Franz Schubert’s “My Dream”

On July 3, 1822, Franz Schubert wrote a brief tale, entitled “My Dream.” His manuscript survives, as does a copy which was in the possession and probably in the hand of his intimate friend, Franz Schober. Ten years after Schubert’s death, his brother, Ferdinand, presented the original manuscript to Robert Schumann, who published it in the February 5, 1839, issue of his journal, the Neue Zeitschrift für Musik.¹

I was a brother of many brothers and sisters. Our father and our mother were good. I was devoted to them all with a deep love. Once, my father took us to a feast [Lustgelage]. There my brothers became very merry. I, however, was sad. Then my father approached me and commanded me to enjoy the delicious food. But I could not, wherefore my father, becoming angry, banished me from his sight. I turned my steps away and, my heart full of infinite love for those who disdained it, wandered into a distant land. For long years I felt torn between the greatest grief and the greatest love. Then the news of my mother’s death reached me. I hastened to see her, and my father, softened by sorrow, did not hinder my entrance. Then I saw her corpse. Tears flowed from my eyes. I saw her lying there like the happy old past, in which, according to the deceased’s wish, we were to live as she herself once had.

And we followed her corpse in sorrow and the coffin sank down.—From that time on I again remained at home. Then my father took me once again into his favorite garden. He asked me if I liked it. But the garden was wholly repellant to me and I dared not say so. Then, flushing, he asked me a second time: did the

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garden please me? Trembling, I denied it. Then my father struck me and I fled. And for the second time I turned my steps away and, with a heart full of infinite love for those who disdained it, I again wandered into a distant land. For long, long years I sang songs. When I would sing of love, it turned to pain. And again, when I would sing of pain, it turned to love.

Thus love and pain divided me.

And once, I had news of a pious virgin who had just died. And around her tomb formed a circle in which many youths and old men perpetually walked as though in bliss. They spoke softly, so as not to wake the virgin.

Heavenly thoughts seemed forever to be showered upon the youths from the virgin’s tomb, like fine sparks producing a soft rustling. I, too, longed to walk there. But only a miracle, people said, leads into this circle. Nevertheless, I went to the tomb, with slow steps and lowered gaze, filled with devotion and firm belief, and, before I was aware of it, I found myself in the circle, from which there arose a wondrously lovely sound; and I felt as though eternal bliss were compressed into a single moment. My father, too, I saw, reconciled and loving. He clasped me in his arms and wept. But not so much as I.  

Schumann published “My Dream” virtually without comment, and Schubert’s first biographer, Kreissle von Hellborn, who reprinted it in full, was loath to attempt an interpretation. Thus Sir George Grove became the earliest to wonder “what events or circumstances” occasioned its composition, speculating that it had to do with a dispute over religious matters between Schubert and his father. In the early twentieth century, several eminent Schubert biographers were very much inclined to view “My Dream” as a factual document: an “autobiographical sketch,” in Walter Dahms’s words; “founded closely on fact,” as Otto Erich Deutsch wrote in 1928. Strongly indebted to Dahms, Edward Hitschmann’s pioneering psychoanalytic essay ac-
cepted the notion of an autobiographical substratum but suggested that the external data of Schubert's life tell us little about the symbolism which saturates "My Dream" and permits its interpretation as an expression of Schubert's unconscious mind. Although later investigators have questioned the literal interpretation of the narrative because of its inconsistency with biographical data and its "wild disregard of dates and facts," it seems clear from a consideration of Schubert's family background and experiences that actual events and his emotional perception of them, although they do not exhaust the import of "My Dream," are far from irrelevant to a consideration of its origin.

Schubert's father, Franz Theodor, was the son of a prosperous Silesian farmer and became a school teacher at an early age, under his brother's aegis. By 1786, when he was only twenty-three, he was appointed headmaster of a Viennese parish school for boys, a position which he industriously discharged until his death in 1830. In 1785, he married a domestic, Elisabeth Vietz, who was his elder by seven years and was seven months pregnant on her wedding day. They had fourteen children, of whom four sons and one daughter survived infancy. Franz Schubert, born January 31, 1797, was the last surviving son of this marriage. His mother was past forty when he was born; less than a year after her death in May 1812, Schubert's father married a woman twenty years his junior and fathered five more children of whom four survived.

Schubert's father tried to arrange that all of his sons by his first marriage follow him in the teaching profession; moreover, it was his preference that they serve—at least for a time—as assistants in the school which he headed. From the surviving documents, it seems that two of the boys—Ferdinand and Karl—were content, perhaps even eager, to walk in their father's footsteps, but that the firstborn, Ignaz, and Schubert, resisted their father's wishes, with varying degrees of success. Perhaps in reprisal for his lack of filial and religious piety, Ignaz was deprived of his share of the family property and replaced as prospective head of the family by his pliable younger brother, Ferdinand. Still, he
remained a teacher in his father's school and ultimately succeeded him as headmaster.

Schubert's resistance to his father's example centered on the patriarchal issues of career, religion and marriage. Aware that Schubert rejected Catholic dogma and authority, his brother, Ignaz, warned: "If you should wish to write to Papa and me at the same time, do not touch upon any religious matters." Schubert did avoid religious controversy with his father; but he could not easily disguise his attitude towards the sensitive issue of marriage. For several years (probably between 1814 and 1816; the precise dates are uncertain), he claimed that he courted Therese Grob, a young singer whose parents were on intimate terms with the Schuberts. (Ignaz Schubert eventually married into her family.) There is no documentary evidence to clarify the nature of the relationship; but, whether it was genuine or pro forma, the courtship's negative outcome was vividly foretold in Schubert's diary entry of September 8, 1816: "To a free man matrimony is a terrifying thought in these days; he exchanges it [i.e., his freedom] either for melancholy or for crude sensuality." And he added, with a touch of desperation, "Monarchs of today, you see this and are silent. Or do you not see it?" There is no evidence that Schubert ever courted another woman. Writing to his father and step-mother, later, he observed of his brother Karl that "a married artist's duty is to supply works of nature as well as art, and if he succeeds in both kinds, he will be very praiseworthy." He added, unequivocally, "I renounce it."

But the prolonged struggle of wills in which father and son engaged during Schubert's late childhood and adolescence seemingly dealt with issues concerning his career. Before he was twelve years old, Schubert told a classmate at the Imperial and Royal Seminary that "secretly he often wrote down his thoughts in music, but his father must not know about it, as he was dead set against his devoting himself to music...", and in 1811 or 1812, his father is said to have attempted to limit Schubert's musical studies on the ground that they were interfering with his general education. Such reports must be approached cautiously, bearing
in mind that Schubert’s father was himself a musician who gave Schubert his earliest lessons, delighted in playing chamber music with him, and otherwise nurtured his musical talents. Rather than a consistent and general prohibition, there apparently were contradictory signals, alternating between encouragement and threats of discontinuance. Schubert diligently pursued his musical studies under Kapellmeister Antonio Salieri for some years beginning in 1811 and he achieved a prodigious productivity, primarily as a composer of Lieder, from as early as mid 1812. Evidently his father, fearful that his son would become what he reportedly called “a miserable pedlar of music,”12 was amenable to Schubert’s musical activity so long as it remained ancillary to a more respectable career. And indeed, in 1814, at his father’s insistence, Schubert went to work as an assistant school teacher, continuing until mid 1816 in the occupation which he despised. (“I would rather eat dry bread than give lessons!” he allegedly lamented.)13 But his father, unmindful of Schubert’s feelings, could now proudly write of his “four sons, all of whom are already in the service of the elementary school organization.”14

In the autumn of 1816, Schubert forced a drastic change in the relationship to his father: he refused to resume his teaching post and moved to Franz Schober’s home, where he devoted himself wholly to music. This coincided with the already-quoted diary entry expressing his terror of matrimony and it seems probable that he almost concurrently withdrew from Therese Grob; for her manuscript album of Schubert’s Lieder contains nothing composed later than c. the end of 1816. But liberation from paternal authority, if it could be achieved at all, could not be established at one stroke. The late summer of 1817 found him bidding a poetic “Farewell” to Schober and once again taking up his classroom duties. There he remained until the spring of 1818, when he obtained a temporary position as music teacher to the children of a Hungarian count in Zseliz. On his return to Vienna after the summer, he took up lodgings with the poet Johann Mayrhofer and remained with him for more than two years. He had renounced schoolteaching forever. His brother Ignaz wrote to
him on October 12: "You happy creature! How enviable is your lot! You live in sweet, golden freedom. ... I am often seized by a secret anger, and ... I am acquainted with liberty only by name. You see, you are now free of all these things, you are delivered."\(^{15}\)

Clearly, those biographers who regarded "My Dream" as an autobiographical narrative were struck by its congruence with Schubert's family setting and with several of the central events of Schubert's early biography, particularly the conflicts with his father and the death of his mother. Unfortunately, they also attempted to use the document as evidence that Schubert suffered two literal banishments—one prior to 1812 and another in 1818—from his paternal home. And they found irresistible the notion of a reconciliation at the graveside of his mother.\(^{16}\) In fact, such events never took place. Reacting against these interpretations, recent biographers have tended to reject any psychological interpretation of the prose piece. In his later years, Otto Erich Deutsch suggested that it is merely a "literary effusion" in the prevailing style of German Romanticism and Maurice J.E. Brown conjectured that, if it is not an unconscious reminiscence of a work by Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, it may have arisen from a literary "pen-and-paper game," perhaps played by Schubert and his comrades on a holiday excursion to Atzenbrugg in the summer of 1822.\(^{17}\)

However, it is not surprising that prose written by a lieder composer and sometime poet who was deeply immersed in, and sensitive to, the trends and currents of contemporary Romantic literature would show the stylistic hallmarks of that literature. Indeed, Schubert's few preserved diary entries are heavily Romantic in style, as are his moving descriptions of the natural beauties of the Austrian landscape in his letters of September 1825. But there is no evidence that "My Dream" was conceived as a literary exercise: the private, even obscure, nature of some of the symbolism argues against this as does the dreamlike narrative
structure. The title itself speaks for the highly personal meaning of the piece; but it was written on the manuscript by Schubert's brother and we cannot tell whether it had Schubert's authority.

Having said this, it is clear that "My Dream" does have a literary, even a mythic quality, which gives it a more than purely private significance and makes it possible to read its symbolism in archetypal terms. On the surface, its theme of a poet's alienation and exile may be regarded as a Gothic/Romantic stereotype and its apotheosis of father/son (king/prince) reconciliation as a commonplace of post-Sturm-und-Drang German drama and poetry. In terms of more archaic models, "My Dream" combines a story of expulsion or flight from Paradise with the parable of the Prodigal Son. A harmonious "Golden Age" is shattered by a son's resistance to his father's imperatives; the hero is twice exiled from Paradise, wanders to far-off lands where he becomes a minstrel/historian of the Fall, is ultimately reconciled with his father, and takes his rightful place among his brothers. The tale is characterized by the customary mythic dualities of death and resurrection, rebellion and submission, conflict and resolution. Paradise is simultaneously represented as a past condition and as a desired future goal. Eden, twice lost, is ultimately regained.

Closely related to its mythic shape are the religious and ritual implications of "My Dream." The hero gains admission to the mystic circle by means of the "miracle" of "devotion and firm belief," achieving salvation through faith. The ecstatic scene at the tombstone of the virgin carries resonances of Mariolatry, while the final reconciliation with the loving father strongly implies an acceptance of religious orthodoxy. The latter, however, is partially contradicted by the supernatural aura with which the whole is suffused. But Schubert's successive portraits of death as offering both the solace of eternal sleep and the rapture of spiritual communion, are not incompatible with the mystical (even erotic) character of revivalist Catholicism in the post-Napoleonic period.18

However, certain crucial details and symbols in Schubert's narrative remain largely inaccessible to mythic and
cultural strategies of analysis. This may be because “My Dream” appears to be Schubert’s transcription of an actual dream or his literary elaboration of a deeply cathected set of personal daydreams and fantasies. In either case, it bears the marks of the deeper layers of his personality and thus would be more likely to yield certain aspects of its innermost meaning to a psychoanalytic investigation.\(^9\)

“My Dream” is a narrative of sin, punishment, and absolution in which the nature of the transgression is disguised or, more likely, expressed only in symbolic form. Unlike the heroes of the edenic and oedipal myths, Schubert (whom we assume to be the anonymous narrator) refuses to enter the garden of earthly delights; his sin—along with his guilt, his exile, and his creative gift—arises from refusal to surrender his innocence. For him, the pleasures of the “feast” and of the “garden” are a source, not of attraction and pleasure, but of revulsion and disgust. “My father . . . commanded me to enjoy the delicious food. But I could not.” “Then my father took me once again to his favorite garden . . . But the garden was wholly repellent to me.” (The words “once again” establish an unmistakable link between the “feast” and the “garden.”) The imagery derived from oral eroticism, the “feast,” “delicious food,” and the “garden” all represent the female body, which Schubert’s father vainly urges upon him. This equation is also suggested by Schubert’s neologism “Lustgelage,” which is here rendered as “feast,” but which literally means “pleasure-feast” or “pleasure-revel” and which implies “Lusthaus” (brothel). Schubert’s is not the active oedipal crime of seeking to gain the mother and transcend the father; rather, his crime is one of sinful disobedience, a passive refusal, motivated in part by fear; but through his trespass he asserts his free will and individuality. Where his brothers become “very merry,” Schubert alone declines to be initiated into adult sexuality; and for this he suffers his father’s wrath as well as separation from his family. Like Orpheus and Narcissus, he protests against the repressive imperatives of procreative genitality.\(^9\)

This hero’s drive is not towards kingship or conquest but towards propitiation, not towards replacement of the father
but towards restoration of a conflict-free father/son relationship. Indeed, following his mother’s death, he and his father gain precisely such a harmony, in which the discordant female element—with its disruptive sexuality—is absent. Apparently, he would have been content to remain at home had his father not again pressed his demands upon him. But, following a period of mourning for the mother, there is a renewed confrontation leading to a second exile. Beset by fear and trembling, unable to withstand his father’s blows, let alone to return them, he flees, now voluntarily, and again wanders “into a distant land,” his guilt-ridden heart “full of infinite love for those who disdained it.”

The second exile liberates the narrator’s creativity, which operates within the boundaries of a pleasure/pain dialectic mirroring his family conflicts. “For long, long years I sang songs. When I would sing of love, it turned to pain. And again, when I would sing of pain, it turned to love.” Schubert’s account of the interpenetration of these libidinal currents accords closely with the masochistic implications of the tale, whose hero is, in Hitschmann’s words, “expelled, beaten, his love scorned...”21 and who, despite his tears, seems to derive some pleasure from these negative experiences.

Fantasy triumphs in the closing paragraph of “My Dream,” which further reveals its fundamental wish-fulfilling trajectory. This Biedermeier emigrant has given no thought to the founding of a new kingdom; rather, unable to endure permanent estrangement, he has awaited a signal for his return. That signal is the death of a young virgin, whose burial becomes the occasion for loving reconciliation. Schubert at last enters the domain of his father and brothers, joins the charmed circle around the maiden’s grave. In a rapturous moment, suggestive of orgasm or the dissolution of ego boundaries (Hitschmann suggests defloration), the circle uttered “a wondrously lovely sound; and I felt as though eternal bliss were compressed into a single moment.”

To summarize: Schubert’s rebellion appears to terminate in a passive, even masochistic temper. He dreams of
restoring rather than transcending the infantile relationship with a fantasied omnipotent father. Seen in these terms, "My Dream" expresses Schubert's wish to submit to his father and thereby gain his love. Fear of separation from father is central here. But Schubert cannot avoid the dreaded separation because of his revulsion against the feast and the garden and that which they symbolize. Thus, the hero of the tale undergoes several alternating exiles and homecomings; and there can be no reasonable expectation that the fabulous reunion with which it closes is other than a temporary prelude to a renewed separation.

All of this—fear of female sexuality, thinly disguised matricidal impulses, passivity toward the father, libidinal union with idealized male figures, identification of love with pain, fantasies of feminine transformation—implies that Schubert's oedipal conflict did not have a traditional resolution. And indeed, the facts of his lifestyle, his bachelorhood, his intense and loving male relationships, his reported antipathy to women, and multiple reports of his disordered sexual behavior, are strongly suggestive of a homosexual orientation.\(^\text{22}\)

There are broad hints by his friends and contemporaries that his promiscuous sexual activity was of an unusual character. A contemporary letter described him as subject to "the passions of an eagerly burning sensuality";\(^\text{23}\) later, a biographer said Schubert was gripped by "passions mauvaises,"\(^\text{24}\) and Bauernfeld wrote of him as "uncouth and sensual," and as "a kind of hedonist."\(^\text{25}\) But Josef Kenner, his fellow student at the Seminary, who was for a time a member of Schubert's entourage, put the matter in even more dramatic terms: he wrote that Schubert's body "succumbed to the cleavage in his—souls—as I would put it, of which one pressed heavenwards and the other bathed in slime . . . " "Anyone who knew Schubert," he subsequently added, "knows how he was made of two natures, foreign to each other, how powerfully the craving for pleasure dragged his soul down to the slough of moral degradation."\(^\text{26}\)

Schubert's biographers generally draw the inference from such testimony that he patronized prostitutes, with disastrous results, for he contracted a venereal disease in
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c. early 1823. However, few men of Schubert’s generation in Vienna regarded visits to prostitutes as immoral. An easygoing hedonism was characteristic of “Alt-Wien.”⁵⁷ In view of such permissive contemporary attitudes towards nonmarital heterosexual activity, it is very probable that Schubert’s friends were obliquely referring to sexual perversion rather than to heterosexual promiscuity.

In any event, it is certain that Schubert never achieved a fulfilled love relationship with a woman.⁵⁸ Apart from Therese Grob, his name was seriously linked with that of only one other woman, Countess Karoline Esterházy (1805–51), whose family employed him during the summers of 1818 and 1824. Admittedly this was, at best, an unrequited love; moreover, she was somewhat retarded—her mother sent her to play with her hoops when she was thirty. She married as she neared forty, with an annulment following shortly thereafter.

Schubert’s rejection of marriage was deeply rooted: Schober recalled his friend’s desperate and pathological reaction to the suggestion that he take a wife; and Anselm Hüttenbrenner, though receptive to Schubert’s explanation that his misogyny arose from disappointment over his failure to win Therese Grob, came to the conclusion that Schubert had “a dominating aversion for the daughters of Eve.”⁵⁹

The symbolism of “My Dream” takes on somewhat different shades of meaning when interpreted against this background. The hero’s curious, even inexplicable, resistance to the delights of the feast and of the garden becomes clear, as does the father’s disproportionate rage at his son’s refusal to share his brothers’ merriment. We may surmise that Schubert’s father feared his sons’ potential homosexuality. His insistence to control their careers may have been connected with his desire to control their sexuality. But the attempt to perpetuate archaic relationships of dominance and submission in turn has homoerotic implications: on this level, “My Dream” may be viewed as a fantasy of homosexual entanglement; the father aggressively demands to participate in his sons’ sexual experiences (he “commanded me
to enjoy”), but the hero denies him this perversely vicarious pleasure and is banished to far-off lands to ward off the homosexual attraction. On his return, he and the father enter the forbidden garden, which now can be seen to symbolize, not only the body of the departed mother, but sexual union with the father as well. The father becomes sexually excited (he “flushes”) and strikes his son for his denial; again the hero flees in fear of homosexual consummation.

The need for father’s protection and forgiveness eventually overpowers Schubert’s fears. He returns from the “distant” (i.e., taboo) regions and appears ready for initiation to “normal” sexuality, but only through the ghostly mediation of the “pious virgin” and, even then, in a graveyard, an unpropitious setting for such an initiation. But virginity and death are twin preconditions in Schubert’s quest for a non-dangerous heterosexual love-object. Moreover, the bisexual imagery suggests unresolved and perhaps insoluble conflicts: the returned prodigal son merges with the etherealized maiden; the feminine “circle” consists of males only, while a phallic tombstone bestrides the maiden’s sepulcher. These condensations perhaps imply that the hero has gained access to the primal scene, the “wondrously lovely sound,” “soft rustling,” and “fine sparks” representing the sublimation of previously fearful sounds and sensations. At least, it is clear that the hero has entered a previously impenetrable psychosexual sphere.

Schubert’s mother completes the trilogy of central figures in “My Dream,” and the complex interplay between Schubert and his father turns on their attitudes toward the mother-image. Despite the matricidal implications of the narrative (the elimination of female competition for father’s love, the all-male environment at the close, the mysterious disappearance of the “sisters”), one may conjecture that, in rebuffing his father, Schubert sought to remain faithful to his mother, to retain the purity of his love for her. His chasteness and fidelity surely contain an implicit criticism of his father, who remarried so soon after the death of Schubert’s mother. However, this seems a peripheral issue: “The homosexual does not pursue union with the woman,” writes Bychowski, because, “in its deep core, his ego has never
separated from her." And because he finds his love objects "on the path of narcissism" (Freud), he nurtures those whom he loves as his mother had nurtured him, his lovers being representations of his childhood self.

So powerful is Schubert's need to deny his oedipal drive that he removes the mother (and her virgin imago) from the realm of the living and himself from the field of temptation. On some level, of course, he has unconsciously outwitted himself, for her death and his flight are closely connected, not merely as the pathetically luxuriant daydream of a wronged child, but as equivalent events, the exile standing for death, the grave for mother's bed, and both conceived, in Jones' description of "dying together," as "a voyage of discovery, as a journey to a land where hidden things will be revealed." 

In "My Dream," the hero takes up his vocation as poet/singer following his mother's death. Here, song (and music) represents the state of exile, and exile in turn motivates a cluster of desires—to return home, to resurrect the mother, and to revive the "happy old past," which is to say, the preoedipal period idealized in memory. In reality, Schubert's creativity seems to have been fully unleashed by—at least to have coincided with—the death of his mother; it may therefore be seen, in part, as his endless attempt at reparation and restitution as well as the simultaneous expression and denial of his incestuous and matricidal impulses. (Only in his music could Schubert enter the garden of delight and join the banquet table with his brothers.) If the surviving documentation is accurate, Schubert had written only relatively few completed works prior to his mother's death on May 28, 1812; and, to judge by dated and datable works, his productivity came to a virtual stop during the months immediately preceding her death. But, beginning in late June, he composed more than twenty works during the remainder of the year and his surging productivity continued almost unabated until his death in late 1828.

It therefore comes as little surprise that "My Dream" was written in the midst of the first period of severe creative
slowdown in his adult life, a period that extended from the spring to the autumn of 1822. It is beyond the scope of this essay to try and identify the events which precipitated Schubert’s prose tale; but it may be relevant to note that his music was enjoying its first popular success and that evidence of his genius had now reached Beethoven, to whom a worshipful and fearful Schubert dedicated a work in April and who, in August, was quoted as saying: “This one will surpass me.” Schubert’s creative block was removed with the composition of two movements of a B-minor Symphony (the “Unfinished”) in October-November. At the same time, by late autumn, he returned to his father’s house for the first time since a brief period at the end of 1817, and remained there, it is believed, until the end of 1823.

This return to his paternal home is sometimes attributed to his having contracted a venereal disease. But the sequence of the events is probably reversed and, in any case, it seems more likely that Schubert's homecoming resulted from deeper emotional currents, including those which are the subject of “My Dream.” In other words, “My Dream” appears to be, not only a retrospective account of Schubert’s alienation from his father but also a prospective allegory expressing his profound wish to return to the paternal bosom. The latter step necessarily meant realigning his relationship with Franz Schober, the acknowledged leader of the Schubert circle, with whom Schubert had been living for some time and who had, according to the clear implication of several reports by contemporaries, guided Schubert into promiscuity, if not homosexuality.

“My Dream” thus constituted one of the means by which Schubert sought to surmount a personal crisis. In it, he reviews the history of his multiple, internal “exiles” from his family, dwells on his mother’s death, recalls the happy days of infancy and childhood, and expresses his yearning to rejoin the family at any cost, including renunciation of his sexual and creative individuality. For to join the “circle in which many youths and old men perpetually walked” signified subjection to the traditional, the collective, the patriarchal. It signified “a devotion” which excluded differ-
ence, a “firm belief” which excluded doubt, a “lowered gaze” which excluded rebellion. Self-conscious both as man and as artist, Schubert knew and treasured his singularity, his creativity, his divergence from a stifling and obscurantist official culture. In November 1822, he inscribed Goethe’s words in the album of a friend:

One thing will not do for all
Let each live in his tradition,
Each consider his own mission,
And who stands, beware a fall.\textsuperscript{33}

But, in a reverse Faustian bargain, Schubert is here prepared to risk all to recover an earlier, greener period. In “My Dream” he has sent a coded message to father, confessing his willingness to yield, his resolve to be a “good” son, to worship God, and to follow the path of a pious and realistic citizen during the “quiet years” of Austrian history.

In the final analysis, however, Schubert could not alter his personality structure, or modify the nature of his sexuality, or unconditionally submit to his father. Indeed, by the dialectical irony of homosexuality itself, rebellion and submission are inseparable: identification with the mother continually leads to alternations between a passive masochistic position and a competitive aggression toward the father and other male rivals. So, Schubert can surrender only symbolically, in dream and in fantasy. In reality, his rebellion—and his creativity—continued: for though the homosexual refusal to be regimented is undermined by the need to propitiate the father and the social representatives of his power, the rebellion itself is perpetual. Wounded, penetrated by its peculiar mixture of pain and love, homosexual aestheticism of the Romantic and post-Romantic period continued its defense of brotherhood against authority, of creativity against the performance principle, of beauty against the wasting effects of time and reality.

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References


So zerreihete mich die Liebe und der Schmerz.


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15. Deutsch, Documentary Biography, pp. 103–104. Nevertheless, Schubert continued to be listed by the School Inspectorate as a teacher in 1819.
16. See Dahms, Schubert, pp. 11, 13, 15, 19, 77, and 89, and numerous popular
    biographies.
17. Deutsch, Documentary Biography, p. 228; Brown, Schubert, 115–16. See also
    39–43, which cites several unconvincing parallels between passages in
    Wackenroder’s Herzensgeselligkeiten eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders (1797)
    and “My Dream”; Brown appears unaware of the ubiquity of literary
    works dealing with father/son conflicts.
18. For parallels between Schubert’s attitude toward death and those of Herder
    and Lessing, and their Romantic successors, see Alfred Einstein, Schubert
    (New York, 1951), p. 313; Christoph Wolff, “Schubert’s ‘Death and the
    Maiden’—Analytical and Explanatory Notes . . . ” (presented at the Detroit
    Schubert Congress, November 1978). See also Ludwig Uhlig, Der
    Todesgenius in der deutschen Literatur von Winckelmann bis Thomas Mann
    (Tübingen, 1975), pp. 5–28, and Kathi Meyer-Baer, Music of the Spheres
19. It would be tedious to repeat the usual Freudian disclaimers concerning obstacles
    to the posthumous analysis of prose and art works; therefore, the
    obligatory warnings on that subject in Freud’s essays on Leonardo,
    Gradiva, Dostoevsky and in his Goethe-Prize Speech are incorporated herein
    by reference.
20. See Herbert Marcuse, Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry Into Freud
    (Boston, 1955), chap. 8.
22. I will discuss at another time the circumstantial evidence that Schubert was a
    central figure in a coterie of homosexual and bisexual Viennese artists
    and bohemians.
23. Anton Ottenwalt to Josef von Spaun, letter of November 27, 1825, in:
    Deutsch, Documentary Biography, p. 476.
24. Alexandre Oulibicheff, Beethoven: ses critiques et ses glossateurs (Leipzig and
25. Reminiscences of Eduard von Bauernfeld, in: Deutsch, Memoirs, pp. 234 and
    45.
26. Josef Kenner to Anton Kenner, letter of April 21, 1858: Josef Kenner to
    Ferdinand Luib, letter of May 10, 1858, in: Deutsch, Memoirs, pp. 82 and
    86.
27. See, e.g., Henry Reeve, Journal of a Residence at Vienna and Berlin (London,
    1877), p. 25: John Russell, A Tour In Germany . . . in the years 1200, 1821,
    1822 (Boston, 1825), pp. 396–98; John Strang, Germany in MDCCCXXXI
    (London, 1836), II, pp. 338–39; Lulu Thürheim, Mein Leben. Erinnerungen
    aus Österreichs großer Welt, 1788–1819 (Munich, 1913), II, p. 19 f and
    passim; K.-H. Köhler and G. Herre, eds., Beethovens Konversationshefte, 1
28. As for his sexual experiences with women, the reliability of several references to
    an affair with a maidservant at Zseliz in 1818 cannot be established; nor are
    these references altogether unequivocal. See Deutsch, Memoirs,
    pp. 100 and 371; Documentary Biography, pp. 100 and 102.
32. Ernest Jones, Essays in Applied Psycho-Analysis (London, 1951), I, p. 14; Sadger, who originated this formulation, adds that the erotic fantasy of “dying together” with the mother also includes the idea of escape from the father’s dominion. See J. Sadger, Heinrich von Kleist, Eine pathographisch-psychologische Studie, in: Grenzenfragen des nerven- und seelenlebens (Wiesbaden, 1910), p. 60, n. 1. I have left for another occasion the exploration of the significance of “My Dream’s” undisguised necrophiliac motifs.