hanno refuses to affirm suffering and to find an escape. His music is, rather, a way to negate his own existence, to negate the will. He is the embodiment of the artistic androgynous creation. But it is finally Tony that points towards the work of art itself. Tony, the unmusical character, seems to grasp the will more than the others, which could be explained by her mediated exposure to music through the novellas of Hoffmann. She has a musical affinity that could lead to acknowledging suffering and overcoming it. Music would not be the embodiment of the will or its expression, but instead music within literature would be the best aesthetic embodiment the *fin-de-siècle* degeneration.

Conclusion

The different case studies discussed in this thesis have shown that female musicians were very present in nineteenth-century culture – contrary to Otto Weiniger's claim that Frederic Chopin was the only female composer in music history[1] – and female composers, in their ambivalent relations to creativity, proved to be rich narrative sources. The texts chosen for this study demonstrate that music is inseparable from women; even non-musical characters (like Emma Bovary and Nana) are developed through references to music. Although the texts reflect the common representation of female musicians (as illustrated in Chapter 1), and participate in this representation to a certain extent, they also take advantage of the ambivalent status of the female artist, and perhaps even of a certain form of frustration that women musicians faced when they wanted to compose, to make it a narrative force. The apparent incompleteness of female artists, who are rather physically weak and lack the artistic power (and genius) to create, turns out to be a gap which literature (authors and readers) sets out to fill. In relation to the notion of gaps in the reading process, Wolfgang Iser argues:

> Fundamentale Asymmetrie von Text und Leser, die sich in der mangelnden Gemeinsamkeit einer Situation und in der mangelnden Vorgegebenheit eines gemeinsamen Bezugsrahmens anzeigt […]. Das Gleichgewicht läßt sich nur über die Aufhebung des Mangels einpendeln, weshalb die konstitutive Leere ständing durch Projektionen besetzt wird.[2]

The gap created by the image of the frustrated female composer gives way to multiple projections from the author and the reader trying to fill it.

The association of women and music through the female body accentuates the material presence of women as well as music in the text. However, the female body is

[1] Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter* 'Chopin, den man sogar als den einzigen weiblichen Musiker bezeichnen könnte', (Wien, Leipzig: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1920), p. 79.
[2] Wolfgang Iser, *Der Akt des Lesens, Theorie ästhetischer Wirkung* (Munich: Fink, 1976), p. 262. ('Similarly, it is the gaps, the fundamental asymmetry between text and reader, that give rise to communication in the reading process; the lack of a constitution and a common frame of reference corresponds to the contingency and the "no-thing" which bring about the interaction between persons [...]. Balance can only be attained if the gaps are filled, and so the constitutive blank is continually bombarded with projections.', *The Act of Reading, a theory of aesthetic response* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1978), pp. 166-67.)

not a mere instrument of literature, which would use bodily performances to include music; it is a complex element where music and text meet. It is at the same time the 'operator' of the sound, to use Barthes's term,[3] the instrument of literature and the sonic space. The female body indeed offers a space to talk about music in literature, but the function of the body is not merely spatial; it incarnates the physical nature of music, its rhythms, vibrations and resonances, and is therefore a musical source of the text. It is not only an instrument; in fact, what this thesis has exposed is that, more successfully than metaphors, references to real musicians or to technical musical vocabulary, the female body – which is both concealed and unveiled, just like music – constitutes a form of music in the text.

The gathering of case studies through themes and chronology shows that the representation of female musicians, and music more generally, follows a progression in the representation of the body, as it is perceived by philosophical, social and scientific discourses which I have used to frame each chapter. Chapter 2 has demonstrated how Romantic imagery, developing Kant's account of the transcendental call, relies on an idealised art longing for a primal unity which the elusive woman (herself idealised and disembodied) paradoxically embodies most clearly. Although the female musician is presented as a projection of male artistic fantasies, her role is nonetheless crucial in artistic production as she is the other at the origin of the transcendental call. In Romantic texts, women musicians are not elusive objects perceived by male artists but are fully part of their experience as artists. In other words, the Romantic artistic experience is made up of both male and female elements, as is particularly visible in Eichendorff's novellas. Although attached to German Romanticism, Berlioz moves away from the perspective of the sole male artist and gives equal importance to the female subject who also strives to experience art through reason.

Chapter 3 showed how the elusive female musician becomes a fully-fledged and organic being. The scientific discourse on monomania highlights the rising concern with the clinical body from the 1830s. This chapter has also shed a new light on the conception of the female body; it moves away from the common interpretation of the hysterical woman, and instead brings together body and mind through obsessive behaviours. The female characters of this chapter thus appear as physically

[3] Barthes, 'Musica Practica', III, p. 450.

sick but this pathologisation is deeply linked to their intellect. In fact, their physical sickness, their *maladie nerveuse*, is a musical one, symptomized by vibration and the electric current. However, monomania allows us to bring forth particularly strong intellectual women empowered by music, although they are all presented as mad characters.

The progression continues with a consideration of the social and spiritual attributions of female musicians in Chapter 4. This time, women are fully-fledged bodies as well as spiritual beings; they become prophetesses of music. *Consuelo* and *Daniel Deronda* are two *Bildungsromane* where female musicians are provided with independent identities. However, this recognition falls flat in the last chapter, which place them at the heart of the discourse on degeneration. After being elusive, pathologised, and intellectualised, the body of the female musician takes on a degenerate form in Chapter 5. The discourse on decadence helps us to understand that it is not so much the degrading body that is at stake at the end of the century, but a decadent subjectivity and perception of the world.

Although I have tried to show the different treatments of the body and of music throughout the century, the case studies and discourses presented in the different chapters are not to be seen in isolation; rather, there is a continuity between them driven by the evolution of a European social and artistic vision in the nineteenth century. The different framing discourses have also shown that the authors were not completely unfamiliar with musical aesthetics. In fact, they were either musicians (Goethe, Hoffmann, Eichendorff, Berlioz, Braddon, Sand, Eliot, Mann[4]) and/or surrounded by musicians (Flaubert, Balzac, Zola[5]). In the latter case, it is interesting

[4] While Hoffmann and Berlioz are the true 'musiciens-littérateurs' of this thesis as explained in Chapter 2, the other authors were also musical. Goethe, like his sister Cornelia, learned the piano and the cello, see Boyle, I, p. 54. Eichendorff had his musical education in Breslau, see *Music in German Romantic Literature*, ed. by Linda Siegel (Novato, CA: Elra Publications, 1983), p. 14. Braddon played the piano, see Robert L. Wolff, *Sensational Victorian: the life and fiction of Mary Elizabeth Braddon* (New York: Garland Pu., 1979), p. 35. George Sand was an accomplished musician, see, for example, how she learned music with her grand-mother in *Histoire de ma vie,* ed. by Martine Reid (Paris: Gallimard, 2004), pp. 649-50. Although George Eliot declared she had 'no soul for music', she also had a musical education and could play the piano, see Leslie Stephen, *George Eliot* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 12. Finally, Thomas Mann was a good violonist and could play the piano as well, see *Thomas Mann Handbuch*, p. 337.

[5] Flaubert listened to his sister Caroline playing the piano and would ask her to play specific tunes, see René Dumesnil, *Flaubert: son hérédité, son milieu, sa méthode* (Genève: Slatkine reprints, 1977), p. 35. Balzac confessed his lack of musical knowledge, but liked to go to the opera or to listen to his sister, see Pierre Laubriet, *L'Intelligence de l'art chez Balzac: d'une esthétique balzacienne* (Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1980), p. 409. Zola, not a musician himself, was acquainted with the composer Alfred Bruneau, see Frédéric Robert, *Zola en chansons, en poésies et en musique*, p. 10.

to note that these writers had musical affinities through women, for examples, the sisters of Goethe, Flaubert and Balzac were musical. The authors' more or less direct affinity with music influenced their texts and, in a reversible effect, these texts influenced music aesthetics or at least the general discourse on music and women. The parallel examination of socio-cultural and literary discourses has shown that although there is a homology of the representation of the female musician in these discourses, this homology shifts through the significant role of women musicians in literature. The study of female musicians in literature helps us to rethink the idea of *representation*. In literature, women musicians are not only an echo of their place in society; they have a theoretical function that helps us to understand artistic creativity.

To return to the questions raised in the introduction – does music help contain the female body in literature? Or is it the female body that contains music? – I would suggest that the relationships between women, music and the body are reciprocal and interchangeable. The female body seems to be contained within music, as if music in literature were adding to the scientific and social discourse on women, which by examining and categorising the body was containing, controlling and almost erasing it. However, the line between controlling the female body through the logos and bringing it to the foreground to empower women is a fine one. This is why women writers using this same logos could be perceived as feminists resisting the patriarchal order, in the same way than women musicians who wanted to compose were perceived as such. Thus, Launay points out that the very fact that women attempted to compose could be perceived as feminist and women musicians could be 'féministes à leur insu'.[6] Yet Sand, Braddon and Eliot did not themselves claim to be feminists, or, since this concept is an anachronism, to have a political agenda in favour of women, their agenda rather concerning women's independence within marriage. For example, although Sand defended an equality between men and women in marriage in her texts, she did not support the political role of women and claimed at the time of the 1848 Revolution: 'Je ne puis permettre que, sans mon aveu, on me prenne pour enseigne d'un cénacle féministe avec lequel je n'ai jamais eu la moindre relation, agréable ou fâcheuse'.[7] It is interesting to note that some women writers who considered themselves as (political) feminists offer the same treatment of female musicians.

[6] Launay, pp. 147-48.
[7] Sand, in *La Réforme*, 1848, cited in Paulette Bascou-Bance, *La Mémoire des femmes: anthologie* (Gironde: Elitys Edition, 2002), p. 219.

This is the case for Mona Caird's *The Daughters of Danaus* (1894), which I believe to be relevant to a closing discussion of a feminist treatment of women musicians. In this novel, Hadria Fullerton, a talented musician, decides to leave her husband and children to go to Paris to take music lessons and compose. The place accorded to female composition in this novel is much more significant than in the case studies analysed in this thesis. In Paris, she is praised by a male composer who sees the possibility of publishing her works, and yet she must renounce her dream and return to England with her family. As is the case in the texts discussed in this thesis, motherhood and artistry are opposed in Caird's novel. In Sand's novel, Consuelo makes an exception to this rule, as she manages to live her life as an artist and a mother, although at the end of the novel she is not a professional musician. Moreover, as Consuelo's motherhood and artistry merge together to express the idea that she must create and transmit her art, it is not a genuine motherhood that is at play, but rather artistic creativity and spirituality. In Caird's novel, Hadria must choose between being an artist and being a mother. Interestingly, while she always wanted to be a composer but had to sacrifice her hopes, it is when she turns away from music that she finds a Romantic drive for creation. Long after she has stopped composing, she finds one of her old compositions and realises she could be a much better composer than expected: 'She knew the music was good, and that now she could compose music infinitely better. The sharpness of longing for her lost art cut through her'.[8] Her sacrifice for motherhood created a longing for a primal (lost) art which developed her creative ability. In other words, Hadria is in Caird's novel the Romantic artist, and the longing for a primal unity is created by a feminine sacrifice. I think that it is in this conception of creation that Caird's feminist views lie. Although the character seems to be subjected to the same treatment as the other characters in our case studies – her fate conforms, indeed, to the patriarchal order – her artistic experience presents an alternative: an all-feminine one, instead of the androgynous situation so present in my discussion.

The role of androgyny in art is one of the key themes of this thesis. Most of the women characters are unstable in their femininity; they cross-dress or have masculine lifestyles. However, I have suggested that rather than reflecting a transgression from women into the male sphere of creating art, androgyny is an

[8] Mona Caird, *The Daughters of Danaus* (Charleston: Bibliobazaar, 2007), p. 426.

allegory of artistic creation; the true androgyny in the case studies is not simply between the male and the female, but between the creator (that is both male and female) and creation (that is also male and female). The androgynous figure creates a continuum of forces rather than a mere dichotomy at the heart of the creative process. The female musician ending up mad, dead or confined is therefore not the ultimate conformism to the patriarchal order but an act of revelation of the androgynous artist and androgynous artwork. The significance of the female body when referring to music in literature is a way to conceptualise music and literature. In the end, what this thesis has examined is not –as I suggested at the beginning of the introduction – the lack of female musicians, but it is not exactly their profusion either. Their profusion rather reveals that gender is a means to conceptualise music: music is thought, approached in terms of gender. A legitimate question to ask would be: why is the female body especially suitable to refer to music in literature? However, it is not so much the feminist perspective that I find relevant (what does it tell us about women?) but the artistic one (what does it tell us about music, literature and more generally art?). The female body does not bestow feminine characteristics upon musical references but general gender characteristics, for femininity is to be understood within a gender continuum where femininity, masculinity, androgyny confront and complement each other.[9] This is why the figure of androgyny is particularly relevant in understanding music: the female body as a discursive motif shows that it is not the feminine, but gender, in its complexity, that is indeed inscribed within music.

The second important outcome of my discussion is that the female musician is not only an embodiment of music in literature; she is also an embodiment of the process of incorporating music within literature, which appears as a violent one. The elusiveness, weakness, pathologisation, and degeneration of the female body express the modifications of the text that strives to include music. In this sense, anticipating the developments of phonographs and recordings, the female body in literature points out a need to materialise music, which at the same time transforms the immediacy of the performance. The body becomes, then, a Barthesian 'corps-scripteur',[10] where music is inscribed in literature. The motif of inscription linked to music and the

[9] According to Hélène Cixous, there is no strict feminine-masculine dichotomy. Against this opposition, she introduces the idea of 'other bisexuality', which is not a dichotomy but multiple. She states: 'cette bisexualité en transes, qui n'annule pas les différences, mais les anime, les poursuit, les ajoute', *La Jeune née* (Paris: UGE, 1975), p. 155.
[10] Barthes, 'Musica Practica', III, p. 447.

female body is, as I have shown, recurrent in nineteenth-century literature. Thus, despite an original homology between social and literary discourses, literature, through female musicians, moves away from a realistic, mimetic framework to enter a more allegorical, theoretical dimension. Female musicians become in literature an allegory of themselves (of their fantasised or negated body) and of musical as well as literary creativity.

This thesis, as a first study on the significance of women, music and the body in literature, belongs to the lineage of works on women and music in literature and is intended to pave the way for new perspectives on this topic. For this study, I have chosen case studies which presented contrasting depictions of the treatment of women and music in the long nineteenth century; however, the same theme could be further explored in other texts, or in other periods. For example, a project on the female (and male) body in comparison with the inclusion of musical scores in the narrative – which is another form of writing that could compete with or complete the female body – could be a new approach to explore. More generally, gender in the arts needs to be further examined; 'gender' not only in the sense of feminine (women and the arts) or masculine (men and the arts) but as a complex source of artistic creation. In other words, the topic of women, music and the body, so rich for literary studies, can only be as rich for other disciplines (musicology, sociology, philosophy) and needs to be analysed *encore et encore*.

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Bodies in Composition: Women, Music, and the Body in Nineteenth-Century European Literature

Abstract:

This thesis examines the relations between music and literature through fictional women musicians in nineteenth-century European literature and more particularly through their bodies. The female body appears to be a rich juncture between music and literature, facilitating musical references in literature as well as creating complex musical narrative systems anchored in social, cultural and scientific discourses of the long nineteenth century. All types of women musicians are examined (singers, instrumentalists, composers, and even listeners) along with different discourses on the body (social, philosophical and scientific), shedding a new light on gender and the arts. Our chronological as well as thematic approach strives to highlight a common representation of the body and of female musicians in literature. German Romantic texts thus present women musicians as elusive figures who play a key role in the impossibility to materialise the abstract. Realist and sensation novels are analysed through a clinical perspective on the body and envision female musicians as monomaniacs. On the contrary, fiction written by female authors introduces empowered musicians as priestess of art. Finally, *fin-de-siècle* novels stage the female body as a degenerate entity of society. The parallel analysis of literary case studies with different perspectives on the body posits the women-music-body triangle as a new approach to gender, music and literature.

Keywords: Woman musician, body, androgyny, gender, music and literature

Corps en composition: les femmes, la musique et le corps dans la littérature européenne du XIX^{e} siècle

Résumé:

Notre recherche vise à étudier les relations entre musique et littérature au XIX^{e} siècle à travers la figure de la musicienne et plus particulièrement à travers son corps. Le corps féminin apparaît comme un riche point de rencontre entre musique et littérature, facilitant d'une part la référence musicale dans les textes et créant d'autre part un système musico-narratif complexe ancré dans les discours socio-culturels du XIX^{e} siècle. L'étude de textes canoniques de la littérature européenne nous permet d'envisager les musiciennes au sens large (compositrices, interprètes, prima donna et même auditrices) en combinaison avec différents discours sur le corps (philosophique, scientifique et social) afin d'apporter un regard nouveau sur les femmes et les arts. Notre approche est à la fois chronologique et thématique et s'attache à montrer une progression commune de la représentation du corps et de la musicienne dans les textes. Ainsi, les textes romantiques allemands présentent la musicienne comme un être évanescent et font d'elle le sujet de l'impossibilité de matérialiser l'abstrait. Les textes du milieu du siècle sont analysés parallèlement au discours clinique sur le corps et envisagent les musiciennes comme des monomanes. Les textes écrits par des femmes placent la musicienne – saine de corps et d'esprit – comme prêtresse d'une religion musicale. Enfin, dans les textes fin-de-siècle, le corps de la musicienne n'échappe pas aux théories de dégénérescence. L'étude parallèle de textes littéraires et de différents discours sur le corps pose ainsi les femmes, la musique et le corps comme un triptyque inévitable aux études de genre, de musique et de littérature.

Mots clés: Musicienne, corps, androgynie, genre, littérature et musique

Université Sorbonne-Nouvelle Paris 3
ED120 Littérature française et comparée
17 rue de la Sorbonne 75005 Paris